



## Minutes

### Transitions Stakeholder Advisory Council

Google Hangout Weblink: [meet.google.com/emq-kfpb-aex](https://meet.google.com/emq-kfpb-aex)  
Google Hangout Call-in: +1 470-268-2030  
PIN: 614 405 288#

Thursday, January 14, 2021  
2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

#### COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Clarice Ambler, DRCOG X
- Meghan Baker, Disability Law Colorado X
- Anne Bartels, PASCO X
- Amy Dixon, CPWD X
- Monique Flemings, AHOD Services X
- Paige Gallaher, Atlantis X
- Jennifer Giurgila, Jefferson County
- Fallon Gillespie, Rocky Mountain Human Services X
- Ashly Johnson, DRCOG X
- Jennifer Krulewich, Focus Cares X
- Tracy Martinez, Touch of Care
- Ed Milewski, Jr.
- Jenn Ochs X
- Lisa Smith, Team Rubicon X
- Neal Waite, ADRC Region 3B X
- Miriam White, SJBAAA

Meghan Phillips, Michelle Voss, Sheryl Kessler, Margaret Hunter, Jose Garcia, Rejan Ricottone, Janna Hartman, Peggy Garcia, Trish Martin, Ronna Conrad, Brad Taylor, Ian Engle, Ryan McGee, Billy Allen, Anne Pierce, LaShawn Love, Michelle Johnson

State Staff: Katy Barnett, John Barry, Nora Brahe, Matt Bohanan, Courtney Thomason, Ann Watts

Attendance Link: <https://forms.gle/EDaybu73WZAnPZH7>



## 1. Welcome and Introductions

2:30 p.m.

- Approval of the December Minutes: Minutes were approved
- Purpose of Today's Meeting- Katy provided an overview of the agenda with Housing discussion main priority, Council updates, final review and vote to approve revised Council Bylaws, rural issues to focus on, ending with comments and questions.

## 2. Council Member Welcome & Application

2:35 p.m.

- Monique Flemings – AHOD Services – Katy welcomed Monique, one of the first Council members from Colorado Springs. Monique shared that she is looking forward to serving on the council to help Transition Services throughout the State. Katy invited others on the call that are interested to apply and submit a new Council member application.

## 3. Program Updates

2:40 p.m.

- Matt from HCPF shared the good news that the Public Health Emergency (PHE) was officially extended to April 20, 2021. There are a host of other timelines that are impacted by the extension but this also provides the Department more flexibility to proactively work with everyone so that when the PHE officially ends that disenrollment's have enough time to be supported.
- Katy from HCPF shared the Department updated the Transitional Coordination Agency (TCA) list which includes all active TCA's in the state. The list will be updated on a monthly basis to make sure all information is correct. TCA List link: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/Transition%20Coordination%20Agency%20List-January%202021.pdf>
- Katy shared the Departments January 1, 2021 memo on Nursing Facility Guidance on MDS Section Q Referrals. The final CCT members graduated in December however the core benefits are still available through the sustained Transition Services program, the memo introduces a new tool to connect residences with Options Counseling agencies and also includes regulations behind the process. Link to memo: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/HCPF%20OM%2021-001%20Nursing%20Facility%20Guidance%20on%20MDS%20Section%20Q%20Referrals.pdf>
- Katy shared the new email address for Transition Services and requested that Council members make sure the new address is updated in any marketing materials where past email was listed. New email address is: [hcpf\\_accessunit@state.co.us](mailto:hcpf_accessunit@state.co.us)



#### 4. Housing Discussion

3:00 p.m.

