



*Mission: Build partnerships and promote strong collaborative action to ensure all residents within the County have stable, safe, and healthy places to live.*

**Housing for Health Partnership (H4HP) Policy Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 17, 2024; 3 pm**

**Call to Order/Welcome**

*Present: Karen Kern, Kate Nester, Mali LaGoe, Suzi Merriam, Terence Concannon, Tom Stagg*

*Absent: Fred Keeley, Heather Rogers, Justin Cummings, Manu Koenig, Mariah Lyons, René Mendez, Shebreh Kalantari-Johnson*

*Additions and Deletions to the Agenda: None*

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

*No public comment received.*

**Action Items (vote required)**

1. Approval of Minutes: February 21, 2024, Regular Meeting

*Discussion: None.*

*Public Comment: None.*

*Motion to Approve: Kate Nester*

*Motion Seconded: Karen Kern*

*Abstentions: None.*

*Board Action: Motion passed with all attending members. No quorum present.*

**Information Items (no vote required):**

2. Housing Santa Cruz County – Affordable Housing Month Events

*Discussion: Discussed that Housing Santa Cruz County (HSCC) is a nonprofit organization with a mission that aligns with the mission of the Housing for Health Partnership CoC. HSCC hosts a series of community educational and outreach events in May as part of Affordable Housing Month. Mentioned that those interested can find the full calendar of events on the HSCC website. This year, the Housing for Health Partnership is co-sponsoring several events, including the Faith-Based Organizations: Building Affordable Homes and Community on May 1st, and the Landlord Appreciation Event on May 14th.*

3. Lived Expertise Action Boards -Updates

*Discussion: Discussed that the Housing for Health Partnership CoC has hired 8 members for the lived expertise workgroups. Mentioned there are 5 general population seats and 5 for youth, with 2 more youth seats to be filled. The youth workgroup includes an LGBTQ seat, a Black seat, a seat representing the south county, a seat*

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*for individuals with experience in foster care, and a seat representing the north county. Discussed that the general population seat is full, as over 70 people applied for the board and 30 people were interviewed. Discussed that an equity framework was used to select the members. Mentioned that the deadline to fill the seats is April 29th, and orientation will begin. There will be 2 orientation sessions: onboarding and The National Coalition for the Homeless will provide an overview on how people with lived expertise can be involved in community work, Continuum of Care (CoC), and other activities.*

4. Picture This – Housing Matters Event Update

*Discussion: Discussed that Housing Matters hosted a fundraising event on April 7th at the Paradox Hotel in the City of Santa Cruz. Discussed that The CORE Investment Program funded Housing Matters to recruit people with lived expertise to share their stories, support homeless services, and build their skills. Mentioned that the event included community outreach, education, singing, storytelling, pottery, and performances from a diverse range of individuals with lived experience.*

5. National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference -Finland and Other Learnings

*Discussion: Mentioned that from March 4-6, 2024, several members of the Housing for Health Partnership attended the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Conference in San Francisco. Sheryl Norteye, a staff member of Housing for Health, shared that she had a phenomenal experience discussing what Santa Cruz County is doing with lived expertise work with executives. Mentioned that she had the opportunity to learn about the housing first model from Finland, which has resulted in less than 1% of the homeless population being on the streets. Mentioned that Housing Matters sent a team of 6 people, and it was the first time Tom Stagg presented on a NAEH conference panel, which led to connecting with San Mateo County.*

6. City of Watsonville Special City Council Meeting on Homelessness Update

*Discussed that the first City Council meeting to evaluate the state of homelessness in Watsonville was held on March 23rd at the Watsonville City Council. Discussed the impact of homelessness on city services and the budget, as well as how it has affected the Watsonville community. Helene Schneider, Senior Regional Advisor at the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, Robert Ratner, Director of the Housing for Health Division, and Paz Padilla, Director of Programs and Impact at Community Action Board, presented at the meeting and focused on establishing a city-specific strategic plan with the public.*

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**Report/Discussion Items** (no vote required):

**7. Housing for Health Partnership Coordinated Entry Update and Discussion**

Monica Lippi, Housing for Health Manager, shared a PowerPoint and provided updates on the Coordinated Entry System. Mentioned that Housing for Health adopted a new Coordinated Entry system policy manual in April 2023. Discussed that Coordinated Entry is a systemic approach to connecting people experiencing homelessness with available assistance in the community. The system aims to provide fair and equitable access and is a Federal and State requirement. Mentioned that the available housing program resources in our system inventory include Rapid Rehousing programs, which are short-term (usually up to 2 years) and permanent supportive housing programs with built-in subsidy and support services, as well as transitional housing programs.

