



Commission on People with Disabilities

April 12th, 2017

Welcome and Approval of March 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting. A motion was made to approve the March, 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the March, 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd.

Update on Chronic Homelessness and People with Disabilities – Amanda Harris, Chief, Special Needs Housing; Nili Soni, Continuum of Care, Commission on Homelessness, Montgomery County Department of Health; and Human Services; and Chapman Todd, Campaign Manager, Zero2016

Handout: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/ICHHandout.pdf

Inside (Not Outside) is a new initiative dedicated to ending chronic homelessness for individuals and families in Montgomery County by the end of 2017. This effort is being led by the County's Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH).

Last year, the point-in-time count of individuals experiencing homelessness was 981. Of that number, 109 families and 623 adults were identified. 162 were experiencing chronic homelessness, which is determined as the individual having a disability and having been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months. The 2017 point-in-time count will be made public in a few weeks. Amanda noted that the total number has gone down.

The Special Needs Housing division of Health and Human Services offers many services to prevent homelessness.

- **Temporary Financial Assistance** - May be able to assist with first month's rent or security deposit if a prior housing emergency (i.e. homelessness, eviction, put out) existed.
- **Utility Assistance Program** - Help low-income residents pay their heating costs and electric bills. Assistance may be one-time or on-going support.
- **Rental Assistance Program** - Assists low income families pay their rent. Eligible households can receive between \$50 and \$200 per month.
- **Shelter Services** - Outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing. There is a men's shelter, a women's shelter, and four family shelters. Services are provided primarily through partnerships and contracts with community non-profit organizations. DHHS Housing Stabilization staff provide emergency assessment services to homeless families with children. Emergency shelter capacity for individuals expands during the winter months. Case management services are provided to all homeless clients to link clients to needed services, including housing referrals, treatment, employment and entitlements.

Staff do a tremendous amount of street outreach, which is particularly important for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Not everyone feels comfortable in a shelter or reaching out for help. Many have a lot of fear and distrust. Case workers may work with individuals for a year or two to create a relationship until that individual is ready to go to a shelter. Some transitional housing is available, which offers more services than at a typical shelter, although it is not a permanent solution. Permanent supportive housing is available for people who are the most vulnerable and have the most complex needs through long-term housing subsidies and support services, which are received in the community and in people's homes. Rapid Rehousing is a short-term housing subsidy for 3-, 6-, or 12-months paired with intensive case management services. Permanent housing is a subsidy with limited supports.

The County uses the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), a common assessment tool that is used around the country, to determine the chronicity and medical vulnerability of homeless persons. The VI-SPDAT identifies an individual's level of vulnerability based on a variety of factors including length of time of homelessness, disability, and police involvement and determines the right type of housing intervention. Individuals with a high vulnerability would receive permanent supportive housing, mid-vulnerability would receive rapid rehousing, and low vulnerability would be little to no intervention. The ICH meets every few weeks and if there is an opening in a housing program, they use the list created from the VI-SPDAT to identify the person who is the most vulnerable and most appropriate for that housing placement. Amanda noted that approximately 25% of the total homeless population has a disability. In order to be considered chronically homeless, the individual must have a disability. Using this tool, Amanda will extrapolate data regarding types of disability and share that data with Betsy.

The County works with Bethesda Cares and Every-Mind (formerly the Mental Health Association) to provide street outreach. If you have a referral to make or find an individual on the street in need of services, you can reach out to either of those organizations and they will conduct an assessment and intervention. It was asked how case workers assist homeless individuals who have mental health issues and actively avoid intervention. ICH is making a targeted effort to reach out to those individuals and staff partner with Cornerstone Montgomery and the Crisis Center.

Transitional housing uses the perspective of providing a safe environment for the individual to learn and develop the skills necessary to be successful in housing. They are given a set amount of time and must reach certain milestones and follow rules until they can prove they are ready to move into permanent housing. Research has shown that transitional housing models are not as successful as housing first models. Amanda noted that research shows that 9 out of 10 people in a housing first model were able to successfully maintain their housing for 12 months with the right kind of supports. This includes individuals with untreated mental health issues or addiction and substance abuse issues that might be the hardest to service. The County is evaluating their transitional housing model to see how it can be shifted to meet the needs of the population.

