

Minutes
Task Force for the Continuing Study of the Treatment of Persons with Mental Illness
Involved in the Criminal Justice System
Thursday, July 18, 2013
10:00am to 12:30pm
Hearing Room B
Legislative Services Building

Call to Order (Bruce Langer) 10:05am

INTRODUCTIONS/WELCOMES:

Introductions were made around the room. Task Force members and guests introduced themselves. Mr. Langer introduced both John Parvensky and Pat Coyle and explained that they are here to provide us with some historical background information about their agencies.

Minutes:

June 20, 2013 minutes were approved without any corrections.

HOUSING PRESENTATION:

John Parvensky, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Mr. Parvensky provided the committee with an overview of the "***Colorado Coalition for the Homeless***". The organization was formed in 1985 to address homelessness in the Denver metro area and eventually expanded statewide. Organizational handouts (see handout) were distributed to committee members. Mr. Parvensky reviewed statistical information to include the "***2013 State Housing Profile***". He also provided the committee with a few "Key Facts":

- ✓ **33% of households in this state are renters**
- ✓ **166,729 or 24% of these households are extremely low income**
- ✓ **\$22,121 is the maximum state level income for an extremely low-income family of four**
- ✓ **128,674 is the amount of shortage of affordable unit available to these low income renters**
- ✓ **\$17.26 is the amount a renter household needs to earn per hour to afford a two-bedroom unit at the HUD-determined Fair Market Rent**

He stressed to the committee that there are limited avenues to finding housing for the mentally ill and that the "Emergency shelter system" is designed to deal with "emergency" housing situations but has now become a means of housing. He also provided information on the coalitions "Housing First" program. This is a programmatic approach designed to help "chronically" homeless families and individuals move more quickly off the street and out of shelters. Services that are provided include: crisis intervention, rapid access to housing, follow-up case management, which is necessary to prevent recurrence of homelessness (see handout).

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Pat Coyle, Colorado State Division of Housing

The Colorado State Division of Housing has been in existence for 40 years and has been successful in providing housing that can't be found because it has been reintegrated into communities and are well kept and profitable. Housing is part of the solution for individuals who are mentally ill and lends to therapy, stability and assists with bringing down cost to the general public and taxpayer.

Mr. Coyle provided the committee with an overview of the "***Colorado-Second Chance Housing and Reentry Program***". This program was designed to provide housing and mental health services within the Colorado Dept. of Corrections (CDOC) who are eligible for parole, homeless and in need of mental health and substance abuse services. These services were provided to reduce the recidivism rate among the population of prisoners eligible for the program. (see handout)

Summary/Action:

The Task Force thanked both Pat and John for an outstanding and very educational presentation. Members asked what the Task Force could do legislatively. Pat and John identified the following as potential ideas:

- ✓ **Funding** – The State has not been able to expand investments for past 10 years;
- ✓ **Advocate** – Target Medicaid dollars for outpatient and wrap-around services; carve out portion of funds for case management services;
- ✓ **Advocate** for increased funding for vouchers;
- ✓ **Advocate** for more production of affordable housing.

The Coalition will provide the committee with a "priority" list of those tasks that will be beneficial to their organization and will work with this subcommittee to bring them forward (i.e., zoning issues and fiscal impact). Pat and John will identify potential language for the Task Force to consider supporting for new legislation. This will be reviewed during the August meeting.

In summary, all agreed that affordable housing is a deterrent to recidivism and a huge solution for overall stabilization and successful treatment for individuals with mental illness.

UPDATE ON JUVENILE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Michael Ramirez, Colorado Department of Education updated the committee on the status of the "Juvenile" subcommittee. He updated us on the three recommendations from subcommittee:

- Impact length of time that it takes to provide competency evaluations by centralizing the process at CMHIP
- Centralize the process of restoration at CMHIP

UPDATE ON JUVENILE SUBCOMMITTEE CONT.:

- Michele Manchester updated the committee on CMHIPs position on recommendations. At this time the hospital is in the middle of the Zuniga lawsuit with several mandates becoming effective July 1, 2013. Because of this, the hospital would like to wait and see what impact these mandates have on the hospital before committing to any other issues. Michele will provide the committee with an update on CMHIPs level of involvement sometime in August or September.

Regarding changing the "statute" of the definition/language of competency, the subcommittee was asked to move forward on continuing to work on language changes. Perhaps, this is all that can be submitted for this upcoming legislative session.

What's Happening in Your Agency

Members were asked to report any updates.

- Gina reported information on the "civil commitment" statues and stated that they are looking at combining the civil/mental health and drug addiction statues. The work group is looking at overall issues affecting special populations. Gina will keep the Task Force updated.
- Michele Manchester reported that she will not be at the August 2013 meeting and will not be able to provide administrative support. Another committee member volunteered support for this meeting.
- El Paso County Sheriff representative reported that 40% of those families that lost their homes in this summers fire were uninsured and that El Paso County will have to deal with those housing issues as well. Additionally, El Paso County received funding to hire a contract person as a "Residential" treatment coordinator. This person will provide services to inmates once they complete their sentences and will work with them from jail to help provide proper housing.
- The Federal of Families has trained 13 family system navigators (advocates). These positions are mainly centered out of Weld County, but the agency is working to expand the workforce statewide.

The Task Force for the Continuing Study of the Treatment of Persons with Mental Illness who are Involved in the Criminal Justice System was adjourned at 12:05p.m.