- Nora Brahe, HCPF - Nora shared the evolution of housing resource development that began with CCT and continues for targeted case management transition coordination. There was an extensive Stakeholder process and early on they decided there needed to be a dedicated housing expert to help with issues. In 2016, HCPF and the Division of Housing (DOH) contracted to increase housing for participants in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program which contributed to a multi-level housing plan. Strong partnerships developed between DOH and HCPF with a CCT housing plan focused on safe, affordable housing that was essential to help CCT members sustain independence in the community. Goals included developing housing strategy that aligned with the grant, resources utilized and collaboration with partners to assist with demand for housing in geographic areas. Partnership with CCT and Housing began in March 2013, from the beginning it was apparent that 95% of members required a voucher to afford housing in the community. Stakeholders shared that housing was very hard to come by, there were many waiting lists for vouchers. To address the voucher issue DOH and HCPF partnered to acquire Community Living Colorado (CLC) housing vouchers which provided a boost to the program. Early on, identifying affordable and accessible housing was the responsibility of TC's. TCA's weren't able to accept new referrals because housing was such an issue, especially in the Metro Denver area. In 2017, the CCT team developed housing navigation services and removed the responsibility from TC's so they were able to take on more referrals. The Department sent out an RFP to housing organizations and granted the contract for the program to Brother's Redevelopment Inc. in 27 Colorado counties which was successful finding housing for people and reducing the waiting list. The goal of the housing navigation team is to ensure improved housing and to provide safe, secure and affordable housing. At the beginning of 2020, housing navigation expanded to all Colorado counties providing Options Counseling and Transition Coordination services. HCPF contracts with Brothers Redevelopment Inc. to provide housing navigation services to individuals receiving TCM-TC services and who have a HUD housing voucher. HCPF contracts with Brothers Redevelopment Inc to provide housing navigation services to individuals using TCM-TC services and receiving HUD housing vouchers. Brothers Redevelopment Inc. was founded in 1971, they provide Housing and other housing related services. Nora introduced Anne Pierce with Brothers Redevelopment Inc. to provide an overview of services.
- Anne Pierce, Brothers Redevelopment Inc. Anne shared an overview of their housing process which starts with an application that goes into their database that provides information to start searching appropriate housing based on criteria including accessible features needed, type of voucher, location based on family, healthcare, finances and background. Anne also reaches out to TC's and CM's to discuss and suggest areas that are outside of specific requested location if there



are no options that meet criteria. Anne checks with landlords on adjustments that need to be made to make sure housing is appropriate and safe for the member. Once they confirm they want to move forward, Anne assists the case manager in regards to paperwork and step by step process to make the transition. BRI does what they can for the most difficult situations based on background and finances. Nora with HCPF added that there is a strong partnership between Anne, the member, DOH and the Transition Coordinator. The process to find a home and sign the lease is complicated so the partnership to ensure accurate information between all parties is extremely important.

- Ann Watts, DOLA- Ann started by saying DOLA couldn't do what they do without HCPF and Brothers Redevelopment Inc. and then provided an overview of how they all work together. HCPF and DOLA set up a state funded voucher program for CCT which is now Transition Services. The Division of Housing is a statewide housing authority with a team that manages 8,000 vouchers across the state for a wider variety of population, of which 83% experience a disability. The goal is to always have vouchers available for Transition Services members that want to leave an institution. They have been successful with budget requests. DOLA suggests members try to get on other rental assistance programs such as the federal Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8). Members with state vouchers have a preference to get them on DOH-operated federal vouchers. Everything is modeled on the HUD section 8 program. The state dollars can customize what they are able to do such as paying for security deposits, no background checks and working with zero income individuals. Provides flexibility - if a member struggles to find the right home, can allow them to put more income towards rent. State voucher vs Federal, with the state voucher you can only live in Colorado. If want to move out of Colorado you will want to go on the Federal voucher. Budget in 2021 is \$5.8 million, 2022 budget needs to be \$6.4 million to keep program growing. Currently, issuing 20 new vouchers a month to help people move out of institutions. Approximately 550 people in the program, 402 with CCT and the other 148 are disabled and at risk of institutionalization. The program also recently opened to individuals in Atlantis and CCDC's pilot program to move people out of institutions during COVID in order to support them.

