

Notes for Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition online/Zoom meeting
Region 2 in the N.C. Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care (CoC) for Homeless
July 1, 2021, 9:30 AM Kristen Martin at Thrive hosting

Persons on the call: Regional co-leads: Kristen Martin, Emily Lowery.

Kristen Martin, Kristen Dunn, Josh Shelton, Tracey Gruver and Rachelle Dugan (Thrive); Emily Lowery (The Haven of Transylvania County), Trisha Ecklund, Makala Perez, Danita Simpson and Kenett Melgar (Blue Ridge Health); Michael Absher (Only Hope WNC); Alyce Knaflich (Aura Homes); Matthew Gruebmeier and Jessica Ownbey (Henderson County Schools); Teena Willis and Bre Griffin (Partners Health Management); Sarah Kowalak (United Way – Henderson County); Trina Rushing (Henderson Library); Chris Berg; Kristen Goossens; Amanda Gregg; Adam Jahnke (VA outreach); Sarah Lancaster (Vaya Health); Sonya Hall; Claire; Angela Vaughn (ABCCM); Suzanne Porter (Rutherford United Way); Brenda Ploss (NC Works Veterans Careers); Kim Berry (Henderson Dept. Public Health-school nurse supervisor); Jason Schulz (Affordable Homeownership Fdn.); Interfaith Assistance Ministries (Hendersonville). See also the **appended Chat**.

Kristen Martin facilitated. *She noted ground rules spelled out in the agenda.*

Minutes of June 3 meeting: Kristen asked for any corrections. Brenda Ploss asked she be recorded as present. The distributed version was adopted by common consent with this amendment.

BoS Steering Committee: No meeting has occurred since our regional June meeting – nothing to report.

Expansion of **HMIS Shelter coverage:** Emily Lowery has contacted two small shelters, including Foothills, but has had no reply. Trisha Ecklund said she'd spoken with Tim Jones at Hendersonville Rescue Mission, and offered to assist Emily meeting with them. There is also a Rutherford startup, Out of Ashes, which has a large grant from Dogwood Foundation to renovate a former shelter building.

Emergency Vouchers: These are to be handled through Coordinated Entry (CE), which adds steps for some agencies such as Isothermal (which was allotted vouchers for Polk and Rutherford) -they have to sign Memos of Understanding with Balance of State to fit in Coordinated Entry. Domestic Violence shelters will also access these vouchers through CE. Resolution of portability issues is also incomplete, and important, as up to hundreds of vouchers may be moved to match households to available units.

Back@Home Outreach: Kenett Melgar said the 7th Avenue contacts have led to addressing a camp in poor shape with services. Blue Ridge Health is attempting to build similar relations in Polk, Rutherford and Transylvania. Having a more stable process makes it possible to begin assessing needs of those who are living doubled-up.

Extended PIT lead duties: Kristen and Trisha see Coordinated Entry work being streamlined across Balance of State. Tying medical-appointments to set up homeless-service contact work looks fruitful at Blue Ridge, where there is depth of staff support – it may be harder at Free Clinic locations. The team is also building trust by wearing PIT Outreach t-shirts, and emphasize the rules for safe contact.

Back@Home Housing: Kristin Dunn and Rachelle are adding cases (nine currently) with intakes for both homeless prevention and rapid re-housing. Thrive has staff changes – Stephanie Gilliam is leaving to seek a masters degree, so Josh Shelton is adding her cases, and Thrive will hire to reestablish capacity. Kristin Dunn said they need to be flexible, as a doubled-up client should get an intake through 2-1-1: **Back@Home** setup

occurs through a Smartsheet rather than HMIS, and 2-1-1 is in the best position to determine whether a client is better served through Back@Home or the HOPE program. Rachelle started with 20 cases and continues to add clients.

Racial Equity: The BoS RE subcommittee is looking at data across several areas addressed by VI-SPDAT: Housing History (linked also to instances of marginalized identities); Risk; Family Unit; Wellness; Socialization and Daily functions. [Please see attached .pdf: Prioritization Tool Comparison] Kristin Dunn notes that the SPDAT information is drawn from self-reporting, which puts a lot of weight on Wellness. One concern about intake evaluations is how the matching (or not) of races for interviewer/interviewee may have an impact on treatment. They are thinking about how shifting to 2-1-1 style assessment would better equalize. Another question drawn from the dialog series concerns diversity setting of any offered housing.

Alyce Knaflich said this avoids looking at veterans' equity issues as SPDAT does not gather data on veteran status. This seems to cause errors also. Kristen Martin said she will contact NCCEH's data team, as this seems to inconsistently handle veterans who do not qualify for VA services. They are trying to replace SPDAT as Coordinated Entry workers hate how it sorts who is included vs. who is not.

As Stephanie will need to be replaced for our Region to keep up with the BoS RE committee work, Kristen Martin asks each of us (except those already serving as leads) to consider taking up Racial Equity work. Stephanie at Thrive was already serving under a waiver (there should be no more than two leads from an agency). It involves one meeting/month and reporting to this Region. Please email Kristen if this suits you.

CYHAC, Children and Youth Homeless Action: Michael Absher said they do not meet in July, please enjoy the summer. They'll be back in September-October.

