

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
January 7, 2020, 9:30 AM Thrive hosting

Persons attending: Kristen Martin and Emily Lowery (Regional co-leads); Emily Lowery (The Haven of Transylvania County), Kristen Martin, Stephanie Gilliam, Carrington Cosby, Josh Shelton and Nickie Kilgore (Thrive), Alyce Knaflich (Aura Homes Women Vets), Vicki Huntley (WCCA Family Advocate Coordinator), Kenett Melgar and Felita Williams (Blue Ridge Health), Monica Mathes (Community Navigator, GT Independence), McCray Benson (Community Foundation of Henderson County), Trina Rushing (Henderson County Library), Ralph Reiss (Veteran Service of the Carolinas), Trisha Ecklund (Blue Ridge Health), Sherry Stokes (Salvation Army), Michael Absher (Only Hope WNC), Brenda Ploss (NC Works), Teena Willis (Partners), Adam Jahnke (VA-LCSWA Outreach-HCHV program), Jessica Owenby, Sonya Hall and Matthew Gruebmeier (Henderson County Schools), Jessica Rice (ABCCM Vet Services of the Carolinas SSVF), Sarah Kowalak (United Way Henderson County), Beth Branagan and Shelly Miller (Transylvania Schools), Chris Berg, Suzanne Porter (Rutherford United Way), Amanda Gregg (Henderson County DSS). See also the appended Chat.

Kristen facilitated. Ground rules were reviewed.

Minutes of December 3 meeting: Kristen asked for any corrections or comments on those minutes of the Coalition, as distributed. None were offered, so the distributed version was adopted by common consent.

BoS Steering Committee: January 5 meeting: [PIT Count and Open-office sessions items treated below]

Funding and Performance (F&P) subcommittee goals:

1. BoS will increase emergency-shelter bed coverage in HMIS 75% by 12/31/2021 (currently in this region only The Haven in Transylvania does so).
2. BoS will increase transitional housing (TH) bed coverage in HMIS 45% by 12/31/2021 (our region now has no reporting TH beds). The regional alternate (Emily) is tasked with engagement/recruitment of nonparticipant agencies to use HMIS. The regional alternate will name a plan subcommittee to implement this, with some members to identify agencies to target; they will name specific people to recruit target agencies, will train these recruiters, evaluate progress, and report monthly. To this end Emily and Kristen have set up some preliminary meetings with shelters. Emily's team will report to us monthly.

F&P members will oversee this work, resource it and visit as needed. An orienting webinar will be Feb. 9th, covering goals, responsibilities, and setting next steps, offering scripts and a recruiter guide. Our regional recruiting subcommittee will be created Feb. 23rd: Volunteers welcome! Emily will fill in as needed. They will set a plan by March 9, be actively engaging by March 15; the first report is due April 15. So it's an aggressive scheme, not for more shelter beds, but for more reporting on beds (increasing accuracy) – and also to generate more provider involvement in regional work.

Kristen reminded us re: the **CoronaVirus round 2** funding, of a zoom call Tuesday Jan. 12, 10 AM. She had sent out an alert of this, but if it's wanted again note that in Chat or email her. Suzanne Porter (Rutherford) will lead that meeting. Round 2 applicants will outline their proposals, and answer questions. Then Suzanne will open a prioritization discussion, affirming those projects

that will be submitted to BoS, and sending forward a meeting summary to report results. (This closely follows our round 1 process.)

COVID Vaccine for homeless persons: All four counties are at 'capacity' for their first phase supply, that is, all doses have been administered or committed. The four county health departments will post advice on further supplying and availability. This will be done so that county medical partners will be able to set appointments and vaccinate promptly, to prevent hitches, unnecessary waits in line, etc. Do not call in to departments – they are swamped by calls as is. Counties are aware of homeless as a particularly vulnerable population and will factor that into distributions, including via shelters.

Trisha Ecklund said Tammy Greenwell at BRCHS is actively advocating weekly at Henderson health dept. Medical units will keep contact to shelter staffs and about shelter populations to follow through. Kristen underlined that all people need to understand the importance of second doses, so they can be recontacted to complete the process. If needed, help set a routine for recontact via a time & place, a phone alert, or something. **Kenett Melgar** established yesterday that international travelers who may get a COVID dose in another country, but of a vaccine not yet FDA approved here, will have to start over (per DHHS). In this country a data management system will track Pfizer vs. Moderna, which will also require second doses of like type; but this does not catch international travel.

Back @ Home: Outreach: [17:27] **Trisha** has been consumed with a COVID outbreak affecting the Hendersonville shelter for 3 weeks, up to a no-positives screening on Monday. Collaboration was improved by this challenge. Trisha cautioned that they did find unsheltered people who tested positive, some of whom could be placed into proper isolation. Care in interacting with unsheltered people is fully needed. Main Street store managers have called Trisha about unsheltered people they are aware of, which helps, it gets people screened into HMIS and ready for coordinated entry opportunities for housing. Blue Ridge has gotten supplies, including a stock of TracFone handsets with minutes to enable unsheltered to make calls and be reached. The latter will help with PIT count. She will give these out regardless of any patient relationship to Blue Ridge Health. She plans to open some Polk County work from the BR clinic there, expanding to the Polk health department and other contact points. She's catching up the HMIS recordation, but do call her if any unsheltered or encampments appear, they will check out all these, medical questions aside. Phones are available for all four counties.