DOH has also had a HUD funded program called Section 811 Project Rental Assistance for the past couple of years in the Denver metro area. If the unit is not already accessible the owner will take on responsibility to modify. There are 90 units now, and DOH recently received another grant from HUD for 80 more units, planned in the next few years. This program encourages construction of new affordable, accessible and adaptable housing for those with disabilities.

DOH has a partnership with HCPF Medicaid LTSS benefit for Home Modifications. For adults on a HCBS waiver (BI, CMHS, EBD, SCI) they have a \$14,000 lifetime limit. For children on a CES or SLS waiver, they can access \$5,000 per waiver period, every 5 years when the waiver renews. It can be challenging to



coordinate when a member moves out of a nursing home so their new home is already modified before they move in. If the member never makes the move out or they don't qualify for a HCBS waiver when they move, then we can't pay the contractor for the work done. Challenges to work timing and coordination to do the home modification. Risky to remodel rental unit if they move out. So they encourage Anne Pierce to find a unit that is at least minimally accessible. They can move in and then request home modification. Disability required modification is the best strategy.

There is a home modification tax credit that was implemented in 2019 for household income under the limit of \$156K, if you make home mods you can get a tax credit up to \$5K back for what you spent, and you can take the credit over a 5 year period.

Matt with HCPF thanked Nora, Anne and Ann for their presentations and said housing is an area we need to focus on. Medicaid doesn't do a lot to touch housing so it's good to work with Brothers and DOLA and get creative to meet needs and make progress. Federal partners and other states invited HCPF to speak at different conferences and to other groups on success here in Colorado. This is a huge priority for Matt to keep expanding and improving and he thanked Nora, Ann and Anne to get where we are today.

- John Barry - opened up to Housing discussion and Q&A

Monique from AHOD began discussion by asking Ann Watts if El Paso County will receive any of the grants. Ann said it is to be determined, they have included El Paso County and have letters of intent but nothing at the moment specific to Section 811. They are at the mercy of what area developers submit and hoping El Paso is included.

Ian stated he wants to represent those in rural areas that choose to live in communities that have affordable housing where there is a lack of available resources. Are there plans for equitable resource distribution throughout the state? Ann Watts said vouchers are throughout the state but potential limited if that community has less affordable housing. Anne Pierce said in the rural areas she is limited in many ways to find suitable units that are accessible with requirements that have to be met. There is limited housing available and even smaller margin that is accessible. Some landlords don't want to take vouchers or accept them which also makes it difficult. Anne said it is also challenging to get landlords to do needed modifications. It is challenging in rural areas and Anne tries her best to educate people and understand the need. Ian clarified these barriers shouldn't hold them up because there are civic, faith, community organizations that can work together to improve resources and tools. In rural areas it's a very long waitlist and we need to get creative. Nora suggested setting up a phone call or Zoom with Ian, Ann, Anne and Michael (another TC) to



brainstorm ideas that can be implemented in the area. Ian said absolutely and Nora confirmed they will set the meeting up.

Jose asked if there are housing services in Pueblo? Anne Pierce said she has some options but trying to gain more.

Michelle from THI- said that as Nora stated earlier, they are faced with many challenges when it came to housing and they have to be creative. Michelle started working with Nora in 2013 when nobody knew about program. Michelle began by reaching out to landlords that had for rent signs. Having both Ann and Anne aboard made it easier, but they had to think outside of box. Michelle is happy to share suggestions and ideas they used to find housing for their clients.

Frank from Grand Junction gave Anne props for helping a member with a county to county transfer early on. He's hoping there are good resources in Grand Junction as they had a tough time themselves providing housing for Center for Independence. Hoping Anne can breach markets they haven't had success with previously. Anne added she will absolutely do her best to find housing in all areas as well as Grand Junction. Anne tries to dedicate time to each area and focuses on one area at a time.

