

SHA Membership Meeting
June 3, 2020
Zoom – COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Diane Riley.
Diane Riley thanked everyone for registering. Diane reviewed the mechanics of zoom navigation including unmuting, chat box questions and the overall agenda.
60 people were electronically in attendance representing housing developers, supportive services providers, advocates, government representatives, corporate vendors and families.
2. Jim Marhold from Declarations addressed the membership as President of Board of Trustees. Minutes of the April 2020 meeting were approved. Motion: Barbara Coppens motioned; Tom Beyer second.
3. Diane introduced Amy Scartocci, amy.scartocci@dhs.nj.gov, Office of Housing and Resource Development, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) to provide an update. Amy reiterated that the Division has been presenting weekly COVID webinars to share with the community on the latest information. These webinars will move to every other week this month. All presentations and recordings as well as resource documents can be found:
<https://nj.gov/humanservices/coronavirus.html>
This webpage houses information for all Department of Human Service Divisions. Amy highlights included: Residential support remains unchanged; Day retainer payments extended thru June 12, 2020; DHS/DDD convening a work group to discuss re-opening congregant day programs and other areas. The group is to develop recommendations and guidelines that can be used by individuals, families and agencies to inform re-opening. Several considerations were outlined. In terms of delays in moving people to new units, she communicated that up until recently the team's priority was inspecting new sites that had been identified to move people testing positive to non-congregant settings. Inspections for new permanent unit housing is now resuming in earnest.
4. Diane introduced Harry Reyes harry.reyes@dhs.nj.gov, Assistant Director of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHAS) to give an update. Harry reviewed the status of state inspections. In person

state inspections are still occurring but for a limited number of situations (discharged from state hospitals, dangerous housing situations etc.) For other situations discretion is being used and reviewed on a case by case basis. Some will be postponed until such time when the inspections can occur safely. Division is working closely with the Supportive Housing Connection (SHC) to focus on emergent needs. Routine and non-urgent moves are being postponed. DMHAS will extend subsidies beyond 90 days for those who have not yet been able to move. In January DMHAS put out a Telehealth RPF for equipment (pre-COVID). Awards were \$15,000 per agency (with \$10,000 match). Six awards were issued. DMHAS guidance documents that the division has issued are placed on the website as Amy mentioned. Harry reiterated that Fee for Service has been suspended. All agencies are receiving up front contract payments, Averages of invoices were evaluated so that agencies are receiving monthly average payments. Referrals and admissions services must continue in order to receive the payments. Most CSS services are being done by telehealth and most agencies are providing services virtually. Some agencies are seeing clients face to face especially those who don't have phones. Cares hot line 866-202-Help (4357) is open from 8-8, 7 days per week and being provided through Mental Health Association. See Jaime Angelini notes in Item 6.

5. Janel Winter Janel.winter@dca.nj.gov Director of Housing and Community Resources, Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was introduced to provide an update. As announced by the Governor DCA will be providing additional temporary rental assistance in the next few months with an investment of \$100 million dollars for low and moderate income households who have been significantly affected by the pandemic. The assistance will be provide 3 months rental assistance with the ability to renew for additional 3 months. Residents of NJ must meet income standards, and current in rent payments as of March 1st. Selection will be determined by online lottery similar to past initiatives. DCA will be launching a frequently asked questions document and other information which will be posted on their website on June 15th. Applications will be accepted by mid-July. Payments will be made in the late summer. More to come very shortly. About 20% of the funds will be reserved affected homeless

families. The selection process will be through coordinated entry COC system. Questions: Will there be an opportunity to ask questions once the material has been posted? The webpage will have a designated email and phone number. There will be staff assigned to answer phones. Is there any updated on the status of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund? Right now the AHTF is still open and taking pre-applications. There is no additional information on the status of that fund. Rick Mortemore continues to provide information to those developers interested in applying. Can you speak to the work being done by the new Office of Homeless Prevention? Rebecca Rhoads is Director of that office and she started at a difficult time. However as reiterated by Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver recently, that office is needed more now than ever. It will help shape our long-term COVID-19 response. Both economically but also all of the ways the social determinates of health affect our system as gaps and holes in our system are exacerbated by this crisis. Many people are even more concerned with housing and health both in the immediate and in a large term. This will hopefully make our overall systems stronger. A consultant will also be assisting Rebecca in our long-term planning. Any word on open enrollment of NJ Section 8 being available down the road? No opening had been planned. NJ has a very large Section 8 program that serves 23,000 households a year using about \$240 million. We are concentrating now on adjusting payments to pick up additional rent portions as people's economic circumstances are affected by COVID. DCA is really happy we are able to respond that way even as these vouchers are becoming more expensive. There are many open questions such as how the new federal funding available can be used to augment some of these costs as well as concerns around enhanced unemployment ending and what that will do to put pressure on household needs. New legislation being discussed has additional voucher support and we are ready and anxious to use whatever additional support we can get federally to provide people stable housing. Diane Riley reminded attendees that the NJ allotment of \$10 million from the National Housing Trust Fund that can be used for developing affordable housing has just been announcement and does not rely on the federal budget.

