

**Region V Systems**  
**Promoting Comprehensive Partnerships in Behavioral Health**

**HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

April 21, 2006  
1645 'N' Street, Suite A  
Lincoln, NE  
10:00 a.m.

**Present:** Wendy Andorf, CMHC; James Wells, Consumer; George Hanigan, PIER; Sam Ridge, CMHC; Jay White, CTP/Heather; Mark Yoakum, Consumer; Carol Murphy, Crete Housing Authority; Shawna Collins, Lincoln Housing Authority (LHA); Dennis Hoffman, CenterPointe; John Turner and Marti Rabe, Region V Systems

**1. Welcome / Introductions / Minutes**

Turner welcomed everyone in attendance.

Introductions were made. James Wells, consumer, was welcomed as a new member of the group.

**2. Specific Case Discussions**

There was follow-up discussion on the topics of consumer behavior and recidivism. Lack of relevant/adequate services was defined as the underlying problem. Several people mentioned that allowing other people to live in their units has led to loss of housing vouchers. Case managers, if clients have one, don't always intervene or become aware of these problems until it is too late. Hanigan expressed the importance of getting clients into a supportive environment. Turner stressed that, according to the option matrix, supported housing, tied to services, is the top priority. Turner also commented that the RentWise program should be helpful to clients and noted that there are economic benefits to keeping clients housed rather than allow them to continue to cycle through the system.

**3. System Issues**

**Application/Priorities:** Turner reported that he has been receiving a lot of applications. The definition for "at risk" in priority 2 has changed, which will allow more clients to be housed under that priority. Turner currently has used 12 of 15 vouchers for this priority for this fiscal year. This plan recognized that the community support worker is the "expert" in determining when a client is at risk.

Under the 06-07 implementation plan, 75 percent of vouchers will be available for priority 2. The targeted population will still be priority one, in order to open a bed at LRC, but most vouchers will be priority 2. Turner is doing some presentations in the community regarding this change.

Turner commented that each client is allotted a voucher for \$5,000, and the program has some flexibility concerning what "other related costs" might be eligible for payment with those dollars. Flexible funding is also under consideration. These funds would be used as a last resort, after other option had been explored and exhausted. It was noted that PIER receives funds for client assistance.

Turner continues to use the LHA to complete inspections, though he occasionally does inspections himself when there is a time constraint. He noted that cooperation has been good between agencies.

**RentWise:** RentWise training is scheduled for June 13 and 14. Team members have been established. RentWise is designed to help clients learn how to be better tenants. Team members will be trained to be trainers, and will pass this training on to community support workers and consumers. Landlords have expressed support for this program, and Turner noted, they continue to be supportive of the Rental Assistance program.

**LB40A:** Turner commented that he has presented the priority matrix completed by this group to a number of entities. Turner will use this matrix in other focus group and attempt to get more input from a broader spectrum of interested persons.

It was noted that there is no urgency to disburse these funds and the getting adequate input is important at this time. Turner commented that the Region may end up doing an RFP. He asked committee members if they would be willing to review proposals if there is an RFP process. The group agreed, with the stipulation that there be specific scoring criteria to evaluate proposals. He also noted that he had received a letter from Mary O'Shea suggesting that they have expertise in this area, and would like to coordinate the focus groups, etc.

There was discussion about different ways in which these funds could be used including enhancing existing facilities. It was pointed out that reality often dictates a large project in order to get supported services paid for.

Turner commented that landlords have inquired about three-plus units. That would be considered a group home and would require a group home structure. Hanigan commented that we need to look at what alternatives are available currently and how much supported housing is available. Wendy commented that we need to look at the whole Region including the rural areas.

Turner is writing a letter to all county general assistance (GA) programs to notify them that Region V could step in with rental assistance before the GA rental assistance. Opening up priority two will allow us to help more rural clients.

#### **4. Utilization**

Turner distributed his current statistical spreadsheet, which is filed as his monthly report. There are currently 29 consumers in the program, with 18 housed. He noted that there is a broad range of representatives from multiple agencies listed as community support workers or emergency community support.

Turner reported that he has not had to deny a lot of formal applications and can usually tell a client if he/she will be eligible in an initial phone call.

#### **5. Other Business**

CTP has several openings at this time. Several clients will be completing treatment in the next 30 days, and there will be a lot of new clientele. White anticipates that they will be full again soon. White has referred several clients to PIER.

Hoffman reported that the Permanent Housing Project at Centerpointe has housed five clients to date. The program has a total of 25 subsidies. This program is for clients of CenterPointe. Hoffman commented that staff turnover has slowed down the process of housing clients.

Turner was asked if he has defined criteria for releasing clients from the rental assistance program. Turner indicated that he has not defined that criteria, but would like to leave that decision in the hands of the case manager. He commented that he is expecting that clients would stay in the program for an average of a year and noted that clients on priority 2 status may move through the program more quickly.

Collins reported that the housing application for LHA is now available online.

The number of units listed on the housing database continues to grow.

Hanigan reported that PIER currently has 17 clients, with five more in the process.

Ridge commented that there is capacity in the IOP program. Clients in this program have their own apartment, can learn basic skills and tenant skills, and have supports in place. Currently the cost is \$265 a month, which includes rent, phone, utilities, and cable.

#### **6. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held at Region V Systems on Friday, May 19, 10:00 a.m. The Steering Committee continues to meet on the third Friday of the month.