

HMIS Information and Discussion Session Meeting Minutes
Regions 1 & 10
December 6, 2011 – 11:15 AM
Held via GoToWebinar and Conference Call

Attendees

Natalie Sandoval, Community Caring Council (Region 1)
Rachel Bersdale, COMTREA (Region 1)
Nancy Pope, Disability Resource Association (Region 1)
Regina Moore, Family Counseling Center (Region 1)
Timothy Massey, Society of St. Vincent De Paul (Region 1)
Velina Todd, Catholic Charities – Warrensburg (Region 10)
Nancy Abbott, FAITH, Inc (Region 10)
Kelly Mangel, Pettis County Community Partnership (Region 10)
Bob Vickers, Pettis County Community Partnership (Region 10)
Cynthia Hopper, Salvation Army-Sedalia (Region 10)
Michelle Allen, WCMCAA (Region 10)
MASW Staff: Lindsay Wallace, Liz Gebhart & Bob Sobule

HMIS User/Agency Survey Feedback: Lindsay Wallace explained that the HMIS Project would be changing the frequency that the user/agency survey is sent out to allow time for more comments and follow-up discussions to address any common issues or concerns. The survey is available now and was sent out on November 22. Lindsay let people know that if they did not receive the link already, they could email or call her. Everyone was encouraged to give their honest feedback and opinion on the survey.

Target Population Training: The HMIS team is developing the fifth target population training which is on substance abuse. Liz Gebhart reported that the first live webinar is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, January 12 at 1:30 p.m. The second live webinar will be on Wednesday, January 18 at 10:00 a.m. Liz reminded attendees that target population trainings are required for all Shelter Plus Care and Supportive Housing Program HMIS Users. Those HMIS Users have six weeks after the first live training to take the training to be in compliance, so for substance abuse, the training needs to be viewed before February 23.

HPRP: Bob Sobule updated agencies on the proper close-out procedure for HPRP clients. He also walked attendees through the self monitoring documents and data monitoring log available for agencies participating in HPRP. Lindsay reminded HPRP agencies that even if they are no longer administering HPRP funds, they are still responsible for the data quality.

Performance Improvement

Bed Utilization Report: Lindsay reported that changes were being made to the bed utilization report based on feedback from agencies at the September RHTM. Two changes will be made to the report, which will be submitted again to the Balance of State Committee in January. The first change is that the report will also take unit utilization into consideration, as some agencies permanent and transitional housing programs felt the bed utilization wasn't as reflective of the full capacity of their program. Additionally, separate regional averages will be calculated for emergency shelters and the transitional and permanent housing programs. Because they often operate differently, agencies thought separating that data out would give a better picture of the needs in a particular region.

Lindsay also solicited feedback on two other comments received during the last regionals. One topic is if it would facilitate better conversation about this data if the data were blinded. The report would instead have "Agency A, B, C" instead of naming the specific agency. Some agencies felt "called out" when the agency

name was listed and it would also provide an opportunity for agencies to look at the overall data more objectively. Most agencies thought it would be helpful to have agency names listed so they could explain why their numbers were high or low. Natalie Sandoval said she thought it would be helpful to see the information beforehand so she has time to look at the data and see why the numbers might be the way that they are. Clarification was also provided by Lindsay as to what the bed utilization report shows and where the capacity is pulled from. Feedback was also solicited as to whether it would be beneficial to include capacity or program restrictions (such as a shelter only housing individual males). Attendees thought it would be helpful.

Length of Stay Report: Liz gave attendees an overview of the average length of stay at emergency shelters report. This is a report that will be submitted annually to the Balance of State committee. This first report, which will be submitted in January 2012, offers a baseline of how emergency shelters are currently performing. A high performing community is identified as one where the average length of stay is less than 20 days. Many continuums start at 30 days as a goal, which is what the HMIS Project is using as the initial target. Results are presented in the Length of Stay report handout. The HMIS Project Coordinator will work with agencies included on this report to ensure that the data is reflective of the clients in their programs(s).

Monthly Monitoring Document: Starting in 2012, the HMIS Project will be doing monthly data monitoring. Lindsay walked attendees through the monitoring document they have set up for the housing programs and emergency shelters, noting that agencies would be notified if any issues were highlighted. Data for this monitoring document will be pulled on the third business day of the new month, since the Partner Agency Agreement states agencies will enter data within three business days. Any agency can request their data on a monthly basis if they wish.

Identifying Best Practices: Monitoring data on a monthly basis helps the HMIS Project identify agencies who consistently have no errors or who consistently improve their data entry skills over time. Just this past month, we recognized Pettis County Community Partnership as an Outstanding HMIS Performer. They have a self-monitoring plan set in place that ensures the accuracy and quality of the data they enter into HMIS and have been able to use their data to assist in addressing community needs through the development of additional shelters and housing programs in the area. We hope this tool will help us to identify other top performers in the Continuum as well.

Identifying Low Performers: Lindsay explained that the monthly data monitoring document enables the HMIS Project to recognize low performers in the Continuum. For HMIS, that would be agencies that consistently have data entry errors month after month and need additional technical assistance from HMIS staff. This information also enables us to collaborate with funders to address possible programmatic issues that are contributing to data quality issues.

Tracking Turn-Aways: During the last round of regionals, many agencies expressed interested in being able to track information about the clients that they have to turn away. The HMIS Project contacted MISI to see what other continuums are doing. Liz showed the attendees the data elements a county in Illinois uses to capture their turnaway information in HMIS. With that list in mind, Liz asked agencies on the call if that was too many elements and if so, what the most important elements were. Nancy Pope explained that they track turnaways on their own right now, just capturing name and the assistance needed. It would be overwhelming for them to track all the calls they receive on a daily basis. Regina Moore asked whether they would need consent to enter client turnaway data into HMIS, and Lindsay responded that they would. Other agencies felt it was a great idea, and Bob Vickers suggested collecting county information. It seemed to be unanimous that any intake would need to be a simple box and not a full application. Liz reported that the HMIS Project would compile a list of the most important data elements identified in each region and give a list to agencies again during the HMIS portion of the March Regional Housing Team Meeting.

HMIS Resource Sheet: Liz encouraged agencies to take a look at the resource sheet for additional HMIS information and updates. She also showed attendees the Monitoring and Utilizing HMIS Data, which outlines the reports you can run in HMIS, what type of data you can pull from them, as well as how the information can be used at your agency. Agencies should contact their HMIS Project coordinator if they are interested in creating a target population training resource binder.

Agency Updates: Nancy Pope reported that they have a new transitional housing coordinator who is doing data entry for HMIS. Michelle Allen said their agency is no longer administering HPRP funds, so that's wrapped up. Bob Vickers reported that Pettis County Community Partnership is still plugging along and with the colder weather they've had a pretty substantial increase in the need for services. Natalie Sandoval said she was still struggling with the APR. Lindsay provided an update on the APR, that it would be ready from MISI on December 31, 2011. Detailed instructions were sent out via email earlier in the morning.