Zero2016 is a national campaign to end Veteran and chronic homelessness. Montgomery County was one of the first four counties in the country to end Veterans homelessness in 2015. ICH worked with the Commission on Veterans Affairs to achieve that goal, which was the first phase of the Zero2016 Campaign. Now they are working on ending chronic homelessness and have those individuals in a permanent housing setting by the end of 2017. It will be important for the ICH to work with the Commission to gain feedback, input and engagement. There are currently 240 chronically homeless individuals in need of housing. 47 permanent supportive housing units have been identified. They are partnering with HOC, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA), and Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP) to locate additional permanent supportive housing units. Housing Unlimited can provide 5 to 6 units and the DHCA budget may be able to provide for an additional 80 units. That leaves a gap of approximately 45 units. Rapid rehousing may be an option of individuals do not require an intensive level of services.

It was asked how they serve individuals with substance abuse issues who do not go to shelters because of their addictions. Amanda noted that chronic alcoholism and substance abuse is a disability recognized by HUD. No one will be denied housing. If the individual is in recovery and would prefer placement in recovery-based housing, then they will work to get that placement. If the individual is not ready to address their addiction, the placement will be in housing with a higher level of support services.

Trish Gallalee, Commissioner, asked about homeless individuals with disabilities that require immediate medical attention and possible long-term personal care. Amanda responded that it is a big issue and a barrier. Slots are limited at assisted living and nursing home facilities. If no slots are available and as the street is never a good option, the individual may be temporarily put into a permanent support housing program with services while staff work on finding additional support services. Part of the Inside (Not Outside) campaign is to review how the County is best using available resources, identifying the population, and building the services around those needs.

Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), noted that there are some specific funds and grants available within Maryland through Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) that work to get people out of nursing facilities. HOC will have 10 housing subsidies through the Bridge Program and the priority is for individuals in nursing facilities. Susan added that some landlords do not want to keep housing voucher tenants after the first year. HOC is working towards educating individuals on how to be a good tenant and working with landlords to

educate them about their tenants. Some chronically homeless individuals may have never owned an apartment and have a hard time assimilating into their new lifestyle. Some individuals give up their housing voucher because they find it too hard to acclimate to their surroundings. Chapman noted that they are trying to use existing resources and connect with other providers. They work with A Wider Circle and faith-based groups that can provide furnishings so individuals do not end up sleeping on the floor or do not engage.

Larry Bram, Commissioner, reported the Easter Seals has been partnering with homeless shelters to provide medical adult day services to the medically fragile population.

If an individual is identified as having an intellectual or development disability, then staff work with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) to receive services. Unfortunately, many individuals do not have documentation of their disability and it is a challenge to prove eligibility.

Street outreach and shelter staff work with individuals to get documentation and IDs prior to house placement. Nili noted that it would be very helpful to find an arrangement with an agency that would assist in paying for ID cards for homeless individuals. Bethesda Cares currently provides some funding, but it is still a challenge and can be a barrier for some individuals. Nili reported that when they were working towards ending Veterans homelessness, they were able to develop a policy with the Veterans Administration (VA) for staff to contact the VA about a Veterans discharge status. A response was generally received within 24 hours whereas in the past it would have taken six weeks to two months.

Chair Report

Seth Morgan, Chair, welcomed the newly appointed Commissioners: Neal Carter, Asha Clark, Eric Jorgensen, and Teri Roe.

Seth testified before the County Council on the proposed FY18 operating budget.

Seth thanked Commissioners Lue Merrick, Marcie Povitsky, Trish Gallalee, Hilary Kaplan and Betsy Luecking, Staff, who assisted in hosting a Commission table at the Respite Resource Fair held in March.

The [Design for Life Showcase](#) is scheduled for Saturday, May 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

Carol Beatty, Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities, will present before the Commission next month.

The Steering Committee meeting for next week is cancelled.

Seth presented outgoing Commission members Tim Markwood, Lu Merrick, and Marcie Povitsky with Certificates of Appreciation from County Executive Isiah Leggett for their dedicated service to the residents of Montgomery County, Maryland as a member of the Commission on People with Disabilities.