Katy with HCPF asked if there are any barriers we have not discussed that people would like to bring up.

Monique asked about HUD 811 PRA properties, she sent info over to Greccio properties. Ann said they are well known to division of housing. Monique said they just converted commercial property to units. Ann included a link to applications: <https://cdola.colorado.gov/open-request-applications-rfa> (scroll down to find the 2020-21 Annual RFA for the Creation of Supportive Housing (2021 PSH RFA))

Frank Rivas had a question concerning feedback from Rocky Mountain Health Plans that ramp building is taking up to 9 months and they were charging up to \$14,000 for a ramp. Troublesome to hear this as there are local resources on the Western Slope that can utilize transition set up benefit to build ramps for the cost of materials only. Frank works with a contractor, RSVP Handyman that provides services to the Western Slope as far as Montrose and east towards Glenwood Springs and makes ramps for \$300 to highest end \$1,400 that are ADA compliant. Contractors provide labor free, just need to purchase materials. Ann Watts not surprised to hear this as contractors know lifetime benefit and can take advantage of that with higher pricing. Ian mentioned in the chat that Brothers has their own home modification program. Ann offered solutions such as bringing Habitat in to provide labor and community by community collaboration. Local agencies interested in providing this type of service collaborate to put puzzle together. Ann would like to see program that can do



modifications up to \$5,000 amount and provide family with loan until they get tax credit back from state. It wouldn't touch Medicaid and could also help people not on Medicaid. Ann requested that local resources are shared to collaborate.

Ashley asked if HOA's can restrict housing vouchers. Ann said no they can't restrict vouchers but HOA's can say only "X" number of units can be rentals, but they can't dictate if owner is able to accept voucher as payment of rent. Frank added to Ann's comments on housing vouchers that many landlords strategically increased rent to get outside of requirements, rent went up to \$783 for single bedroom and they have gone out to price at \$800 or higher with additional caveat they need to earn 2-3 times the rent to qualify. This is how they get around saying they don't accept housing vouchers but price them out. Also, discrimination against service animals is an issue. Ann said that sounds familiar with landlords increasing rent and ways landlords try to avoid vouchers. Ann shared that for service animals, Denver Metro Fair Housing Center has good resource to address issues.

Jose Garcia shared in the chat that many of the Property management companies in Pueblo do this and require 3 times income needed plus application fee. Ann Watts confirmed this is going on.

LaShawn with the Love Foundation shared how they address the 2-3 times income limits. They use voucher and social security income that counts towards amount which should suffice for that rent requirement. They educate places that the voucher is another form of income.

Ian shared celebration was in order for their 1<sup>st</sup> successful transition since pandemic started in Steamboat Springs. Due to HUD standards it's extremely difficult as 1 bedroom apartments are \$1500-\$2000. Ian was successful by acting as strong community and developing relationships with landlords to educate them that vouchers are payments, and this is an inclusive community. Take advantage of sharing the inclusive community messaging with civic organizations, chamber of commerce, etc.

Frank Rivas added that he has been able to sell some landlords with the fact that we will be involved on a regular basis to make sure the property is being cared for properly and the member is being supported by Home Health. He states that he acts as an Intermediary that they can call if they have a problem with the tenant.

Amy Dixon said that she sells someone on housing and transition services by sharing with them what a better life it is to get people out of nursing homes and into the community. Amy uses Facebook to help find apartments and whatever else she finds in the community to communicate and request housing. Amy asked if there is a way to know about units that have modifications. Ann said to



contact her, and they have access to a database to see if units have modifications. Ann shared the database for affordable housing, you don't have to pay to use it, but you will need to register: <https://preservationdatabase.org/>

Jose asked to expand affordable housing in Pueblo. Anne Pierce said she is searching all the time and calling units to know if there's anything available and if so what is pricing and she is steadily building relationships there. It's a challenge, doing what she can do calling apartment complexes, Craigslist, Apartments.com and any other resources available to find housing. Ann Watts shared there is some affordable housing but no 811 in Pueblo. Amy asked if there is standard email Anne Pierce sends out? Anne said she a standard email she can share but feels she can form stronger partnership when they hear and talk to her.