Alyce told Trisha that she has many winter supplies, backpacks, sleep bag covers, socks, gloves. Trisha welcomed this and put her cell # in chat to follow through.

Thrive Re-Housing: **Kristen** gave a Back @ Home update. They continue to contact a rolling list of needy households, adding and dropping as housing is located, households report finding housing outside of programs, etc., based on the surge identified in prep for startup of this program. Move-ins are low compared to what was expected, but a lot of that is due to the eviction moratorium. That prevents problems, but also means low turnover, so few units are ready to occupy. Please let Thrive know if you learn of any available rentals, they are needed and the program will fund them.

Carrington said one household was put in a stable unit this month, so there are four now assisted in the program. New options were explored: SRO (single room occupancy) and shared housing; two such arrangements were looked at, but as subleased they did not qualify for this program. Note that Josh Shelton has joined Thrive to work on B@H.

Racial equity subcommittee: **Stephanie** said the BoS committee completed training with C4 on Dec. 8th. Goals for 2021 were set: 1. Find funding for racial equity initiatives; 2. Attain a more equitable prioritization system (VI-SPDAT, coordinated entry); 3. Embed equity into the framework of all committees. The subcommittee next meets on Jan. 20.

Sarah Kowalak said that the Henderson County Racial Equity Collective will have a second training Jan. 22-23 with the Racial Equity Institute. It's full-day online training; there is funding for people of color to participate. There are about eight slots open, free of charge. Contact Sarah in Chat, or she will put her email there. For January's training it probably needs to be done today, however, the group plans quarterly sessions.

Children and Youth Homeless Action Committee (CYHAC): **Beth** said the next meeting is Friday Jan. 15th, at 9 AM on Zoom. A December make-up meeting featured Casey Steen, attorney for Pisgah Legal, who talked about the eviction moratorium and related resources. CYHAC usually met in odd-numbered months on third Fridays; that's expected to continue. The PIT count was brought up. Beth asked if Kristen or others could flesh out PIT this month, about what was new and unclear in December, especially if volunteers are needed.

Point-in-time (PIT) Count: **Trisha** offered to join CYHAC on the 15th to talk about PIT. Our region will rely on outreach workers till about the end of January to collect info. At that point verifications would start, and remote volunteer workers would help – avoiding COVID. Beth was asked to send invitation links to Trisha and to Kenett Melgar. Kristen offered to send CYHAC invites to the whole list, spreading the word generally. Volunteering will be quite different from last year, and fewer workers are needed. Jessica Rice at ABCCM in Chat said they will have outreach workers also.

Process is beginning by distribution of contact forms to outreach workers (Kristen will send these around). The verification follow-up begins after Jan. 27th, setting up where we go when verifying homeless status on count night. So, the preparation is to get best contact info for unsheltered people going into count night; this info is also to get connected to Coordinated Entry (CE). This can help access needed resources down the road, and helps with by-name list accuracy now and later. That will help agencies to step up to find the needy and meet the needs with less plowing through outdated information, and it helps get funding.

Some forms are designed for agencies not participating in HMIS. Nominally these forms are to go to Kristen, but Trisha will also receive them to better share load. It's a short form, basic demographics; if no phone, it's also a chance to connect them to the Blue Ridge phone supply. If you have an encampment in mind to check out, please refer to Trisha. She will closely screen any outreach workers. Alyce asked what dates outreach is planned. Trisha said Blue Ridge usually goes out Fridays, but it's also worth checking with **Sherrie Stokes**, or email Trisha about a specific situation. Sherrie said she often goes out Fridays and Sundays.

Kristen reviewed that the previous PIT count method, morning-after surveying, does **not** occur this year. The 2021 focus has been extensive use of the by-name list, which has been central to the Back @ Home activities and now is therefore better verified. The restricted volunteer effort has to do with personal privacy concerns as well as COVID risks, as homeless people risk exploitations as well as infections. So, any approved field volunteer is expected to wear full PPE to cut all transmission risk. The verification volunteers will all be linked to the Coordinated Entry subcommittee, as contacts to homeless people should be consistent: familiar faces or voices, as much as possible, to avoid confusion in work with a jumble of unfamiliar people and agencies.

Brenda Ploss asked if our agencies should start to use the forms to collect information toward PIT. Trisha agreed, provided the subjects consent. Kristen asked that this information come to Thrive,

with hopes of then scheduling full Coordinated Entry appointments. The follow-up email with these forms will confirm what's expected.

