

Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition (Region 2 BoS)
March 7, 2019 - Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS), Hendersonville
Transylvania and Rutherford Counties by phone link - 9:30 AM

Facilitation in Hendersonville by **Kristen Martin**. Co-lead **Emily Lowery** participated by phone from Transylvania County. **Suzanne Porter** participated by phone from Rutherford County.

Minutes for February 7 considered for acceptance as distributed by email. There were no stated objections, so the distributed draft was adopted as final by common consent.

Kristen said that **Trina Hill** has resigned, to go work for Buncombe County DSS. We honor her years of leadership in this Coalition.

March Balance of State (BoS) Steering Committee call (March 5):

A Healthy Opportunities pilot program was initiated February 15, concerned with social determinants of health potentially impacted by new Medicaid pilot funding. This effort is surveying stakeholders, concerning Medicaid impacts on persons in shelters, and also rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing participants. It offers a multipage survey, and requests responses from affected parties by March 15. Kristen said Thrive will participate, and she will forward the survey link to anyone concerned. She hopes for a number of responses, especially given our awareness of significant shortfalls in local program resources. Others urged to participate include Safelight and SAFE.

Webinars: NCCEH has posted webinars addressing both information for potential new Continuum of Care funding applicants [Recording:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/play/recording/2c4ea51f1958ea5271b64274ba979477131dfaac34174092b10627d6e3b0a197>], and for funded CoC programs seeking renewals [held today; see <http://bit.ly/2tNCcEU> [NCCEH website]. NCCEH also will host a teleconference on funding and performance on March 28. [March 28, 1:00-2:00 PM View the presentation: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/791696621> Phone:+1 (646) 749-3112 Access Code:791-696-621]

NCCEH Conference: “Bringing It Home”, May 21-22, at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh. Please consider sending an agency representative. The cost (\$100) is very reasonable.

Coordinated Entry Evaluation: Kristen said our Region responded well to the conducted survey. A table was presented showing 14 client responses in our area; but it left unstated that this was 14 of 22 clients served in all, an unusually high rate of response. It’s suggested we give feedback saying response rate is also very helpful for evaluations of our assistance efforts. A question was also raised, whether VI-SPDAT can be improved upon in the task of prioritizing clients for service. For example, it does not consider safety in addressing Domestic Violence situations.

Scorecard process: Kristen said regions are required (a HUD mandate) to offer a representative to serve on the CoC Scorecard Committee, with a name submitted by March 29. This is ~month-long intensive task in April, which then wraps up with no further work. If interested, please contact Kristen or Emily before March 29.

Schoolhouse Connection is a national nonprofit attempting to aid homeless children, particularly pre-school, to gain access to important services such as Head Start or Early Head Start. Kim Geiss and **Beth Branagan** are working with a consultant, have a planned Mar. 28, 10 A.M. call. Transylvania will host visits, including training for service workers providing for young children, “Sesame Street in communities”. Virginia Watkins with SAFE is organizing sessions Friday March 22, 1-4 PM at St. Phillips/ Miller Hall, (there is a wait list, contact Smart Start to join the wait list) also Saturday March 23 at Perkin Ranch, “Little People Big Feelings”, about helping regulate emotions, from 10 AM-12. Also, on Thursday March 21st there is a DHHS presenting about WNC Early Childhood Action Plan, 9 AM-2 PM at Brevard College/Porter Center; attenders must register, \$35 for Get Set participants, \$50/day for others. A rally is to follow from 4 to 6.

Matt Gruebmeier followed up, noting an upcoming popular training (third of 4 to be offered) on Sat. April 6, to assist school personnel to work with trauma sensitive youngsters. Boys and Girls Club, Head Start, preschool personnel and a variety of other early-child providers have participated; about 100 have signed up for the next session, with 130 as maximum. Also, on April 1st there will be Community-focused Mental Health First Aid training, at the Mills River Academy (the tech center adjacent to Mills River Elementary) from 8:30 to 4. There is a \$20 fee for a manual. Registration required, see <http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org/blog/2019/03/05/community-ymhfa-training-april-1/> .

Coordinated Assessment update: Kristen said the process to move from paper applicant records to HMIS continues, with about 80 of 200 now verified active and complete. The hope is to use this data to persuade local elected officials and key staff to get involved in Homeless Coalition efforts and/or to join the monthly Affordable Housing task force.

Chris Berg asked that a summary of demographics of our verified applicants be made and shared when this work is

finished.

Kristen said that Blue Ridge Community Health is training intake staff to use VI-SPDAT, joining Safelight, Transylvania County Schools, and United Way/Rutherford County as recently adding to our intake capability.

Veterans: Lead David Carr is not connected. Jim Tanner at the VA had no announcements, but confirmed an outreach fair of groups and support organizations is happening today.

BoS emails: Kristen circulated a subscriber sheet for all the general emails sent by BoS staff. Kristen and Trina had been pruning these before circulation to the Southern Mountains list, but we each have the option of getting all these.

ESG staff visit: On June 6th the state coordinators of the Emergency Solutions Grant program plan to attend the regular Southern Mountains meeting. They are aware that we use phone-in options to attend, but hope to meet as many of us as can make it to the face-to-face session. They will try to answer questions.

The causes of homelessness were discussed briefly. They are not captured in VI-SPDAT records. It was suggested that we gather some anecdotes of medical situations that may have caused or contributed to loss of housing.

Virginia Watkins, the child advocate at SAFE in Transylvania, is arranging for a **camp for 5th-8th graders affected by domestic violence**. Dates/times: August 5-9, 8:30-5:30, no cost, meals/food provided. Organizations serving such children may contact her about registration – forms for 30.

The next Southern Mountains Coalition meeting is on April 4, at 9:30 AM, at *Blue Ridge Community Health, community room, Hendersonville*.. Emily Lowery will facilitate, as our co-leads have agreed to rotate.

With respect, Chris Berg, secretary

Notes from Henderson attendees after-session:

Kristen reported Thrive has been very busy. They see more walk-ins. This is partly due to a donation for bus passes, but some voluntary outdoor-livers/campers also seek small hygiene products, protein bars, microwavable cereal, Hot Hands packs. A very popular item are church-donated mats (created from recycling plastic bags) which are serviceable groundsheets acting as moisture and thermal barriers.

Jessica Bain at Family Preservation Services reported their effort to augment hospital discharge services with mental health support/handholding; a lot of those served are homeless.

Trina Rushing, Henderson County Library director, reports a larger number of people have been coming to hang out, sometimes in the surrounding area/bushes or bathrooms as well as in the main library building. She and the staff hope to keep folks engaged—a library is not designed as a sleep space. She pointed to an upcoming movie “The Public” (Emilio Estavez), to be in movie-house release mid-April, and in other formats later: It is based on experiences at the Cincinnati public library. Our library plans to have showings with follow up conversations when the alternate-showing formats become available. The Library is requesting a social worker in next year’s budget, partly to address this situation with mental/behavioral strategies. There have been some incidents of city police ejecting people from the building without a staffer requesting that. Kristen mentioned a working party is under way with the city manager.

Matt Gruebmeier reported 288 students have been identified this school year as defined by McKinney-Vento as homeless or with unstable residence. That is about what complete annual counts have been in recent past years.