

## SOAR Dialogue Highlights

1/17/13

Attendees: Emily Carmody, Jeff Doyle, Aundry Freeman, Sheila Crump, Daphne Drew, Charlene Powell, Jacquetta Bullock, Elizabeth McDermott, Joyce Allen, Nefertari Manigault, TJ Reynolds-Emwanta, Donna Taylor, Pamalia Davis, Tracy Miller

### **Introductions/What are you looking forward to in 2013:**

- Emily Carmody- working on SOAR goals set at SOAR caseworker meeting
- Aundry Freeman- looking for more community involvement in SOAR, more people you have the more ideas you can come up with
- Sheila Crump- Get a qualified person to sign off on MSRs
- Daphne Drew- Continue communications with SSA office
- Charlene Powell- Looking forward to getting my feet wet and getting started
- Jacquetta Bullock- Expand services and connect with someone else who can help submit more SOAR cases
- Elizabeth McDermott- Advocating for more SOAR workers in Durham and strengthening community partnerships
- Joyce Allen- Learn how to get through the SOAR process smoothly
- Ariel Reynolds- Continuing to connect with SOAR workers across the state
- Nefertari Manigault- Learn the different barriers that homeless people experience when trying to get income
- TJ Reynolds-Emwanta (guest Attorney Donna Taylor )- getting SOAR program up and running at CenterPoint LME/MCO and getting more participation in the community work group
- Pamalia Davis- Make sure all consumers are approved
- Tracy Miller- Keep up with applicants

### **Announcement:**

- Congratulations to Asheville! They have achieved Gold SOAR Community Certification

### **Presentation by Jeff Doyle, VA Mid-Atlantic Network Homeless Coordinator**

- See attached slides for Jeff's presentation re: SOAR and VA partnerships
- Questions and Discussion from presentation:
  - 1-877-424-3838- VA hotline, call to connect homeless veterans to services at VA
  - Are there any tips in identifying veterans to link to the VA
    - First question: Are you a veteran?
    - Second question: Have you ever served in the military?
    - Even if that person served in the military and is a vet but cannot get VA benefits, call the VA Medical Center contact (information in slide show) to verify if the person is eligible for benefits.
    - Qualifications:

- Good discharge: honorable, general with honorable conditions, medical (at any point)
  - Many veterans think they do not have a good discharge when that is not true
  - Again, homeless contact at VA medical centers and/or eligibility office at VA to check on discharge status
- Prior to 1980- serve 90 days active duty
- After 1980- serve 2 years
- Caveat- if someone was called up to a combat situation
- Partnerships with SOAR and VA
  - Formal partnerships
    - Direct grant funding available for community agencies to serve veterans
      - Provides funding for staff and admin costs
      - Could combine focus on with SOAR
      - If agency has SOAR trained workers, it increases the likelihood of grants being approved
    - Homeless Contracts Beds
      - Every VA medical Center has funding for these emergency beds (capped as 90 day beds)
      - Could provide SOAR process for veterans accessing emergency beds
      - Funding is a little more flexible
      - Could write in SOAR activities into grant and get funding for those activities
  - Informal agreements
    - Memorandums of Agreement between VA Medical Center and SOAR caseworkers
      - Find ways to assist
      - Streamline ways of getting medical records
      - Streamline referrals
      - There are SOAR trained staff at VA medical centers who know SSA system and VA system
      - Signed memorandums with the VA can be used to leverage HUD CoC funding and/or provide a service match
      - VA can take on responsibilities of providing case management and services
  - Does anyone in the group have a partnership with the VA at this time?
    - Tracy- We had a connection at the VA but the staff retired. We are starting over to explain SOAR and develop a system
    - Nefertari - have an MOA with the VA, SOAR is not currently a part of it but we are revising it in March

- Currently covers what we do for veterans and what the shelter does for them
  - Jeff- by adding SOAR it would make it more formal and by providing more services to veterans you can ask more of the VA
- Emily- Clarification of what VA can and cannot do with SOAR
  - VA cannot be the 1696 Representative
  - VA CAN gather medical records
  - VA staff CAN write Medical Summary Reports
  - VA doctors CAN sign Medical Summary Reports
- Aundry- We have a connection with the VA medical center and the Vets Quarters in Asheville.
  - Work closely with caseworkers at shelter and the HUD-VASH program.
  - I have not had an issue with getting medical records. MOA would be very good for us.
  - Can the VA contract with law firms? Is there a specific funding source for SOAR?
    - Jeff- No direct funding streams available for SOAR but can be worked in as reimbursable service as part of 3 programs
    - Emily- Agencies who have contracts with VA for programs can work in SOAR into their program
    - Jeff- Just being a law firm would not be an issue
      - May be because your agency is not providing additional services beyond legal services
- Emily- Can agencies also subcontract with another existing SOAR agency to provide SOAR services?
  - Jeff- Yes- can be complicated with subcontracting
  - Jeff- For all VA grants, the applicant has to be a nonprofit
- Nefertari- Do we need to update our MOA before we apply for grants?
  - Jeff- no you can apply now
  - Having an MOA would be beneficial to your grant application
- SSVF application is currently open, you can get information on how to apply on VA website
  - Winston-Salem- United Way is SSVF grantee
    - Goodwill provides disability advocacy for VA benefits and are SOAR trained
    - If you are interested in getting in touch with them to see how it works, please get in touch with Emily
  - VA is interested in reaching out to rural communities, Fayetteville, and Charlotte
    - Reaching rural communities is a challenge

- Looking for ways to partner to expand outreach
- TJ- I've had problems with obtaining medical records for veterans that I worked with in the past. Any avenue of how to get records from the Salisbury VA or satellite offices would be great.
  - Jeff- I recommend having a formal MOA or contact Homeless Liasons
  - Jeff- I agree it can be difficult to get records
- Contact information for HUD-VASH and Homeless Coordinators provided in presentation slides
  - If people have any issues with contacting their VA medical center, you can contact Jeff
  - Jeff's Contact Information
    - [Jeffrey.doyle@va.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.doyle@va.gov)
    - 919-688-7613
- Every year VA has annual plans, trying to build SOAR relationships is a very important piece of that plan

**Next call scheduled for February 21, 2013 at 10:30 AM**