

**Meeting Minutes of the Governor's Council on
Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
Community Engagement and Supports Subcommittee
Housing Workgroup
October 3, 2023, Approved**

Attendees:

Emily Birckhead, Danny Hale, Bob Hansen (chair), Nikki Lyttle, Joey McComas, Matt Johnson, James Phillips, Beverly Sharp, Kristin Tiedeman, Kim Tieman

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, October 3, 2023 and was conducted by Zoom conference. A quorum was present to approve September meeting minutes. James made a motion to approve the minutes and Danny seconded the motion. The objective of this meeting was to review 2023 Quarter 3 progress and Town Hall Meetings, as well as plan for 2024 for the Housing section of the State Plan.

Agenda Items:

2023 Town Hall Meeting Report

- During the discussion, Kim emphasized that housing was consistently identified as one of the primary challenges mentioned in every call and was a recurring theme throughout the meeting report. Bob echoed her sentiments and mentioned that there was reportedly a waiting list of 300 women seeking recovery housing.
- Kim pointed out that the PPW Subcommittee had recognized the specific need for recovery housing for pregnant women, particularly those enrolled in the Drug Free Moms and Babies Program. Bob also highlighted the issue of recovery housing being concentrated in certain counties, leaving rural areas underserved.
- Bob brought up the connection between individuals with SUD and the correctional system, as well as the need for transitional housing solutions for those leaving the judicial or correctional system. Bev added that it was important to allocate resources to transitional housing for

individuals completing a recovery program and lacking a place to go. She also noted the high cost of reintegration for those leaving incarceration compared to the cost of housing them in correctional facilities.

- Nikki mentioned concerns related to legislation surrounding WVARR certification, particularly how individuals leaving incarceration might not have access to funding if they choose Oxford housing, which follows a different certification process from NAR standards. The group discussed the possibility of advocating for legislative changes to amend the bill's language in the upcoming legislative session.
- Brian Gallagher was tasked with reaching out to Bob to discuss the legislative aspect of WVARR certification and funding. Kim committed to reminding Brian to make this contact.
- James suggested the creation of a formal pathway to provisional certification, which had been discussed previously. This would allow new recovery homes a grace period to obtain certification before they become subject to legal requirements, ensuring they can access funding. However, implementing this change would still require legislative adjustments.

Quarter 3 Progress and Quarter 4 Activities

Goal 1

- Strategy 2, KPI 7: Emily pointed out the intention behind this KPI was to use the survey data (KPI 8) to identify gaps in sustainable funding models for recovery housing. Bob emphasized the need to mobilize members from this workgroup to leverage the information available in the report and other resources to formulate recommendations. James, Matt, and Bob agreed to collaborate on this initiative.
- Strategy 2, KPI 8: Kristin shared that HRSA had granted approval for the white paper, which she had already forwarded to Bob and Dr. Koester earlier in the day. Kristin provided an overview of the paper's highlights, including the participation of 34 providers who completed the survey in its entirety. The survey collected information on funding sources, as well as the obstacles faced in securing funding. It also examined how house operators perceived their reliance on community support, residents' ability to learn from crises, and the resilience demonstrated by residences in overcoming challenges. The full survey results would soon be made available to the workgroup. Kim mentioned that WVU had developed a cost calculator that could be applied to recovery residences to establish budgets, ensuring they can maintain their operations without financial strain.
- Strategy 2, KPI 9: Kim noted that if the Governor's Council were to hold a retreat, the state's plans for addressing recovery housing needs would be shared with the WV First Foundation. This could potentially lead to funding opportunities by demonstrating the urgency of the situation, including the existence of waiting lists, individuals residing in non-certified homes, and the specific housing needs of the PPW population. Nikki suggested rephrasing the KPI to focus on grant funding rather than SOR funding, as SOR funds were either insufficient or already allocated. She also pointed out the challenge of grant funding being tied to the number of fatal overdoses, meaning that if fatal overdose rates decrease, grant funding could diminish. Dr. Christiansen had been instrumental in advocating for evidence-based recommendations to the

Foundation in pursuit of funding for these initiatives. Kim recommended that the next call with Brian should involve brainstorming unmet needs in recovery housing, and she suggested sending out a poll to workgroup members to gather input on these needs.

HUD Funding

- Nikki mentioned that she has been actively involved in the rollout of HUD funding in collaboration with Commerce for the past year. However, the process has experienced delays due to changes in staff and initial issues with incorrect procedures. They have an AFA ready to be implemented once Commerce approves the funding for renovations in recovery homes. There is a significant amount of money to be allocated, and time is of the essence.
- Individuals requesting funding are required to provide three quotes from contractors along with their AFA applications, and an environmental scan is also necessary.
- BBH is responsible for managing the funding. People seeking grants must submit mini-grant applications that include WVARR certification, contractor quotes, a description of the work needed, and an explanation of why it is necessary. BBH will process invoices on a quarterly basis as part of a reimbursement schedule.
- Emily provided an update on the Voucher program, which had encountered similar delays, primarily due to canceled meetings. The Voucher system is now transitioning to their responsibility instead of involving multiple agencies. Their policies and procedures specify the qualifications for receiving vouchers, limited to expanding capacity by adding new beds. They are currently working on navigating this aspect of the policy. Payments will be processed through the RedCap system, pending feedback.
- There is a possibility that HUD will continue to allocate funds to Commerce for this specific initiative, provided they continue to submit applications for it.

Next Steps:

- James, Matt, and Bob are planning to convene a meeting ahead of the upcoming housing work group session to advance Strategy 2, KPI 7.
- The complete housing survey findings will be provided for the comprehensive evaluation by the entire workgroup.
- Extend an invitation to Brian for the upcoming housing work group conference to address unmet recovery housing requirements, and a questionnaire will be distributed to subcommittee members to gauge the most urgent needs.

Adjournment:

The workgroup will persist in its efforts to develop sustainable funding models and formulate recommendations for future funding during the upcoming final quarter. 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 November.