

California Behavioral Health Planning Council
Housing and Homelessness Committee
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 15, 2023

8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Doubletree Hilton Hotel Santa Ana - Orange County Airport
201 East MacArthur Blvd Santa

Committee Members Present:

Monica Caffey, Chairperson

Deborah Starkey

Stephanie Blake

Arden Tucker

Barbara Mitchell

Vera Calloway

Staff Present:

Jenny Bayardo, Naomi Ramirez, Gabriella Sedano

Item #1: Welcome and Introductions

Monica Caffey welcomed all committee members and guests. A quorum was reached.

Item #2: Approve April 2023 and May 2023 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the April and May 2023 Housing and Homelessness Committee minutes was made by Barbara Mitchell and seconded by Deborah Starkey. The motion passed with no abstentions.

Public Comment

None.

Item #3: CBHPC Workgroup Updates

Monica Caffey opened a discussion on how the HHC can coordinate and align the Committee activities with the CBHPC's three workgroups (Reducing Disparities, Children and Youth, and Substance Use Disorder).

Jenny Bayardo identified Monica Caffey, Vera Calloway, and Arden Tucker as attendees of the Reducing Disparities Workgroup, and Barbara Mitchell as an attendee of the Substance Use Disorder Workgroup. The Children and Youth Workgroup still

needs representation from the HHC. Jenny Bayardo stated that she could provide an update for the Children and Youth Workgroup.

Vera Calloway brought attention to the importance of the older adult population. Monica Caffey questioned why the Council does not have a workgroup to focus on older adults. Jenny responded that staff and scheduling create a challenge with creating new workgroups, but the Council is aware of the issue, and it can be considered.

Barbara Mitchell agreed that it would be beneficial to integrate older adults into the Committee's Work Plan.

Monica Caffey stated that the HHC will continue to integrate the workgroups and will be mindful to also include the older adult population in HHC activities.

Item #4: CA Interagency Council on Homelessness Presentation

Cody Zeger, Director of Statewide Policy for the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH), provided a brief background of Cal ICH. Cal ICH, formerly the Homelessness Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), was formed in 2017 in statute by SB 1380 to oversee the implementation/compliance of Housing First policies. When first created, the Council was a mix of state staff and community members. In 2021, AB 1220 changed the Cal ICH Council structure to include almost exclusively directors or secretaries from State departments and agencies working on homelessness, as well as two community member positions appointed by the Senate and Assembly. An advisory committee, comprised of 31 experts across the state, was also formed to provide guidance to state leaders.

The Cal ICH team compiles the housing and homelessness-related work of the members of the Council and then works with them to find performance measures and identify successes to prevent and end homelessness across the State.

Vera Calloway expressed concern with Cal ICH's Council structure and questioned the connection to the work of the Council with state agencies, and if they are promoting the State's agenda, such as the CARE Act. She recommended that Cal ICH consider her concern.

Cody responded that the Council does not oversee individual programs or the implementation of programs such as the CARE Act, but they work with the advisory committee and other working groups to find the best practices and how to incorporate programs effectively.

Vera responded that the community perspective needs to be kept in mind.

Nykole Sakihara shared information on Cal ICH's Action Plan. At the end of every year, Cal ICH completes an implementation progress report based on the Action Plan that is discussed by the Council and then released publicly with metrics such as: first-time homelessness, persons successfully placed in housing, recidivism, and the number of people who are accessing shelter each year.

The Action Plan with 5 Action Areas (with BH/MH focus) are as follows:

