

HMIS Information and Discussion Session Meeting Minutes
Region 4 - Maryville
September 8, 2011 – 4:00 PM
Community Services, Inc.
1212 B South Main, Maryville, MO

Attendees:

Catherine Driskell, Catholic Charities
Amy Ward, Catholic Charities
Amanda Hunter, Phoenix Family Housing Corporation
Lindsay Wallace, Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW)

HMIS User/Agency Survey Feedback: Lindsay Wallace presented the “HMIS Project Response to Agency Feedback” handout. It was explained that the HMIS staff took all the comments received in all 10 regions and worked with MISI to address each comment, issue or concern. While the HMIS team structured user/agency surveys to go out every quarter, Lindsay stated they should look for the next survey in December. The surveys will now be structured in a way that there is time to discuss surveys at a regional housing team meeting and then work with MISI to address any concerns.

Target Population Training: Lindsay announced the fourth target population training which is on HIV/AIDS. The first live webinar will be Tuesday, October 4 at 10 a.m. The second live webinar will be in the afternoon on Thursday, October 20. A notice will be sent to all HMIS Users to register for the live webinars. For those who are required to take it, they have six weeks after the first live training to take the training to be in compliance, so for HIV/AIDS, the training needs to be viewed and the evaluation form completed before November 15. Amy Ward asked how long newly hired staff at their agency had to complete the trainings. Lindsay stated a reasonable amount of time would be allotted for newly hired staff to complete the required trainings; this amount of time would be determined by the agency’s HMIS Project Coordinator.

HPRP: Lindsay presented the handouts created by the HMIS HPRP Project Coordinator, Krystal Searcy. All HPRP programs need to meet the reporting requirements and ensure their data is accurate with HMIS before they are closed out of the system. Even if an agency’s contract with DSS is ending, it does not mean the contract between HMIS and DSS is ending. Agencies are still responsible for data entry errors and corrections until such time HMIS closes out their contract with DSS. If there are any questions, Lindsay said that they should contact Krystal.

Lindsay reminded all agencies to update the client file at program exit, including housing status. HMIS has found discrepancies among all funded agencies, not just HPRP, that show a housing status of literally homeless at program exit and a destination to permanent housing. Amy Ward asked how to update the housing status for a client who should have had a housing status of literally homeless for program eligibility but did not. Lindsay stated she would work with Amy one on one to address this issue.

Performance Improvement: Lindsay explained the HMIS Team is starting to look at performance measurement across the agencies, and the first report focused on bed utilization. A bed utilization rate shows on a given night the percentage of beds occupied in an emergency shelter or housing program. Lindsay referenced attendees to the HMIS Bed Utilization report and walked through the four common problems outlined in the handout.

Agencies provided explanations for red-flagged cells in the HMIS bed utilization report. Amy Ward explained why some of Catholic Charities' percentages were low. She stated it was due to the fact that in terms of units occupied, the agency was at capacity but in terms of beds occupied, the agency was not. Since bed utilization rates are based on beds occupied and not units occupied, it shows the agency as having low utilization rates when in fact all units are occupied. Amy stated that how the formula is set up it seems funders would want you to house more families than single individuals. Lindsay stated that was not the intent and the explanation provided by the agency is included in the report sent to the Balance of State Continuum of Care Committee.

Lindsay referenced the bed utilization tip sheet as a helpful tool for shelters and housing agencies to calculate bed utilization rates on their own. As grants continue to hold agencies more accountable, Lindsay encouraged agencies to use the data they put into HMIS for community planning and funding purposes.

With the increased focus on data, Lindsay reminded agencies of the self-monitoring plans that are set up to ensure agencies are reviewing their data. To help with that process, the HMIS Project is working with MISI to develop data self-monitoring webinars, which we hope to present in October. Those webinars – which are not required – will help you know which reports to run, how to run them, and perhaps more importantly, how to identify potential errors and fix them.

HMIS Resource Sheet: Lindsay referenced the resource sheet within the packet given to attendees. Many were touched on during the meeting, and she also referred agencies to the cultural competency resources as a follow-up to conversations during the June Regional Housing Team Meetings.

Other Items: Amanda Hunter with Phoenix Family Housing Corporation stated assistance provided through the Columbia and Maryville offices were showing up on the same report. Lindsay stated the agency probably needs to have two separate accesses into HMIS if they need two separate reports. Lindsay will work one on one with Amanda to address this issue.