

Riverside County Health Coalition Meeting | Jan 2022

Meeting Notes

01/19/2022

Present: Dianne Leibrandt, Salomeh Wagaw, Mary Obideyi and 100 other attendees.

Next meeting: April 20, 2022, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

- The welcome and introduction remarks were given by Dianne Leibrandt. She highlighted the use of a new format for the meeting, Zoom webinar, and the inclusion of closed captioning for both English and Spanish. Dianne introduced the topic of the agenda as housing and its impact on health. The speakers were introduced: Vonya Quarles & Toya Vick from Starting Over, Marcus Dillard from Riverside County Housing and Workforce Solutions, and Marcus Cannon from Riverside County HHOPE Program.
- A poll was conducted by Irene, which asked for sectors represented by the participants of the meeting. The result showed a majority (64%) representing healthcare and public health sector. Others included education and academia, housing and students.
- Dianne encouraged organizations to send in their logos, if any are interested in becoming partners to Riverside County Health Coalition.
- Purpose of the Coalition and the new Health Equity program was briefly mentioned. Mary Obideyi, a new point of contact person was introduced.
- Mary Obideyi welcomed everyone and gave an introduction of the speakers.

Starting Over:

Vonya Quarles- Executive Director- Mary gave a brief bio of the speaker.

As part of our introductory poll, which sector does your organization represent?

- Vonya Quarles began her presentation by giving a background of the organization and how the program began as direct service organization and transitioned to policy advocacy and expansion to other services.
- A link to video providing an overview of housing challenges was shared for participants: [Segregated By Design on Vimeo](#)
- Toya Vick gave an overview of current programs and projects and barriers to housing.
- Speakers also covered topics of transitional housing, employment, prison employment initiative grant, FREE- Family Reunification Equity and Empowerment project and data collection.
- Vonya discussed how conviction, eviction and crime free housing policy are biggest barriers to those trying to access housing.
- Starting Over, Inc. provides transitional, harm reduction, and supportive housing. People who are system impacted and all other people in need of shelter or housing are welcomed at our eight homes. The program receives referrals from probation, Riverside University Health System, Jail in-

reach programs, and through word of mouth. The primary goal is to provide stable transitional housing re-entry services. Some programs of the Starting Over to include Participatory Defense, Path to Staffing Employment & Entrepreneur Development and Prison to Employment, Case Management/Peer Support, Legal Services, Food for Life, and Community Organizing and Civic Engagement.

- Prison to Employment Initiative Grant- the number of eligible individuals for support under the P2E grant exceeds 66,000. Because of these conditions and the increase in releases from prisons and jails due to COVID-19 health concerns and changes in laws, the need for supportive services in the region for this population is greater than ever.
- The Family Reunification, Equity, and Empowerment (FREE) project provides support for system-impacted parents and families navigating the child welfare system. Also utilizing the same hybrid model, the FREE Project provides direct support to families as well as policy work.
- Civic Engagement and Policy Advocacy- Some of housing-related policy wins include influencing Riverside County to reduce criminal history look-back periods from 7 years to 3 years in 2017 and enabling youth coming out of probation to be able to stay with their families in subsidized housing in 2019.

Riverside County Housing & Workforce Solutions:

Marcus Dillard- Supervising Development Specialist- Mary shared a brief bio of the speaker.

- Marcus shared about the Housing and Workforce Solutions program, which is a part of the Special Programs Division within Riverside County. Special Programs encompasses HUD VASH, Project Roomkey, CALWORKS Housing Support program, and Housing Opportunity for Person with AIDS (HOPWA).
- The VASH program – a partnership between HUD and the VA to provide section 8 vouchers plus supportive services to homeless veterans.
- Project Roomkey- a program launched in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provided COVID-19 assistance to homeless persons by placing them in hotels and giving them section 8 vouchers. The program launched in partnership with Adult Protective Services, the Office on Aging, Emergency Management Division, and other entities.
- CAL Works Housing Support Program- The program addresses the housing needs of homeless families with children who are currently receiving TANF assistance. The program is a collaboration between DPSS and HWS. HWS provides housing navigation, housing counseling and short/medium term rental subsidies.
- Housing Opportunities for Person with AIDS (HOPWA) - The goal of the HOPWA program is to assist low- income individuals and/or families that live with HIV/AIDS with supportive services and housing subsidies. The program is in partnership with True Evolution, Catholic Charities, Desert AIDS, and Foothill AIDS to administer services.