Ashly asked if the landlord is adding bedrooms downstairs but doesn't plan to raise rent or add anyone new, would you lose the 3 bedroom voucher? Ann clarified that no they would not lose the voucher.

Jennifer Ochs shared an email following the meeting with a wonderful vision for Colorado neighborhoods. Jennifer asked instead of nursing homes why not build disabled neighborhoods. This way the disabled can live independently and help each other out when needed.

- Nurse hut instead of a guard huts
- Home care services treat the whole neighborhood
- Community building to help residents with independent living
- Businesses could build an office to allow the disabled to work
- Community garden where residents can grow and share their food
- Coop building filled with tools and to provide a workspace to allow residents to have a creative release
- Store front where items made at the cooperative could sold
- Community gym to provide physical and occupational therapy
- Community pool
- Transportation services

Katy thanked everyone for the great discussion, said the Council is aware housing is a huge need and asked if we should create a subgroup to address concerns? Monique Flemings stated a subgroup is not needed but Council needs



to revisit housing concerns on a regular basis. Katy confirmed housing will be addressed frequently and thanked John for his help with the housing discussion.

## 5. Council Updates

4:00 p.m.

Clarice thanked all the speakers for the phenomenal discussion that provides an action plan to move forward. Clarice asked for any updates from Council members.

Neal Waite pointed out the TCA list that the hyperlink had small typo which has been corrected. He was happy to see an updated list and more providers in Boulder County.

LaShawn had a question on TCA's best practice to get that information to update the BUS systems. Nora said the information has never been sent to CM's. Sent individual information to SEP's but they will look at how to do that and will provide more clarity.

- **Council Bylaws Vote-** Clarice shared there were no edits or notes received regarding the Council Bylaws that she screen shared with the group. Clarice reminded the Council that we do have an amendments section in addition to the function and scope of the Council, new members approval, attendance and definitions of responsibilities for existing staff on the Council. If no objections we would like to do vote via Poll option through Google Meets. Vote "Yes" to pass new bylaws and "No" to not pass. Clarice confirmed that only folks that are approved council members can vote. Amy Dixon put in chat she is in favor of bylaws but not sure how to vote with the online poll. Clarice went through process for more clarification. The final vote was 12 Yes votes to 0 No votes. The Council Bylaws were approved.
- **Rural Issues Follow Up-** Katy shared we would like to follow up on conversation in December, much of it was on housing and zero income which we will discuss in February. Opened up discussion to folks for how they felt. Should we continue to have rural conversations or have a subgroup? Clarice suggested having this on the agenda every other month, we can get creative for best way to address issue. Katy stated it will part of discussion moving forward to always have rural lens on how members are affected.

## 6. Open Forum

4:20 p.m.

Katy opened discussion up to anyone that has a comment or question about the program.

Ian shared that he loves the group and happy to have this discussion and opportunity to share issues. Katy thanked for Ian and Frank for joining so we can know what's going on western slope.

LaShawn asked about the process for new TCA's wanting to become providers. Nora clarified the Council does not review new TCA's wanting to become providers. Nora



confirmed the enrollment application is submitted to Gainwell, a HCPF contractor, and they do an initial review for technical issues. Gainwell sends the reviewed application to Nora and she reviews and approves or doesn't approve based on evaluation.

## 7. Adjourn

4:30 p.m.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request for persons with disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities and language services for individuals whose first language is not English may be provided upon request. Please notify John Barry at [john.r.barry@state.co.us](mailto:john.r.barry@state.co.us) or the 504/ADA Coordinator at [hcpf504ada@state.co.us](mailto:hcpf504ada@state.co.us) at least one week prior to the meeting to make arrangements.

