

**Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee
Housing Workgroup
November 7, 2023, Approved**

Attendees:

Amber Blankenship, Danny Hale, Bob Hansen (chair), Deb Koester, Julian Levine, Matt Johnson, James Phillips, Beverly Sharp, Rachel Thaxton, Kristin Tiedeman

Opening:

Bob Hansen provided welcome and opening remarks of this meeting of the Governor's Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee Housing Workgroup. The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve October meeting minutes. Danny made a motion to approve the minutes and Amber seconded the motion. The objective of this meeting was to review 2023 KPI progress and finalize 2024 priority goals and strategies for the State Plan.

Agenda Items:

Discussion on Recommendations of the Subgroup: Strategy 1, KPI 7

- A portion of the workgroup convened to discuss recommendations for KPI 7 regarding sustainable funding models for all tiers of recovery housing within the state, and subsequently, this initial draft was presented to the workgroup for their evaluation.
- Jay pointed out that believing our current levels are comprehensive does not necessarily imply that there is sufficient housing available for all populations. They acknowledge the need but find that the complexity of recovery housing levels 1 through 3 addresses this issue. Consequently, it makes sense to structure funding based on the complexity of each housing level. Matt agreed with this perspective.
- Matt proposed a payment structure for each housing level. For Level 1, which accommodates people transitioning out of more intensive levels of care, he recommended a payment equivalent to one month of rent or a program fee based on HUD guidelines or subsidized

housing. Level 2, being more complex, would require program fees for 3 to 6 months, with the need for a reasonable standard since these fees may vary. Level 3 would operate with a daily per-bed rate, covering basic needs for running a Level 3 facility. No payment structure was suggested for Level 4 due to issues with MCOs.

- Kristin mentioned that in Kentucky, Oxford Houses receive many referrals from individuals who require higher levels of care but end up in Level 1 housing because it's the only option available. Danny added that in West Virginia, many operators of Level 1 housing also operate higher levels of care.
- Bev expressed concerns about individuals leaving the correctional system with nowhere to go, especially sexual offenders who need Level 2 or Level 3 support. There is also a shortage of transitional housing for individuals coming out with substance use disorder who don't necessarily need recovery housing but require transitional housing, which is currently lacking.
- Danny highlighted the importance of respite beds, suggesting that they could be valuable for people who are discharged from a recovery program and have nowhere to go. Having places to stay between leaving a program and entering recovery housing or while on a waitlist would be beneficial. He mentioned a successful respite housing model in Florida. Matt also mentioned Lauren's Wish in Morgantown as an example of respite housing within the state, and Bob emphasized the need for the group to collectively learn more about these models.
- The group intends to make modifications and review the draft before the next meeting, at which point they will hold a vote for approval.

White Paper on Recovery Housing: Strategy 1, KPI 8

- During the Community Engagement subcommittee meeting, Bob mentioned that a question arose regarding the white paper which did not address non-certified housing.
- Kristin pointed out that the primary obstacle to reaching out to non-certified recovery housing is the lack of contact information and uncertainty about the locations of these uncertified housing facilities. She suggested collaborating with the research team from the Fletcher group to gather insights and include additional questions about certification, which could then be sent to non-certified housing providers.
- Danny informed the group that he possesses a list of contacts for both certified and non-certified recovery housing, which he can distribute to the workgroup. He also noted that 48% of the state's recovery housing is not WVARR certified for various reasons.
- Bev emphasized the importance of understanding why houses are not obtaining certification, as the subcommittee's focus extends to all recovery housing across the state.
- To keep the workgroup updated, the current recommendations and report will be redistributed.

2024 Planning

- The workgroup aims to persist in their objective of enhancing the capacity of recovery housing in West Virginia. Deb proposed the idea of considering all levels of housing or defining the capacity for "long-term" recovery housing.

- Bob suggested breaking down their current approach into three separate strategies that emphasize funding, training, and the appropriate utilization of recovery housing.
- Jay emphasized the importance of concentrating on specialized groups within the context of recovery housing, such as parenting women, sex offenders, parenting men, and other groups with special needs such as hearing impaired and those in wheelchairs. The goal is to identify the unique needs and capacity of these individuals. Matt agreed and urged the consideration of the specific barriers these distinct populations encounter, with the aim of making entry into recovery housing more equitable.
- Amber mentioned discussions in town hall meetings regarding individuals attempting to establish new housing and providing training for those interested in doing so. Jay proposed the development of a mentorship program involving current WVARR-certified housing for non-certified facilities while they pursue certification.
- Bob highlighted the potential significance of collecting outcome data as a strategy for evaluating the impact of recovery housing. Danny mentioned that colleagues have been actively working on this to bring as many programs as possible into the recovery capacity system (rec-cap). Jay stressed the importance of standardizing data collection and implementing uniform standards throughout the state.
- Bob mentioned working on a draft with input expected by November 15th to formulate three distinct strategies. Matt, Danny, and Jay will collaborate on the mentorship strategy for this plan.

Additional Discussion

- Danny reported that KPI 1 has achieved full completion, with 23 recovery residences meeting the target.

Next Steps:

- Bob will revise the recommendations for KPI 7, incorporating today's discussion, and circulate them for review and finalization by the workgroup at the upcoming subcommittee meeting.
- Danny will provide Kristin with a list of recovery residences that are not WVARR certified, facilitating progress on KPI 8.
- Bob will distribute the latest white paper from the Fletcher group, which is based on the survey of WVARR-certified recovery residences, as a means of refreshing the group's understanding.

Adjournment:

Workgroup members are expected to draft their respective strategies for 2024 planning by the end of November. Bob expressed his gratitude to all the workgroup members for their participation. The work group is expected to meet again on the first Tuesday of December.