Ex-Officio and Member Updates

Nancy Greene, ADA Title II Compliance, Department of General Services, reported that the assistive listening device and public announcement system equipment in the EOB Auditorium has been updated.

Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation (DOT), reported that DOT continues to provide outreach about the County's Medicaid and Call-n-Ride transportation program to older adults and people with disabilities. Ride On has also announced [Ride On extRa](#), a new bus option expected to make its debut early October. The bus will run during weekday rush hours in a 12-stop route along Maryland Route 355, between Medical Center Metrorail Station in Bethesda and Lakeforest Transit Center in Gaithersburg.

Susan Smith, Liaison to Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC), reported that last week MHAC had a presentation on the County's recently implemented mental health courts. The District Court has 31 active clients with 14 pending referrals and the Circuit Court has 10 active clients with 2 pending referrals. MHAC and the Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council will be hosting their Annual Spring Forum on Thursday, May 11th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at

Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg. Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy will be the keynote speaker and he will be discussing the mental health courts.

Rita Gale, Montgomery County Public Libraries, reported that Davis Library reopened this past Saturday. She also noted that all assistive technology workstations have been installed at all libraries that are currently not undergoing renovations. Branches were asked to make these workstations available by Friday of this week. The Library Accessibility Advisory Committee will be touring Long Branch this weekend and Marilyn Praisner in May to provide accessibility design feedback prior to the start of their refresh projects. She added that new Wheaton Library will be using airport-style restrooms instead of installing doors.

Simone Geness, Montgomery County Public Schools, reported that a Special Education Summit will be held on April 22nd at Walter Johnson High School. The summit will feature keynote speaker Scott Anderson from Scott on Wheels, resources and workshops for families of students with disabilities. Families will also have an opportunity to meet representatives from MCPS offices and Montgomery County agencies and non-profit organizations. She added that the annual Transitioning Youth Provider Fair will be held on May 4th at Gaithersburg High School. Simone also reported that MCPS is working with MontgomeryWorks on a new three-week summer program called Summer Rise that would provide internships for 2,400 youth and a stipend of \$100 per week. The program will include students with disabilities.

Susan Hartung, Developmental Disability Advisory Committee, reported that the Committee meeting last month was cancelled due to inclement weather. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 17th at the Rockville Memorial Library, 21 Maryland Avenue, 2nd Floor Meeting Room.

Kathy Mann Koepke, Liaison to the Commission on Health (COH), reported that the last COH meeting had a presentation on the importance of physical education (PE) in schools and the lack of PE required. They discussed increasing PE within the school system as well as developing after school PE programs. Part of the new programming will include teaching kids about different kinds of movement and why it is important for their health. Simone noted that Special Education Resource Teachers and Special Education Supervisors will work with the family if a student wants to participate in after school programs. Asha Clark added that Arc of Montgomery County has an after school program for pre-teens and adolescents that include recreational and social opportunities. There is currently a waiting list for this program.

Announcements

Larry Bram, Commissioner, announced that The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, in partnership with Transition Work Group of Montgomery County, is hosting a resource fair for young adults with disabilities and their families on April 30th from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Held at 6101 Executive Boulevard, North Bethesda.

Neal Carter, Commissioner, reported that the Montgomery County Council will holding a public hearing on April 18th about the County's proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line for the U.S. 29 corridor.

Tom Liniak, Commissioner, announced that JSSA will be hosting their annual Transition to Employment Open House on May 9th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at 200 Wood Hill Road, Rockville.

Asha Clark, Commissioner, announced that the Arc of Montgomery County will be hosting a Tools for Schools workshop on May 3rd at 7:30 p.m. The workshop will consist of a page by page walkthrough of the IEP.

Eric Jorgensen, Commissioner, announced that he will be hosting a financial planning boot camp at Kensington Library on April 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, May 10th, 2017 –Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Level Auditorium, Rockville, MD 20850 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, May 17th, 2017 – ****PLEASE NOTE LOCATION**** Health & Human Service, 401 Hungerford Drive, Conference Rooms 1A/1B, Rockville, MD 20850

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I / Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager