

**Heading Home Hennepin Executive Committee Meeting**

**April 7, 2021**

**Minutes**

Attendees: Susan Bass Roberts, , Andrea Brennan, Council President Lisa Bender, Steve Cramer, Co-Chair Mayor Jacob Frey, Maria Hanratty, Kyle Hanson, John Knowland, Commissioner Chris LaTondresse, Robert Lilligren, Dewayne Parker, Pastor Melissa Pohlman, Dr. Danielle Robertshaw, Council Member Jeremy Schroeder, Jodi Wentland, Scott Vargo, Shane Zahn

Non-members: Brooke Adams, Peter Ebnet, Sara Gangelhoff, Eric Grumdahl, Blair Harrison, Andrea Inouye, Binta Kanteh, Stephan LeSure, Nathalie Matthews, Martha Trevey

Hennepin County staff: Lindsay Anderson, Mikkel Beckman, Laura DeRosier, David Hewitt, Mark Legler, Barb Nesheim, Eric Richert, Don Ryan, Danielle Werder

Welcome - Co-Chair Mayor Frey

Motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting was made by Mayor Frey and seconded by Dr. Danielle Robertshaw. The minutes were approved.

COVID – 19 and the homeless/health response

* *Blair Harrison, Minnesota Department of Health*

Status: Cases and community transmission is increasing again. 43% don’t know how they got COVID. There have been several outbreaks in schools, record high number of cases for a day for 2021 positive increasing every week among the 10-19 years old age range. There has been an increase in cases across counties. The B-117 variant is driving 60-75% of current cases in Minnesota, more contagious. 20% of citizens are fully vaccinated in Minnesota

We are seeing an increase in hospitalizations and ICU visits. There currently is an upward trajectory as we were seeing back in October. The average age has gone down to 57 because of younger people impacted.

Illness among people experiencing homelessness and staff working in shelters experienced a big peek in November and December of 2020 and had come back down. We are starting to see a small increase in cases in group residential settings.

Minnesota is one of the only states with an interagency team dedicated to the COVID-19 response for people who are experiencing homelessness. Hennepin County has shown a similar pattern with lower numbers of cases after winter surge. Due to incredible partnerships, we have not seen hospitalizations that exponentially impact people experiencing homelessness more than the general population. Minnesota was also a leader in a statewide vaccination effort for people experiencing homelessness. Vaccine events have been held at congregate homeless settings and targeted towards unsheltered populations.

* *Martha Trevey, Hennepin County Health Care for the Homeless*

Hennepin County Health Care for the Homeless operates as a federally qualified healthcare center with clinics within the shelter system, street outreach and drop-in centers. An isolation hotel was created for possible or confirmed COVID cases. A triage line was set up for individuals, staff, or health care partners. Vaccination efforts started in February with an emphasis on diversity and developing relationships. A 3rd round of vaccine events began this week. The vaccine events will be transitioning to using the Janssen 1-dose vaccine. We are tracking data that measures outcomes and informs interventions through a racial equity lens.

In the future will be moving from big vaccine events to having 1-dose vaccines embedded in clinics, and sponsor additional pop up vaccine events as needed going forward. A partnership between DHS and Metro Transit has converted buses to mobile vaccine units. Beginning April 28-29 it will go to communities that have access barriers. That will include visits to unsheltered residents.

* *Danielle Werder, Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness*

Provided an update on the Hotels to Housing project. A multidisciplinary team was developed to provide housing case management assistance to guests in isolation hotels. 191 individuals have been housed so far. An increase to the total number of case managers has led to more people being housed. They assist residents with daily wrap around services and resources. There has been a big focus on obtaining important documents including birth certificates, Social Security cards and state ids. We partnered with our Long-Term Support Services (LTSS) staff to do CADI waiver assessments resulting in 81 people referred for CADI waivers.

Funding has provided residents with move in supplies and furniture and connected people to their case management services. Partnerships with public housing authorities have been invaluable. We have recently crafted policies to incentivize and engage hotel residents to finding housing.

Responding to the economic impacts of COVID – 19

* *Mikkel Beckmen, Hennepin County Housing Stability*

The Tenant Resource Center (TRC) was launched in January 2020 and in 2021 an accompanying renter’s help online resource tool (rent.211unitedway.org) was launched. This past year the TRC assisted residents to submit applications for federal rental assistance funding. Efforts have expanded to work upstream to prevent homelessness which was based on recent research on evictions. This has included diversion strategies, and work in housing court to provide services pre-trial.

Hennepin County received 25 million in rental assistance in January, the City of Minneapolis received 12 million. The funding can be used to pay rent in arrears back to March 13, 2020; it can pay future rent in 3 month increments with the ability to recertify for additional rent assistance. Hennepin took applications through a ‘sprint’ and the average household owed $4,200. As of today, we have processed $3 million of assistance. A landlord-initiated program is being set up also. Another round of funding is coming through recent federal legislation

State of homelessness in 2021

* *Mark Legler, Hennepin County Office to End Homelessness*

Provided a review of recent sheltered and unsheltered populations. There has been a decrease in families, increase in single adult and small decrease in youth shelter stays. Users length of stay went up significantly for singles and youth shelter.

Full details in presentation.

Lessons from COVID and Paths Forward

* *David Hewitt, Hennepin County Housing Stability / Office to End Homelessness*

Several measures identified to minimize the number people entering homelessness and maximize the number of people exiting homelessness. Presentation attached.

Continuum of Care notifications - David

We expect a full Continuum of Care funding notice from HUD this year (last year was skipped).

Final positive note. A 10+ guest of the Harbor Light Center shelter moved to permanent housing last week. 2,165 people exited homelessness to permanent housing in 2020.

Adjourn