Coordinated Entry (CE) and Affordable Housing Need: We've talked about racial equity and emergency vouchers as CE concerns. It's notable that CE needs to connect with Housing Authorities, Section 8, Back@Home housing, and Veterans housing at least. Our regional (by-name) need is currently 346 households, comprised of 399 people. The state and federal funds are NOT enough to solve this, though the work flow may give that illusion.

We need Affordable Housing. To get any, we need to ID and reach to funding partners, elected officials, whoever. Kristen said to house 350 families will take about \$5 million per year, to get those affordable units. Trisha said the new PIT/CE work will need all housing organizations as partners. Alyce said we should put together talking points around this situation. Trisha has some on a PIT brochure. Kristen suggested several people work together on talking points to create an agenda.

This coalition has over 200 names on its send-out list, but people don't stay involved in many cases. Kristen sees a need to re-involve people, starting with anyone doing domestic violence and veterans work. She was pleased she got invited to a local-government group (for Henderson County).

Tracey Gruver brought up the AirBnB situation as a drag on more affordable units staying in stock. Surely there are good reasons to adjust the burden; if AirBnB hosts encounter fees or the like, getting less profit, these units may revert to long-term rentals. That would increase affordability. Alyce cautioned that the AirBnB host business is big in Buncombe, they would have clout. Jason Schulz saw a competition, the AirBnB model versus unit purchase and remodel (which could increase affordable units). One issue is the odd stigma of 'affordable' – it is not a threat to AirBnB.

Several people put up their names to work on an affordability effort.

Hendersonville Connection Center: Kristen has mentioned this for a few months. It was paused to wait for opportune application for funding. Among the service representatives who would be stationed there would be a Coordinated Entry worker.

Veterans: Angela Vaughn (ABCCM) is frustrated by vets not calling back – one vet disengaged when ABCCM had no assistance for car payments, so his vehicle got repossessed. She wants to refer to Transformation Village, but how? Brenda Ploss (NC Works) sympathized, has had similar experiences – though the situation is better, there are more on-the-job training slots, and higher pay! Getting them the phones is part of what’s needed. It was noted that DSS has phones issues, while in Buncombe there are Jetpad (?) hotspots available at libraries.

Alyce said Aura Homes for Women Vets does help with car payments, utilities, transportation to work or medical appointments. They work in nine counties, ours and also Haywood, Madison, McDowell, and Mitchell. The shift away from support for congregate living impacts them, as they can only directly house three women now in Buncombe. The merger of NC Serves and NC Cares is helping with car payments through the Hope program. Their rehab in Hendersonville is proceeding, the new roof is completed, now they will fund-raise for electrical work and walkways. (She hopes for good contractors.) They will have to reconfigure it to have private rather than shared bathrooms. They hope to finish it in a year to a year and a half, to house women with their service pets and children, so be able to directly house twelve women vets.

Adam Jahnke is also concerned with getting a better replacement for SPDAT. The VA has vouchers to offer, but not relations with landlords who’d accept them.

Other announcements:

Sarah Kowalak said the HOPE program is under-used. Please check its resources at www.rebuild.nc.gov .

Teena Willis said Partners will soon hire a housing case worker for Rutherford and Polk.

The next regional Coalition meeting will be July 1, at 9:30 AM, via Zoom.

- With respect, Chris Berg

Chat messages:

From Kristin Dunn to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Kristin Dunn, Thrive

From Kenett Melgar to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Kenett Melgar Blue Ridge Health

From Jessica Ownbey to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Jessica Ownbey, HCPS

From Teena Willis to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Teena Willis Partners Health Management

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Sarah Kowalak, United Way of Henderson County

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com NCWorks Veterans Career Advisor (Hend- Trans & Bunc-Madi)

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone: 09:52 AM

Can you send this graph as a link file to download

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:04 AM

Trisha Ecklund, tecklund@brchs.com Blue Ridge Health- street outreach mobile 828-388-4004 Team members - Makala Perez, Danita Simpson.

Can also contact 7th ave direct line 828-696-8263 option 4

From Kristen Martin (she/her); Thrive to Everyone: 10:04 AM

kmartin@thrive4health.org

From Kenett Melgar to Everyone: 10:13 AM

what is the name of the study?

From Kristin Dunn to Everyone: 10:13 AM

UNC Charlotte did about Moore Place. The agency rebranded to Roof Above

From Kenett Melgar to Everyone: 10:14 AM

thank you

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:14 AM

tecklund@brchs.com

From Me [Chris Berg] to Everyone: 10:14 AM

Chris cshapenote@hotmail.com for advocacy

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 10:15 AM

aurahome.alyce@gmail.com

From Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com to Everyone: 10:22 AM

Offered my house in Asheville to Habitat for Humanity. never called me back after 3+ calls. I sold it for @ 250K and now back on the market for 425K

From Rachelle Dugan (she/her) to Everyone: 10:33 AM

Rachelle Dugan - Thrive Housing Case Manager

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 10:34 AM

Alyce Knaflich 828-771-6979 aurahome.alyce@gmail.com Aura Home women Vets

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:35 AM

kristen martin can you hang around for just a min so I can ask a few questions if you have time

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 10:36 AM

www.rebuild.nc.gov