

HMIS Information and Discussion Session Meeting Minutes
Region 7
June 8, 2011 – 8:30 AM
United Gospel Rescue Mission
400 South Broadway, Poplar Bluff, MO

Attendees:

Karen Smith, SCMCAA
Rita Cooksey, United Gospel Rescue Mission
Carolyn Hayes, Ozark Foothills Regional Planning
Erin Schrimsher, Ozark Family Resource Agency
Melissa Morgan, Ozark Family Resource Agency
Kristina Bowlby, Veteran's Administration
Xavier Varquez, Family Counseling Center
Sandra Mick, Recycling Grace Women's Center
Jenni Miller, Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC)
Sandy Wilson, Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW)
Krystal Searcy, Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW)
Liz Gebhart, Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW)

HMIS Staffing Changes: Sandy Wilson stated that Bob Sobule is leaving the HMIS Project effective June 30, 2011 and Krystal Searcy will take his place as the HMIS HPRP Project Coordinator. Liz Gebhart has filled the HMIS Project Coordinator Position for Regions 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Sandy referred attendees to the contact information handout sheet for the staffing changes.

HMIS User/Agency Survey: Sandy Wilson reported that the MASW staff reviewed the results of the HMIS User/Agency surveys that were completed during the March regional housing team meetings. Users were able to complete a paper form of the survey at the meeting, or they had the option of completing the survey online through SurveyMonkey. Sandy gave a thank you to all those who participated, as over 80 surveys were completed. Sandy explained that two main comments emerged from the results. The first comment was that the ROSIE system doesn't always seem to be user friendly, so she wanted to have a discussion about what agencies thought.

Rita Cooksey commented that there isn't a category for someone who lives in the household who isn't related, such as a family friend or significant other. That can create a data integrity issue.

Sandy Wilson said the second comment from the user/agency survey was that the HMIS team might not be engaging our users more effectively, that at times agencies feel we talk at them instead of with them. Sandy asked if there were ways we could better work with each agency to make sure we were engaging them in the conversations. When there weren't any, Sandy said that in other meetings it has been suggested that an agenda be sent out or posted prior to meetings so agencies know what to expect. Attendees agreed with this, saying it allows for them to ask all their staff for opinions to better represent thoughts for those who can't be in attendance. It also gives new people a chance to look up any terms, agencies or topics they're unfamiliar with.

Agency Procedure Manual: Sandy Wilson reported that the Agency Procedure Manual was submitted to Steering Committee for approval on June 3. The manual includes background on the HMIS Project, common housing acronyms and current policies and procedures utilized by the HMIS Project. With the creation of this manual, several forms have been updated and/or changed. Some of the forms were included in their packets and are effective starting today. The manual will be available on the website to be printed by the end of

business on June 13. Since all the information from the manual couldn't be covered during this meeting, webinars will be set up in July to go over the manual in more detail. Notifications of these webinars will be sent out next week. Please be sure to register.

The following documents were included in the packet and discussed that the meeting:

- Agency Partner Agreement: Each agency's Executive Director or other authorized official will need to submit an updated, signed Agency Partner Agreement.
- User Policy and Responsibilities: This form has been changed from the User Policy Responsibility Statement, and Code of Ethics from to the User Policy and Responsibilities form. Current HMIS Users do NOT have to sign a new User Policy form. Any new HMIS User identified with your agency will need to utilize this new version.
- Consumer Notice: We had a Consumer Notice based on various funding requirements and projects. There is not just one form and is not specific to any funding stream. You can post this where people can see and take down any older versions of this that you may have.
- Notice of Client Rights: This replaces the Client Consent-Release of Information and Client Revocation form. Every client you enter into HMIS must now be informed of, understand and sign the Notice of Client Rights form and NOT the Client Consent-Release of Information form. Additionally, the Client Revocation form is now gone. By signing this form, the client understand that any information s/he shares with an agency participating in HMIS is kept confidential and that only those authorized to input data into HMIS can view their personally identifying information.
 - Rita Cooksey asked and Sandy clarified that this form is just to be signed by the head of household.
- HMIS Technology Equipment Reuse and Disposal: This form replaces the HMIS Computer Reuse and Disposal form to encompass all technology equipment, such as fax machines and prints that contain a hard drive. Your agency will need to adopt this new policy and your agency director or other authorized official will need to sign the form and mail it back to the HMIS office. Keep a copy for your files.