Coordinated Entry: As above; there has been good progress toward update of the by-name list. Now there are 391 listed. Kristen outlined how the list ebbs and flows as people come, go or change housing status. Thrive intakes 2-4 households per week into supported housing. Kristen will get info to Suzanne in Rutherford for FEMA shelter situations.

Veterans: Ralph Reiss of ABCCM is new to vets work and the area. He lives in Polk, works there and in Rutherford, Henderson, Transylvania and McDowell.

Alyce said Aura Homes continues to renovate the Hendersonville building. They hope to start housing people in the next year and look forward to that. Their apartment has space for women vets, they're welcome and it is prepped for COVID safety. She had hoped to hear about Transformation Village (Jessica Rice with ABCCM had to sign off). She'd like to coordinate as she has two available rooms – apparently Steadfast House is still open?

Brenda Ploss continues to serve 11 western counties, and works with Ralph with two in Henderson, but is looking for more vets in our area. She's pleased with the hiring that has been offered to vets during COVID, See also her Chat.

Adam Jahnke is with Asheville VA social work, covering this region. Like Ralph he signed on during COVID, so it's peculiar. He looks forward to doing real outreach and meeting partners, but for now he's useful to be a point of contact for VA services (his info is in Chat).

COVID – agency changes: Trisha said **BRCHS** is eager to test anyone. The rate of asymptomatic positives in the shelter outbreak was very concerning, so they'd like to do lots more checking. Any homeless person can, should, be referred to Trisha, her number is in Chat.

2-1-1: Sarah said last meeting we heard the wait time to service was about 2 hours. Improvements have gotten that down to 15 minutes. Some of that is menu improvements, some is route to call-back options. Call-backs are prompt. Sarah has cards on 2-1-1 to hand out. If anyone would like some, let her know (email is in Chat), she will bring them to you.

The next regional meeting is set for February 4, 9:30 AM, by Zoom. - Chris Berg

The Chat follows.

From Carrington Cosby, Thrive to Everyone: 09:31 AM
Carrington Cosby, Thrive

From Stephanie Gilliam to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Stephanie Gilliam, Thrive

From Kenett Melgar-BRH to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Kenett Melgar Blue Ridge Health

From nickie kilgore to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Nickie Kilgore Thrive

From Josh Shelton, Thrive to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Josh Shelton, Thrive

From sghall to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Sonya Hall, HCPS

From bbranaga to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Beth Branagan, Transylvania County Schools

From CFHC to Everyone: 09:31 AM

McCray Benson, Community Foundation of Henderson County

From Amanda Gregg to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Amanda Gregg, Henderson County DSS

From Ralph Riess to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Ralph Riess, Veteran Services of the Carolinas

From Adam Jahnke - adam.jahnke@va.gov to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Adam Jahnke, Veterans Affairs Homeless Program

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Happy New Year. Brenda.Ploss@NCCommerce.com 919.710.3748 NCWorks Veterans Career Advisor (Hend/Trans)

From Felita Williams to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Felita Williams with Blue Ridge Health

From Michael Absher to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Michael Absher, Only Hope Wnc

From Monica Mathes to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Monica Mathes, Community Navigator, GT Independence

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Trisha Ecklund Blue Ridge Health

From Alyce Knaflich to Everyone: 09:31 AM

Alyce Knaflich Aura Home Women Vets aurahome.alyce@gmail.com 912-484-6316

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:32 AM

sarah kowalak, United way of Henderson county

From Trina Rushing to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Trina Rushing - Henderson County Library

From Shelly M to Everyone: 09:32 AM

Shelly Miller- Trans. County Schools

From Emily Lowery to Everyone: 09:41 AM

Emily Lowery, The Haven of Transylvania County, emily@havenoftc.org

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 09:54 AM

Trisha Ecklund 828.273.7140

From Suzanne to Everyone: 09:54 AM

My audio is awful today. Trisha- can you please share that information via email? Just a few bullet points? Thank you so much.

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:59 AM

skowalak@liveunitedhc.org

From Jessica Rice to Everyone: 10:02 AM

We have boots on the ground to help with PIT as well.

Double booked ad have to run. Ralph Reiss is with ABCCM VSC and is on the call. Trisha I will follow up with you on PIT. Thanks!

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:12 AM

Will we be able to use these forms through our office/ organization - when staff have contact with a homeless individual/ family. So, we start the canvassing for this now to gather contact info, correct.

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:12 AM

yes as long as they consent

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:13 AM

Thank you for the updates

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 10:15 AM

Suzanne yes I will send my updates for our back at home progress to Kristen to send out to the group'From

Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:19 AM

No Updates from NCWorks. Offices open. Continue to work with Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) Veterans.

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:22 AM

No Updates from NCWorks. Offices open. Continue to work with Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) Veterans.

Adam tel #?

From Adam Jahnke - adam.jahnke@va.gov to Everyone: 10:22 AM

LCSWA Adam Jahnke 828-578-8544

From sghall to Everyone: 10:25 AM

Sarah, May I have some cards? Sonya Hall

From Brenda.Ploss to Everyone: 10:25 AM

Hang in there everyone. Stay safe and Be well!!