- Action Area 1: Strengthening Our Systems to Better Prevent and End Homelessness in California
 - Develop interagency practices for integrating and sharing data from health and human services, housing and homelessness programs; Stakeholder engagement to inform the design of the CARE Act; Support Collaboration between LHJs and COCs; Leverage public health data with HDIS to inform policy; Support communities in building disaster preparedness plans.
- Action Area 2: Equitably Addressing the Health, Safety, and Services Needs of Californians Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness
 - Implement and evaluate the impact of Encampment Resolution Funding program, Help connect providers to training and supplies for overdose reversal and referrals to treatment options, Implement CalAIM; Continue Community Services and Supports program using Mental Health Services Act resources.
- Action Area 3: Expanding Communities' Capacity to Provide Safe and Effective Sheltering and Interim Housing
 - Implement Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program; expand availability of residential treatment and interim housing; implement DSH Diversion Program; implement Community Based Restoration Program; Provide training and technical assistance; provide guidance and resources regarding overdose reversal.
- Action Area 4: Expanding and Ensuring Equitable Access to Permanent Housing in Our Communities
 - Develop and advance CalAIM; Provide training and technical assistance to providers utilizing Community Based Restoration funds; Design and implement the Veterans Support to Self-Reliance Program.
- Action Area 5: Preventing Californians From Experiencing the Crisis of Homelessness
 - CalAIM PATH funding; Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT); Early Access to Treatment Services; Improve IST discharge planning; Returning Home Well Initiative; No Place Like Home Program.

Q&A:

Barbara Mitchell asked if the work plan looks at where Housing First is not working, or the number of chronically homeless people that are unsuccessful in maintaining housing. She asked if Cal ICH has received feedback from people with lived-experience of mental illness on what it is like to be placed in housing where many residents are actively using substances, while they are trying to maintain sobriety and housing.

Cody responded that they are working on providing appropriate resources, information, and funding when necessary to actually implement Housing First in a way that is successful. Cal ICH hopes to look at how can people be successful in that environment and work with folks at the local level to see what is and isn't working, and what resources are needed.

Barbara asked how the CBHPC could send documentation to Cal ICH on why they should consider re-examining statutory language or make recommendations to the Legislature regarding Housing First. Cody responded that he could take messages back from this meeting and the public is welcome to comment at Cal ICH meetings.

Vera Calloway commented that people receiving services are the true stakeholders, and they should be the ones forming the committees and inviting the state agencies and legislators to take direction from them in the decision-making. If people with lived experience were invited to the table in the beginning, before the programs were implemented, they would be able to let agencies know what would not work right away. Vera also commented that the coordinated entry system tends to be biased and gives lower acuity scores to black and brown people.

Cody Zeger acknowledged people with lived experience have been left out of the decision-making process for far too long and the hope is to bring these people into the process earlier. Vera noted that since Cal ICH is new, they can be innovators and break down some of the barriers.

Arden Tucker agreed with Vera's comments. She emphasized that since Cal ICH is new there is a hope that some change will begin with them. Arden also asked where they get their data from queer and transgender folks who they may not feel safe to show up and asked about outreach for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

Cody Zeger responded that they work with the Department of Rehabilitation to assist with disaster preparedness and outreach. He also responded that the data they receive comes from HMIS systems.

Public Comment:

Elizabeth Stone, Ventura County, echoed the necessity of having people with lived expertise at the table early on, and the importance of supportive services and not just housing-only. She emphasized the need for peers in the workforce for supportive services.

Steve McNally, Orange County, asked that Cal ICH share what they heard so they can confirm what they heard was said, because it is not clear that the state is listening. In year 19 of the MHSA, we cannot demonstrate what works. Steve asked that they look at how much MHSA money has been taken for housing prior to No Place Like Home. He would like to see urgency and completion of serving a need versus effectiveness. He commented on how individuals are taken from their community and moved to another place in mixed housing where people don't look like them. He also commented on how housing money is separated across so many different silos, people are competing for the same space, and it isn't focused. "Recovery is based on honesty, openness, and trust, and California has a trust problem. Think about empowering the people."

Arden Tucker thanked the presenters then echoed the comments of Steve McNally about building trust and emphasized that advocacy means action.

Vera thanked the presenters and closed by saying the end result should be permanent supportive housing because actually building and creating housing is not being addressed or met.

Item #6: Licensed Adult Residential Care Association Presentation

Bennie Tinson, MPP, Executive Director, Licensed Adult Residential Care Association (LARCA) gave an introduction of the formation of LARCA in Los Angeles County, speaking on behalf of over 280 state licensed ARFs and RCFEs. Per the last AB 1766 Quarterly closure report, 27 facilities that serve low-income residents in Los Angeles County living with SMI have closed. LARCA is trying to prevent those that are currently housed from becoming homeless and immediate action is needed to prevent further closure of these facilities.