Target Population Trainings: Sandy Wilson stated that agencies whose HMIS Users are required to either attend or self-certify the target populations trainings on domestic violence and have yet to do so are: Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission (anyone else here just needs to self-certify), Ripley County Family Resource Center and SEMO Christian Restoration Center. Agencies who are required to attend or self-certify for the targeted population training on mental health and have yet to do so are Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Commission (anyone else here just needs to self-certify), Ripley County Family Resource Center and SEMO Christian Restoration Center.

There was a reminder that these are all required trainings for any HMIS User who works for a Supportive Housing Program (SHP) or Shelter Plus Care (S+C) funded agency. Agencies are given six weeks from the time the first live training takes place to complete these. After this time period, any HMIS User who is required to attend or self-certify and has not is notified. If these attempts fail, the Steering Committee has approved that the HMIS Project can lock that specific HMIS User out of the ROSIE database until such time they have completed these target population trainings.

Sandy Wilson said that while these are only required for certain agencies, others are also encouraged to partake in the trainings for their useful information. One agency asked if it was possible for non-users to take the training and still get something from the agency saying that the person is certified. Sandy said it was a great idea and she would discuss it with her team about how to set up that process and option.

The next live Target Population Trainings on Developmental Disabilities will be June 20 at 10 a.m. and June 28 at 1 p.m. The training will be recorded on June 29 and posted to the HMIS website sometime that week.

Notification has been sent out regarding this target population training. Additional target population trainings will take place on substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and Chronic Health Conditions and Other Physical Disabilities. Sandy also reminded participants that there is a self-certification option. If users have already received comparable training through other sources, or if the staff member does not do client intake and/or data entry and only pulls reports, they can submit a self-certification letter stating that they do not need to attend. A sample letter is available on the HMIS website.

HPRP: Sandy Wilson reminded attendees that Bob Sobule will be leaving on June 30 and Krystal Searcy will be taking over his position. Sandy said that there was an error in the 2009-2010 HPRP APR concerning the housing status of clients at program exit. She thanked those who worked to fix those errors and stressed that agencies should always remember to update the housing status at program exit. If a person's housing status has changed since the intake, then it needs to be updated. There was also an issue with a large number of clients who have "other" or "Don't know" as the exit destination.

Sandy also stated that Krystal and Bob are working on developing a self-monitoring plan for HPRP. MASW has been working with MISI to develop self-monitoring plan webinars to explain the reports used in the self monitoring plans. While most agencies know what to click to run a report, Sandy said we want to show agencies how to read reports and know what to look for. This will help agencies better identify and correct any errors. Sandy also reminded everyone that if any agencies are thinking about ending their program, they need to contact us. Even though the actual program may be closed down, we will keep it open in our system until the state shuts the program down. Data may need to be edited or corrected even after the program ends, so Sandy stressed that people need to let us know if they plan to shut down a program.

Best Practices Highlight: Sandy explained that one of the goals during these information and discussion sessions is to highlight at least one agency in the Balance of State on a best practice that they are utilizing. For this meeting we wanted to show Ozark Family Resource Agency's Cultural Competency Policy. Sandy asked if any other agencies have something like this or if it's something they feel their agency could adopt.

Rita Cooksey said that they don't have a written policy but their pastor is fluent in Spanish. She also said there were resources available in town that they're connected to and that Spanish forms are available. Sandy Wilson asked if it would be helpful to put the cultural competency policy in Word format to allow agencies to more easily download and tweak it to create their own. Melissa Morgan said she could provide MASW with a Word version of the document.

Sandy mentioned that she found a language posted in a hospital that had a range of languages saying, "If this is your language, please point here." She is trying to track down a smaller version and then will make it available to all agencies who want it. Sandy also said that many organizations pull up free translation services online, but an agency may have someone who can't read. A few attendees asked for that website information, and MASW will be providing those resources to put online.

HMIS Resource Sheet: Sandy mentioned that we would be providing resource sheets for the HMIS portion of the regional housing meetings as well. The Cultural Competency Policy link will take agencies to the one discussed in the best practices. The resource sheet also has information about the self-monitoring plan webinars. MASW will work with MISI to develop and hold funding-specific webinars to show HMIS users how to run reports, read them, identify errors and fix those errors. The webinars won't be required, and the dates and times are TBA. Sandy also discussed the 2004 HMIS Data and Technical Standards. This focuses on the data elements and standards that guide HMIS data collection, not just the technology. If you run into any questions, please contact us at the HMIS office and we can assist in making sense of the document. Finally, the resource sheet provides two links for further resources for agencies. Sandy mentioned that Tech Soup is especially helpful in purchasing software and sometimes hardware at a greatly reduced cost.