Mentioned that the first version of Coordinated Entry was called Smart Path, where assessors met with people experiencing homelessness and administered The Vulnerability Index-Service Priority Decision Assistance Tool (the VI-SPDAT) assessment. This assessment generated a score related to the person's vulnerability and added them to a housing queue. Mentioned that the housing queue became exceedingly long and resulted in a lack of transparency, inconsistent messaging, mistrust, and poor service quality. There were significant delays in referrals, leading to participants no longer being locatable, eligible, or document ready.

Discussed that the new Coordinated Entry system now includes connectors who enroll participants in HMIS programs, collect participant data, complete a Housing Needs Assessment, and determine if they are eligible and prioritized for H4H-supported housing and services. Mentioned that Connectors also work intensively with participants to create an individualized Housing Action Plan. Emphasized that only the highest priority households are added to a housing queue for the system's limited housing resources, providing more transparency for participants and service providers. Discussed that to ensure that the system does not put too many people on the queue that cannot be accommodated, an inventory-based threshold setting is used based on the estimated number of resources available in the next 6 months. Eligible participants must score at or above the dynamic level score to get added to the housing queue. The current dynamic threshold score is 16. Discussed that currently, Transitional Age Youth and Families with minor children are automatically added to the queue to be referred to housing programs because of resource availability.

Mentioned there is a monthly connector collaborative to case conference and learn from each other. Mentioned that Housing for Health directly funds a limited number of connectors, most connectors work as part of an outreach team, drop-in center, multi-service center, or other programs that have voluntarily agreed to take on the connector role. Mentioned that over 100 connectors have been trained. There are 27 active connectors and 28 still in the process of training. In March, 42 people were referred to a connector, and 211 are waiting to get referred to a connector.



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Discussed that Housing for Health is working on creating a document ready checklist to help with the housing problems solving, search, and eligibility process. Discussed that some organizations that are CalAIM community support providers are not becoming connectors due to CoC having higher service standards than CalAIM. Mentioned that expectations for being a connector include using HMIS, coming to a regular meeting, and frequent face-to-face contact with clients.

Concerns were raised about having a connector being the only way to get referred to a housing program. Discussed that community support services can help people experiencing homelessness by trying to get them into other affordable housing options such as Section 8, move back in with friends/family, increase their income, or find roommates.

***8. California State Auditor Report on Homelessness Investments and Local Jurisdictions (San Jose and San Diego)- Potential Impacts and Local Actions***

*Discussed that over the past five years, California has invested \$24 billion in homelessness and housing programs administered by nine state agencies. Discussed that State auditors evaluated the City of San Jose and San Diego to determine if local agencies were monitoring the cost-effectiveness and tracking outcomes. Mentioned the audit revealed that there was insufficient tracking of how the money was being spent on homelessness programs. Discussed that the lack of oversight has led to media reports that suggest the state is wasting money. State legislators and staff argue that they provide funding to local governments, but it is not being used wisely. Mentioned a core challenge is that people's incomes do not match the cost of housing in California. Discussed that if the state were to create a statewide \$2,000/month rental housing subsidy for five years for approximately 174,000 households, it could significantly reduce the homeless population.*

***9. County of Santa Cruz DRAFT Encampment Response Protocol – Discussion***

*Discussed that there is a County initiative involving the County Administration, Health Services, Human Services, and the Sheriff-Coroner to develop a written policy and procedure for responding to health and safety concerns related to people experiencing homelessness living unsheltered in community camps. Karen Kern questioned the use of the term "relocation" in the drafted protocol because it implies that people are going to be relocated when they are just getting displaced.*



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**Board Member Announcements**

*No additional announcements.*

**Adjournment**

**Next Meeting:           Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 3 pm**

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