Bennie Tinson emphasized funding is needed so quality care can continue. He shared that individuals diagnosed with SMI receive approximately \$44 per day while individuals diagnosed with Developmental Disabilities or Intellectual Disabilities receive \$177 to \$384 per day. Many of the individuals with SMI need the care and the housing provided by the Adult Residential Facilities, but \$44 a day is not enough. The Governor and the Legislature should act immediately to address the inequity.

Bennie Tinson provided a sample budget for an Adult Residential Facility, showing a cost of -\$22,710 per month while 6 residents in a home would bring in approximately \$7,920 per month, resulting in a large deficit.

LARCA has launched a petition on their website for others to take action by signing at www.larcala.org. The petition calls for (1) an Immediate infusion of \$2,000 per bed for each state-licensed facility with 70% of their census on SSI and living with Serious Mental Illness with no supplemental assistance including all AB 1766 population facilities, and (2) Implementation of the 1915 c Waiver to provide care and housing to low-income residents living with Serious Mental Illness that is on par with those living with Developmental Disabilities.

A licensed ARF provider, at risk of closure, was invited to speak by phone. Her facility has been open since 2003 but it is increasingly difficult to remain open. Now the challenge is to close the facility or to find another alternative. She is appealing for help for herself and other facilities so they can continue to provide for people.

Q&A:

Vera Calloway asked about the average daily cost per person per day. She also mentioned a complaint about ARFs is a lack of activities for residents, which she recognizes funding is needed in order to have. Vera then shared an art program she was able to do with her previous work that engaged residents and encouraged that to be replicated through funding.

Bennie responded there are several associations that represent ARFs throughout the state, but they are working to ensure they are speaking as one industry and are looking to grow their numbers in Los Angeles County. They just received legal counsel's approval in LA County to expand outside of LA County, and are looking to expand across the state. He also responded that the daily rate needed is \$200 per person per day for housing and care. Bennie also noted that the minimum wage is \$16 an hour in his county, and just the labor costs alone make it unsustainable. LARCA is also looking at expanding the number of ARFs and forming a land trust to make sure the facilities

that close will remain facilities to serve the population. They connect their residents to the local community to offer training workforce development, music as therapy, and other creative things.

Barbara Mitchell suggests increase budget on staff, because \$16 dollars an hour with overlaps in shifts for 24 hours a day with lunch and break times is unrealistically low. Increase the number of hours in the budget to be able to show the true cost which is much higher. Barbara asked how many people in the association were able to get the limited number of subsidies of operating slots in residential care homes to subsidize operations.

Bennie responded that they don't have the number received. LARCA serves predominantly medium and small operators.

Barbara said she provided comments when the money came out that it was an unrealistic plan, and asked how many residential care operators would agree to a deed restriction on their property based on getting small loans for a number of years. One thing might be to provide the state with feedback on the lack of reality of that program, based on the input of what is going on in the state. Individuals will not be able to take advantage of the program due to the many restrictions. More money is needed than asked.

Vera asked about unlicensed facilities and if they are totally separate from licensed. She mentioned that residents in unlicensed facilities are not necessarily cared for.

Bennie responded that LARCA's focus is on licensed facilities, and they encourage unlicensed facilities to become licensed.

Monica Caffey expressed her gratitude for the presentation and the need for action.

Public Comment

Theresa Comstock, CalBHB/C, thanked Bennie for the presentation and would like to partner with LARCA moving forward and find out more to bring to the board for their meeting.

Item #7: Community Listening Session Report Review/Discuss

Jenny Bayardo shared the draft of the listening session report. She asked Council members for feedback on the report and volunteers to work with Council staff on finalizing the report. The committee then discussed the specifics of the listening session.

Barbara recalled issues about people experiencing racial and ethnic disparities from the coordinated entry systems. People who self-report are able to use skills to get in with a score that can house them, while there are people on waiting lists forever. The housing list is not first come first serve, but by score which is not fair to people who have been on a waiting list for years and years. This should be investigated.