- Shelter Plus Care program- Program has the capacity to provide 107 units of housing for some of the “hardest to reach” residents in Riverside County who experience homelessness and who are disabled.
- Mainstream 111- Program provides rental assistance through Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers to very low-income, disabled households.
- Emergency Housing Vouchers program- Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV’s) are specifically designed for households who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking.
- Security Deposit Assistance- Program provides clients with deposit assistance and rental assistance.
- In addition, the project is working with school district individuals impacted by COVID-19. He is working with this group of population to provide housing vouchers. The project is also working with local community churches to provide services.
- Recently, the project has been awarded a grant from the RUHS-PH to educate/provide assistance related to COVID-19 assistance for underserved populations. Currently, working with different supervisorial districts to reach out to under-served communities. The project is working to ensure that no barriers exist for people to receive needed services.

Questions/Answers:

- Anonymous Attendee: Regarding "individuals being connected to schools", do you mean children, teachers, or administrative staff? Most of these individuals are students and their families, not necessarily staff. There are many who are affected, but don't hear about them.
- Suzanne Petersen,
Where are these Starting Over houses located? They are in Riverside, Corona, and Eastvale.
Are any of these services available in Coachella Valley? No. However, Coachella Rescue Mission might be able to provide assistance.
- Luz Moreno: Does the re-entry have anything to do with the conviction? Re-entry program is for assisting individuals who are in transition to normal living. Many times, these individuals are looking for additional support. So the conviction does impact how they are able to re-enter into society. They are barriers they face based on the conviction they are holding, e.g., pc 290 (sex offender) compared to other offense.
These are the most difficult population to serve. There are broad misconception about 290 conviction. Regardless, there are certain conditions that are part of their parole, which does not allow them to live in certain areas. Often times, these are the barriers faced when providing transitional housing. There is a heavy stigma for this type of conviction and so for their protection, they are usually housed in a collective housing. So, it presents lots of challenges.
- Connie Edwards: Who is the contact person that is working with the districts in Riverside County? Please contact Marcus Dillard for more info.
- Anonymous: Could families facing evictions use your services? Yes. United Lift program is used for tenants facing evictions. Marcus Dillard has contact info for United Lift program.

- Sundae Sayles: Can you speak to housing individuals who are Covid+ and homeless? Disease Control (Barbara Cole and her team) is helping COVID+ individuals. We want to ensure individuals are receiving proper care.

RUHS- Behavioral Health, Homeless Housing Opportunities, Partnership & Education Program (HHOPE):

Marcus Cannon, LMFT- Behavioral Health Services Administrator- Mary gave a brief bio of the speaker.

- Marcus indicated that his presentation would touch upon implementation data for this program. He began his presentation stating that it is important to address why people are being homeless and provide resources and assistance in preventing homelessness. He provided an overview and brief history of the HHOPE program.
- HHOPE stands for Homeless Housing Opportunities Partnerships Education. It comprises of Coordinated Entry System (CES) "HomeConnect", Housing Crisis Response, Whole Person Care, CalAIM Enhanced Care Management & Community Support, Permanent Supportive & Affordable Housing Programs, Emergency Housing, Transitional Housing & Rental Assistance, AB-109 Housing, and Adult Residential Facilities & Life Support Program.
- HomeConnect is a County-wide coordinated response system for people in a housing crisis. HomeConnect can help by connecting people to resources to avoid loss of housing, find financial and other resources, locate a suitable rental, and other services to assist in a housing crisis. Phone number to contact the program is (800)498-8847.
- Wellness begins with a home. Even with great health care and substance treatment programs, innovation on treatment, odds of improving health without home is not very good. Wellness begins with a home.
- Housing Crisis Response Teams are located county-wide and provide Housing Crisis Response & Support through street outreach and engagement, housing crisis plan development and support, linkage to services and resources, housing navigation for individuals and families in a housing crisis to obtain short-term emergency shelter or to maintain their current tenancy through rental assistance. For outreach request, the number to call is (800)498-8847.
- Whole Person Care (WPC) program provide comprehensive services for those individuals with chronic health concerns, justice involvement, along with active probation or parole. Referral is made through nursing staff stationed with probation/parole only.
- CalAIM is a long-term commitment to transform and strengthen Medi-Cal, making the program more equitable, coordinated, and person-centered to help people maximize their health and life trajectory.
- AB-109 Housing provides supportive services to procure and maintain stable housing through emergency housing, food and hygiene kits, housing location assistance, employment resources, bus passes and work clothing for clients with justice involvement and are on active probation. Clients are referred through Riverside County Probation only.

