

Joint Office Assessment and Recommendations

October 31, 2023 Provider Conference

Notes:

Facilitators: James Schroeder

Moderators: Vienna Roberts and Kanoe Egleston

Project Scope: Assessment and evaluation of barriers to the effectiveness of JOHS and County response to homelessness

Homelessness Response System - Not an agreed upon strategy/view of needs and services across the homelessness response system

Recommendations

- Align around the key components of the homelessness response system
- “Map” components, ensure alignment
- Identify gaps in existing services and populations served
- Develop strategies together and engage in planning sessions to address the needs and gaps identified
- Improve existing partnerships and build on existing conversation to incorporate other systems (health systems)
- Develop a community wide shelter strategy
 - Workgroup to create recommendations that will be provided to the oversight committee
 - Aligning exercise with the City and County
 - Shelter strategy tied to broader strategy
 - Move beyond the increase of shelter beds to ensure a focus on what other services are needed
 - What else do we need to do to facilitate people getting in housing and staying in housing
- Develop a community wide strategy for addressing medically fragile households

Governance/Leadership - Lack of cohesive, holistic structure for effective governance

Recommendations

- County and City elected leaders form a dedicated oversight commission to align on strategic priorities and outcome goals; committee structure channels community input to Joint Commissioners
- JOHS serves as a strategic advisor to the Community Board, Joint Commission and City/County Commissioners
- Move toward broad set of stakeholders
- Strategy and prioritization separate from the operational/day-to-day management of JOHS
- JOHS manages contracts, oversees delivery, supports leadership decision-making, intervenes and collaborates with system partners and disseminates best practices

Provider Payment and Provider Relations - Funding policies/procedures create barriers to provider operations, performance and financial health

Recommendations

- Process improvement with provider invoices
- Rebase rates for services
 - Staffing costs and other costs associated with delivery of services
 - Contracted rates accurately reflect cost of doing services
 - Same across entities; limited variation
 - Re-evaluate “partial funding” of services
- Comprehensive review and redesign of funding policies and processes
 - Payments that are proactive and not reactive
- JOHS role to provide leadership in coordination of provider community

Housing and Other System Integration - Uncoordinated systems provide fragmented care for shared clients

Recommendations

- Utilize community advisory boards
- More robust and intentional about other system integration (health system; first responders; etc.)

Communication - communication issues were a universal concern

Recommendations

- Proactive communication
- Improve communication internally and externally

Role, Function, Structure of JOHS - rapid growth and change has created structural challenges and the need for realignment

Recommendations

- Role clarity internally within the JOHS
- Evaluate organizational structure

Coordinated Access/Entry

Recommendations

- Added elements to the redesign of CA tool
- Conduct a broad assessment of the tool and CA process

Discussion/Q&A

- Shared challenge with the utilization of excel format for budget proposal during allocation process. Request for simpler template.
- Shared experience of the fragmentation of access to services
 - Desire: create funding to build more housing
 - Shelter Work Group
 - Ensure focus toward shelter flow

- Services offered at shelter as opposed to mobile outreach
- Will not move forward in applying for funding as the strategies are ever changing without clear intention. Question was posed how the HMA recommendations have been received and the timeline to implement recommendations.
 - Answer: JOHS is currently working on several of the HMA recommendations. People are taking the recommendations seriously and HMA feels hopeful that things are moving in a similar timeline as HMA as recommended.
- Provider shared the difficulties and challenges with federal funding requirements. They would not have accepted the contracts and were notified more than half way through the fiscal year the funding source and various requirements.
- Participant - How does the adjustment with the City governance structure impact the relationship with the County (and thus the JOHS).
 - Answer: Through these recommendations the City and County will practice working together differently. Establishing relationships regardless of all the changing things.
- Governance - PHB responsive to this structure and to create a holistic response to solving homelessness?
 - Answer: Yes and having these governance structures work towards aligned strategies that are created together
 - Shelter workgroup - How do we have input into the strategy if we are not participating in the workgroup?
 - Answer: Please reach out to JOHS to provide input/recommendations
- Fee for service model challenging for new/expanded programs
 - 1/12th model - collect 100% overhead with new programs
- Feedback: Ensure focus on utility costs per provider, especially in response to COVID when thinking about rebasing budgets. Pre-covid shelter budget were bare bones and to analyze the true cost of shelter services this needs to be included
 - HMA confirmed this is what was heard in PSH services as well when HMA was conducting stakeholder interviews
- Housing market and disparity to who gets into units and who gets evicted
 - There are often times more services at shelter as opposed to housing, which as an influence/impact on some individuals desired state to move out of shelter services