

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
CONSUMER RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
March 13, 2020**



**ATTENDEES:** Valerie Handy Bey, Eileen Cotton, Mark Council, Anthony Williams, Armstead Hetherington, Lisa Hoffman, William Knight, James Barnes, Mr. Tate, Linda Wise, Maggie Shearin, Angie Purnell, George Marsh-Bey, Linda Mason Kennedy Tate, Dorsheena Hagler, Athenia Haniotis, Richard Mayo. Staff: Malcolm Williams, Eddie Martin, Jr., Kevin Lindamood, Lisa Hoffman

**I. INTRODUCTION AND READ GROUP AGREEMENTS:** Armstead Hetherington

**II. REVIEW OF MINUTES:** Anthony Williams made a motion and Richard Mayo seconded that motion to approve February 14 and February 28, 2020 meeting minutes. **By unanimous vote, both minutes were approved by the committee.**

**III. CORONAVIRUS AND THE HCH COMMUNITY:** Kevin Lindamood, President and CEO presented. He explained how the operation of the agency has changed in terms of the short term – everyone, including staff will have to be screened when entering the building. New behavior patterns, for everyone.

Explained the virus and the disease:

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illnesses such as the common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). In 2019, a new coronavirus was identified as the cause of a disease outbreak that originated in China.
- The virus is now known as the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- Cases of COVID-19 have been reported in a growing number of countries, including the U.S. Public health groups, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are monitoring the situation and posting updates on their websites. WHO declared a global pandemic in March 2020. These groups have also issued recommendations for preventing and treating the illness.
- People who are older or have existing chronic medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, may be at higher risk of serious illness. This is similar to what is seen with other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza.
- The mortality rate is much higher than we have ever experienced. What the international and global health community is trying to do is slow the spread of this disease, so it doesn't travel as rapidly as it seems to be travelling.
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 may appear two to 14 days after exposure and can include:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Other symptoms can include: tiredness, aches, runny nose, sore throat
- The severity of COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild to severe. Some people have no symptoms, which is another cause for alarm.

**Everyone deserves to go home.**

- Transmission first happened from animal to people, but it spreads between people in close contact with each other within 6 feet, via respiratory droplets from a cough or sneeze, it may also spread via exposed surfaces and it is unclear how long the virus can live on those surfaces – study has ranged from a day to a few days, depending on the type of surface.
- Center for Disease Control is encouraging everyone to get a flu shot – there is no vaccine for this particular illness, but it is very important to ensure that people are protected from other kinds of illness. Ask to encourage others to get the flu shot
- Take everyday prevention actions to stop the spread of germs: washing your hands, using hand sanitizer, if you sneeze cover that in a tissue or the cuff of your arms

Explained what HCH is doing:

- Starting today, are universally screening all: clients, visitors, postman and staff. The questions entail travel, exposure to someone else who have COVID, and symptoms might be experiencing
- Discontinued any staff member that are traveling for work
- Discontinued any attendance at conferences or large meetings
- Discontinued any meetings at the agency that are not related to the agency
- Asking groups/committees like board and board committee meeting moving forward to meet via teleconference, meeting less frequently, or minimizing the group of people meeting
- Asking staff that are non-client facing to telework
- Taking the steps that are possible to halt the spread of the virus and to make sure that the agency is protecting client and staff safety, and meeting as much of the health care need as possible. Also preparing for possibilities of what happens if there is an exposure and a wide range of staff need to isolate.

Questions/Comments:

Comment: Suggested that the clients need to be informed before changes take place.

Response: Explained because from the national perspective and the state perspective there are things that the agency just doesn't know yet and are having to adjust as soon as they receive the information.

Question: What about giving out mask to everyone?

Answer: Under normal circumstances, would want to give a mask to anyone who has any symptoms of anything that could be spread. Challenge: international shortage of basic surgical mask.

Question: Where do people go that don't have a stable place to stay and need to be quarantined?

Answer: This question has already been raised to the local public health authorities, homeless services system, and now to the Maryland Dept. of Health and public health leaders. This remains a platform of the agency advocacy. Waiting on guidance. Are also exploring other options that public health authorities can take:

- prevent all evictions and foreclosures for the next 6 weeks – these are policy recommendations that every state in the country is working to address
- make sure that any re-certifications for food stamps, Medicaid, cash assistance that may come up in the next 6 weeks, make sure that it is extended so that people don't lose their benefits during this health crisis

Ask the committee to let the agency know if there are other things that they should be advocating for

Question: Clients provided services via telephone?

Answer: Working on telehealth – it is unclear if that would include phones without a HIPAA approved video component. If that is something that the agency can legally do, that option will be implemented – working on getting more information

Question: Regarding the clients sleeping on the porch and what is being done about them during this outbreak?

Answer: The people on the porch are constantly rotating. Will not make them leave the porch. Suggestion made to keep them informed regarding the virus and changes made

Comment: Eventually, might have to limit the health facilities to people with appointments, but will need a place to get people off the street.

Suggestion: Agency getting a double-sided board to put all of the updated information, so that people can see it outside as well as in the lobby

**IV. CLIENT COMPLAINT PROCESS:** Lisa Hoffman, Compliance Coordinator will postpone this agenda item until the next meeting. There were complaints brought up at this meeting:

- Client complained of the attitudes from some of the agency staff, especially security – not a welcome atmosphere
- There are constant complaints from clients regarding the first floor staff lack of customer service. These are complaints that have been consistent way before this pandemic

**V. NEXT STEPS:**

Canceled: Baltimore Center Stage “Where We Stand” Play, Constellation: Free Market and Client Art Show.

The next meeting will not take place in-person, looking at teleconferencing. Asked the committee to think about the best way to get the most updated information to them and get it ASAP. Looking at via text or conference calls.

**NEXT MEETING: Friday, March 27, 2020**