- Permanent Supportive Housing provides assistance to residents in Supportive Housing to maintain stable housing through case management services, including regular home visits, life skills support, referral to community resources, and linkage to appropriate services. Eligible clients are chronically homeless and disabled. Referrals are received through Coordinated Entry System only.
- MHSA Affordable Supportive Housing is available to eligible Behavioral Health clients receiving FSP-level services who are extremely low income, homeless, or at high risk of becoming homeless.
- Augmented Adult Residential Facilities (ARF) provide housing, care, and services to consumers needing long-term support.
- For more information, call HHOPE at (951) 715-5050.

Questions/Answers

- Suzanne Petersen: Are there substance abuse programs (detox, MAT) available to uninsured homeless in the Coachella Valley? Yes, call CARES line at (800) 499-3008. People can walk into any behavioral health clinics for service.
- Miguel Vasquez: Going back to your initial metaphor of the people falling into the river... How are you addressing the root causes of the housing crisis? (And I don't mean providing programs). RUHS-BH serves 60,000 residents a year and a very small fraction of that population is homeless individuals. Other programs serve healthy individuals function better and help stabilize communities and provide school based programs. So, these programs are there to prevent individuals from becoming homeless. Other factors play into homelessness, which need to be addressed.
- Curley Palmer: Are there extensive waiting lists for these programs you are highlighting. In the past, we were being told that this was a barrier? It depends on the program. Health care and Housing are underfunded and Riverside County is underfunded compared to other counties and much work needs to be done.

Community updates from our partners:

Rachel Kochhar – Reach-Out Covid testing is available rest of the month in JV office in Jurupa Valley. Covid-19 vaccination offered on Feb 2nd.

Isabel Martinez- University and Magnolia Community Health Center offers free Covid testing and vaccination at their sites for children ages 5 -12.

Ronica Cervantes – DPSS Community Outreach can come out as vendor to talk about MediCal, Cal Fresh and new benefits.

Marc Mitchel – Public Affairs with Anthem shared grant information regarding substance use: [RFP: Substance Use Disorder. As an organization committed... | by Anthem Foundation | AnthemFoundation | Jan, 2022 | Medium](#)

Suzanne Petersen – Coachella valley volunteers in medicine provides free medical clinic for uninsured/underinsured. 82915 ave. 48 Indio, CA 760-342-4414 Adults only; hours 9a,-5pm, Tues, Wed, Thurs

Cassidy Acosta –Aurrera Health Group conducts media outreach about the transition to Cal MediConnect to Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans on behalf of the California Department of Health Care Services. They are currently hosting a communications work group for elderly and older adults. If interested, please contact: Cassidy@aurrerahealth.com.

Sundae Sayles – Point in time count needs volunteers for February 23rd.

Gustavo Hurtado – Rainbow Pride Youth Alliance is hosting 2-4 meetings next week to go over Covid-19 resources/testing and how to support queer and transgender youth in the Inland Empire.

Ra' Neisha Bratton –HEAL Zone collaborative is held every third Thursday, 12:30-1:30pm, to discuss community improvement projects and share resources. Contact Raniesha@rchf.org if interested.

[Parent Health Institute/ Instituto de Salud para Padres \(google.com\)](#)

Equity Collaborative Convening/Wrap Up:

Salomeh Wagaw- Health Equity Director

- Salomeh began with a quote, “We do not gain our humanity by taking someone else’s”. All the work in Public Health is an effort to continue with collaboration, cohesiveness, and harvest and build power within the communities. She thanked the speakers for their work and encouraged continued collaboration going forward.
- She shared an upcoming Equity Collaborative Convening, Feb 2-3, from 9am to 1pm. It will be a two day session discussing our equity efforts for the department, including the vision and mission for the department and external partners. Please contact Irene if interested in participating. It’s the first in the series to solicit feedback from our partners to see how we can move forward together. This event is geared towards NGOs, SBOs, and CBOs, but open to other entities, including county departments.
- She thanked all the panelist for their participation.

Mary Obideyi- Program Coordinator II

Mary thanked everyone for their participation. She encouraged participants to fill out a survey, which will be posted in the Chat Box. If there are any resources and/or questions, please contact Riverside County Health Coalition.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2022.

Meeting adjourned at 11:43 am.