

Shelter Providers Meeting Minutes

6/1/21 9:00am – 10:30am

Attending: Preston Patterson, Joel Girard, Kim Sutter, Torrie Kopp Mueller, John Adams, Casey Becker, Tara Barica, Sarah Lim, Kim Neuschel, Bridget Rogers, Lisa Hamuer, Jani Koester, Jael Currie, Liz Duffie, Peter Twiss, Kim Tesch, Jalateefa Joe Meyers, Sara Hayes, Mikael, Julia Martin, Lucia Ldesma

- Introductions
- Review of April's Meeting (summary of minutes)
- Discussion: question/answer with Kim from Public Health

There' is confusion about mask requirement. What's lifted today is the emergency order including store capacity, etc. As the disease rate significantly goes down and vaccination rates go up, it was decided to lift the emergency order. Average 15 cases a day.

Public health recommendation is to follow the CDC guidance, but it's no longer a requirement. It will continue to be individual agencies and businesses decision to require masks as we don't know who is vaccinated and who is not. It's no longer a public health mandate. Emergency order wasn't included the capacity limits for the shelters. So the only thing that's really impacting the shelter by lifting of the order is the mask mandate.

What we need to get a handle on is the rate of vaccination among people experiencing homelessness/shelter guests. TSA women's shelter and Beacon estimated about 75% vaccination rate among their guests from self-report, but the rate varies widely. Some sites are at 30%. Beacon is polling (walking around and asking guests) about vaccination weekly. It's not easy to estimate and we would want to know how many people are fully vaccinated to plan for mobile clinic, etc. Public health request last week if they could get an access to HMIS data to see how many people are vaccinated facility based and in general. Questions about permission need to be resolved.

Porchlight men's shelter and the Beacon will continue to require masks. Continue with health screening. A couple guests at the Beacon asked why masks were still required but were fine with the explanation. YWCA is still requiring masks but running into some challenges because the shelter is in the same building as residential units.

Shelter set up is all different, hotel rooms, shared rooms, open space. Turnover of clients is also different.

Beacon is keeping the 125 people capacity for now, but opened a door to female guests. We will see how things will change we will open back fully.

Q: Any other mitigating strategies separate from social distancing and handwashing/sanitizing we could use? A: COVID screening process. Medical Respite Center will continue for a while for isolation and quarantine.

Q: What do we need to be aware of about asking about vaccination status? Health information is protected. A: Some employment requires the information. But whether shelters can require people to share the vaccination status, Kim is not sure. ESG funded programs can't require vaccination for shelter admissions, but asking the status is probably okay as long as shelters are denying the access based on the vaccination status. Kim can ask public health and Torrie can ask at HUD office hour.

If people are not sure about the vaccination status (2nd dose, etc), you can call the public health on-call number as long as the shelter guest is there to speak. It's ideal to follow the schedule , but people can still get the second dose any time even if they missed the 2nd dose appointment.

If you have thoughts about setting up mobile clinics, contact Kim.

Public health will be transition out of managing the Medical Respite Center in June, but it will continue to operate at least through August, and Kim will still be serving part time as a liaison to homeless and housing services. Dane County and public health are working with Bright Star and Focus Counseling, two entities that have been working at Medical Respite Center, for public health transition plan.

- “What now?” discussion about permanent men’s shelter – Alder Jael Curry

Purchasing of the Thiere Road location was not approved by the City Common Council. The Council may reconsider after 60 days.

- Hotels to Housing program, and what the County board passed – Casey Becker

There were some changes made that would potentially impact many programs. The resolution was originally introduced as the vulnerable population hotel programs would be ending to create additional housing solutions. It will be a phased program. In the short term, the goal to help as many people who are currently sheltering in the hotel to housing. The rent amount will match the emergency rental assistance program (120% Fair Market Rent). Focus staff is working with people on discharge planning- housing, vaccine, shelter, storage, etc. Resolution 11 amendment also opened up the housing resources to unsheltered and staying in congregate shelters. Some work needs to be done, as the eligibility became larger. It will be a ... there will

be case management funding available and RFP will be released later in the summer for 2022 and beyond, maybe some even in 2021.

It's been referred to as Rapid rehousing program, as up to 2 years of rent, up to triple security deposit, assistance paying utilities, rental or utility arrears, move in costs, and services are available.

What are some long-term strategies for people who receive the assistance? It's in an early conversation stage, but the new emergency housing vouchers maybe used as a long-term solution for this population; other housing vouchers or public housing; Focus counseling is putting together chronic homeless documentation in case RRH is not enough to leave an opportunity for them to be able to transfer to PSH.

How do we prevent return to homelessness for people who get housing through this program? Many communities participating in Built for Zero is using RRH as the first housing intervention. Our community return to homeless rate within 1 year of RRH exit is 7% for singles and 5% for families with children. It would be part of the work of case management providers to prevent return to homelessness.

- Review of the *old* Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Lisa Hemauer

The Committee reviewed and updated the community plan summary for the shelter providers section.