6. Diane Riley introduced Jaime Angelini jangelini@mhanj.org from the

Mental Health Association of NJ to talk about new resources available through a crisis counseling program called Hope and Healing. Hotline Info and Support Group Listings can be found at: <https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/> This is funded from a SAMSA grant and MHA is working in collaboration with Dept. Human Services (DMHAS and Disaster and Terrorism Branch). A similar program was instituted after super storm sandy but this is very different crisis. Emotional support three ways: Call line, Text Line, virtual team which is providing virtual support groups. The support groups are targeted to specific audience (nurses, job seekers, 60+, parents, educators, Spanish speakers, etc.). Everyone needs emotional support. More information is on the MHA website. MHA is willing to tailor their presentation to a specific agency or community group. Please contact Jaime in order to discuss and take advantage of this great opportunity.

7. Diane Riley, SHA executive director highlights included:
 - a. SHA has pivoted to these virtual meetings and added more. Please reach out to Diane for specific Lunch and learn for specific topics etc.
 - b. Diane welcomed new members [Horizon NJ Health](#) and [Eiros Group](#).
 - c. Diane reviewed the new Housing Navigation Course currently under development by SHA. The course will be based on the successful Housing Navigation Course in NY State. 35 hours of training, 30 participants The curriculum includes: Planning, Budgeting, Financing Housing, Types of Housing, Construction, Finding a Home, and include case studies. Students Will develop a housing plan. Many industry experts will be included as guest lecturers. The NY Alliance created this training and in 3 or 4 years and have 200 navigators. The course timeline will be 8 weeks and include in person and remote classes. SHA plans on re-opening the process next week to allow for more agencies to apply. The process will close at the end of July with an anticipated start of the class in early Sept. Also SHA is the process of building a very simple searchable Housing Tool that will post rent

opportunities, vacancies, and new development info. Many thanks to the NJ Council of Developmental Disabilities for their support.

8. The featured guests Donna Rook, Donna.Rook@dhs.nj.gov Operations Manager, and Michelle Rowe, Michelle.Rowe@dhs.nj.gov Operations Supervisor from the Division of Family Development, Department of Human Services presented on the topic “*Emergency Assistance and Homeless Prevention*”. The presentation discussed the various programs available from DHS and specifically how homeless or imminently homeless individuals may be able to receive other assistance such as shelter, temporary rental assistance, back rent, utilities and more.

The purpose of the presentation was threefold: highlight WFNJ eligibility regarding administration of the EA program, develop a process to serve mutual clients/consumers, Cross Train.

Highlights included:

Donna emphasized that Emergency Assistance is particularly helpful in providing temporary housing and shelter-related assistance for people who are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA) or SSI.

Temporary housing and shelter-related assistance can include:

- Paying for back rent, mortgage and utilities
- Providing temporary support for ongoing housing costs
Rent, mortgage, emergency shelter (motel or shelter)
- Set up a household by paying for:
Moving expenses and security deposits for rent and utilities
Essential house furnishings including one-time purchase of a medically necessary air conditioner.

The presentation also reviewed the definition of homelessness as well as circumstances when a client was client engaged in a “failure to plan” which could make them ineligible. The County Welfare Agencies (CWA) determine eligibility for EA and that information was also examined.

Recent changes based on the passage legislation (S866) amended the current law and expanded of EA benefit timeline for:

- SSI Recipients
- WFNJ recipients who have a 12-month Med-1 and are permanently disabled

- WFNJ clients categorized as “chronically unemployable”
- WFNJ clients who are parents/relatives of a disabled child or dependent and must provide full-time care
- WFNJ clients who are 60 years or older.

Finally, Michelle Rowe offered an overview of Social Services for the Homeless (SSH), an additional resource (not a WFNJ program). This resource can be used for individuals and families who are either homeless, at risk of homelessness or in need of food and are otherwise ineligible for WFNJ emergency assistance through no fault of their own.

SSH may only provide:

- Short-term, non-recurring assistance to eligible **families**.
- Benefits for up to **four months**. The four-month limit applies to assistance from **any and all SSH agencies**.
- **Must be able to sustain independence after the program resolves the crisis.**

A family may not receive more than four months of SSH assistance within a 12-month contract year, or more than four consecutive months.

Eligibility:

- New Jersey Resident
- Working poor individuals and families ineligible for WFNJ/TANF or GA because of income
- Current WFNJ recipients who have exhausted their EA benefits
- **Ineligible aliens or individuals with drug distribution convictions who cannot receive WFNJ cash**
- **Only the SSH state-funded component may be used for these individuals.**

Full presentation can be found:

<https://www.shanj.org/past-sha-membership-meetings/>

The meeting concluded at 11:45 AM. Next meeting of the SHA membership is scheduled for Wed. August 12, 2020

Submitted by Diane Riley, Executive Director