Vera would like to focus specifically on what the organizations in the resource list can do, and the reason why they are on this list. Who are the organizations that are really doing the work and what can they actually do? She also would like to add to the list.

Monica Coffey stated that the report should culminate all of the comments so we have something that is concrete and can keep the conversation going.

Arden and Vera volunteered to assist Council staff with the report if needed. All committee members are to send suggestions or recommendations to Jenny Bayardo while HHC staff are out.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Stone shared that culturally, self-reporting varies a lot and creates disparities because there are different perceptions of sharing personal hardships. There is a segment of people who are unhoused who are surprised they fell into homelessness and did not know of resources because they never anticipated that they would ever be in that situation.

Vera added that when you have people working with unhoused asking questions and filling out the forms, there is often no empathy or understanding with the population. She stated that you are not eliciting the information you need to make the report of value to the system-- which is why peers make great case managers with the unhoused.

Item #8: Work Plan Finalization (Action Item)

Chairperson Monica Caffey led the HHC in a discussion about the Work Plan for 2023-2024. Monica asked if the Committee would still like to discuss and evaluate the Housing First policy as a goal. Vera believes the HHC should look at it because it probably isn't going anywhere. The Committee can make recommendations, such as for people who are trying to get clean and sober alongside people who are actively using while in housing.

Jenny confirmed Goal 1 sounds complete and accurate, but Goal number 2 and 3 could use more clarity and detail.

Naomi Ramirez suggested more specific goals for Goal 2, such as the activity to be completion of the Listening Session Report and who the committee wants to send it out to, and for Goal 3 to identify specific steps to take with the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing and MHSA Modernization proposal.

Barbara Mitchell emphasized that Goal 3 is critical at this point, and it is important to move attention to the MHSA modernization proposal and look at Behavioral Health Bridge housing. HHC may also want to look at redirecting community care expansion to operation support.

Vera brought up stakeholder feedback and non-government organizations, tenant coalitions, and consumers who are likely an untapped resource. The greater community advocating for unhoused people are not reached by CBHPC and the Council is not on their radar either. She sees a gap and would like to reach out to the grassroots resources of what is needed so the report can result in something.

Jenny recommended adding clarity in older adults in Goal 2, and Naomi Ramirez agreed that the specific activities to address the main goal are missing. She asked what steps the committee is trying to take for Older Adults.

Vera asked what the difference is in the resources available to those populations (adults vs. older adults vs. transitional-age-youth), and whether there are organizations that are taking care of older adults specifically. She also recommended looking at bridge-housing models for different populations.

Naomi agreed that looking at what Vera suggested would help provide clarity in what needs to be researched.

Jenny Bayardo confirmed with the HHC that Goal 2 will focus on youth, TAY, adults, and older adults as the focus is on reviewing and evaluating. The group agreed Goal 1 is fine as-is, but Goal 3 requires minor adjustments to be accelerated.

Barbara Mitchell suggested that the HHC look at and have recommendations for the Housing proposals in the Governor's redesign no later than October, and/or have an interim meeting and finalize it by October, set a timeline and have someone from DHCS review all of the BHBH proposals that came in that were funded, and provide an evaluation at the next meeting because June is the timeline to finalize them. Barbara also would like Stephanie Blake of the Department of Aging to bring someone from her Department to provide input on what issues they are seeing with older adults and homelessness, and what initiatives they are taking.

Monica asked if a motion needed to be made, and Jenny Bayardo stated that the Work Plan could be updated and brought to an in-between meeting or the next meeting.

Public Comment

Elizabeth Stone mentioned Goal 2 of the Committee Work Plan regarding identifying state laws that impede matters contributing to housing and said there seem to be reports and environmental assessments to block the building of housing. The housing stock is insufficient, and there are many state laws and regulations that impede housing.

Arleen Garcia-Herbst wanted to ask if the proposals will identify specific locations for the housing, such as putting housing where unhoused folks are congregating or where they seek services.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.