



Minutes:

**CROSS PROBLEMS AND HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS NETWORK**

Monday, September 17, 2018

2:30 pm, LGH conference room, Burle Business Center

United Way  
of Lancaster County

ATTENDANCE

Chair Doug Hopwood presided as chair.  
See attached sign-in sheets for attendants.

WELCOME

Doug opened the meeting with welcome and introductions. He shared that the Mayor will be in attendance at today's meeting. Agendas, minutes, and all materials are posted online on the 211 website: [www.pa211east.org](http://www.pa211east.org)

FOCUS TOPICS

**Safe Haven**, Presented by Marcy Mercer

There is a Safe Haven bassinet/crib at the entrance to Women and Babies Hospital and the Emergency Department at Lancaster General Hospital. There is a safe cord to pull at each bassinet location that rings a silent alarm for staff notification that a baby has been put in the bassinet. Medical forms for parents to anonymously return for the medical history of the baby. In Pennsylvania, the baby must be less than 28 days old and not physically or sexually abused. If abuse is found, a legal investigation is started. Once the baby is accepted at the hospital, Children and Youth takes over the case once child is medically cleared. Age determination and applicable rules is decided by Children and Youth.

The Safe Haven Act is in place throughout all 50 states and provides a safe and legal option for parents to hand over their baby at a hospital. Infants can also be handed to a police officer under the 2014 addendum. Every state has different laws. In the past there were situations in Lancaster County where babies were abandoned; this led to the PA Safe Haven law. Every hospital has this at their facility. Hospitals were the chosen institution as they are open 24 hours every day. Since 2003, 36 babies have been turned into Safe Haven sites. Individuals can access information on the Safe Haven website, as well as the Safe Haven crisis line. Under the law, there is an option for parents to regain custody of their child, after approval is given by the Children and Youth Agency. Anyone can drop off any infant with no questions asked.

The Safe Haven Committee meets twice a year with a multidisciplinary team. Staff work with high risk populations in schools, colleges, and other areas where individuals of child-bearing demographics would interact. Anyone interested in being on the committee can contact Marcy or Maria.

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### **Unthinkable Group and Lancaster County Coalition to End Homelessness (LCCEH),**

Presented by Jen Koppel, Cathy Hartley, and Ross Polvara

LCCEH has been in place for the last 8 years. Three years ago, they moved from the County to Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health (LG Health). The contract with LG Health is for 7 years, but the Coalition must look at sustainability with or without the health system. When the LCCEH Governance Board started to look at strategic planning and sustainability, they realized they did not have the skills to adequately complete this task. An opportunity presented itself from the Unthinkable Group as a consultant for strategic planning. Unthinkable is working with the Coalition to see the needs of the community. Barriers are being assessed and ways to address these developed.

The consultants are very pleased to be here working in our community. Both partners came from large corporations but felt a pull to work with social organizations. Their firm provides strategic design thinking and human centered work. Everything they do starts with clients (in our project this is individuals experiencing homelessness). Unthinkable is hoping to provide the user perspective after completing a 9 week project. They are meeting with providers and the Governance Board during their time here. This is Unthinkable's first homeless population study. For the first few weeks, they are looking at a broad range of services and have met with broader community groups (ex: LG Health, Lancaster County Prison, Tabor Community Services, Water Street Mission, clients, regional hubs, faith based organizations), and are scheduled to meet with landlords in the coming weeks.

The consultants stressed the importance of the Coalition, but also its collaboration with partners. At the end of the investigation, they will provide actionable projects/tasks for both the short and long term. They are also looking at broader partnerships and address how the Coalition could collaborate better with their current partners, reach partners on the edges, and engage new partners. Currently, the Coalition as a whole is funded by County (Federal) and Federal funds, with some additional funds from the United Way. (All County and Federal funds are federal dollars that come from Housing and Urban Development (HUD)). These funds are strict with contingencies (not flexible funds); these funds are also not predictable or guaranteed. By looking outside of these fund streams, the community at large can be more widely served. The consultants will investigate alternative funding sources.

Common themes that have been made visible are long wait times and data sharing/lack of sharing. The consultants will look at common themes and issues to develop projects for the Coalition. Identification is needed of the story that the broad Coalition wants to tell. The consultants are also looking to develop a model that could be used outside of Lancaster County, and create innovative solutions based on a variety of viewpoints.

### **Mayor Sorace, Introduction by Milzy Carrasco**

The Director of Neighborhood engagement, Milzy Carrasco, introduced Mayor Sorace. The Mayor's team is working with the Coalition on the homeless population. The team stressed that there are not boundaries to the city; people move and transition. Grant funds awarded to the city for homeless services are passed directly to the Coalition.

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The Mayor's first introduction to the system was with the non-compliant landlording issue in the city. She singly had to make the decision to make a large number of individuals homeless and add to an already full homeless system. This was difficult work for the team. Some individuals were housed and some were not interested in assistance. This was a learning opportunity on the homeless system. There will be continued property condemnations as the Mayor's office continues to ensure safe housing. Her team is also looking to work on prevention of condemnations (addressing smaller issues that lead up to the final condemnation issue). Homelessness manifests itself differently and can be perceived incorrectly. Continued collaboration is needed to address multifactorial issues of homelessness.

Affordable housing is needed. The question was asked if there are safe, livable boarding house options. This is a zoning issue that can be brought before the zoning hearing board. This process involves an open forum followed by voting. The Mayor's team is working to identify landlords willing to manage boarding houses.

The service providers expressed gratitude for the willingness of the Mayor's office to attend this meeting. Continued communication is to be applauded. Members also expressed issues with "fast-tracking" the London evictions over the number of clients already waiting. This also showed issues with housing clients with criminal backgrounds. The Mayor's office is working with landlords that are willing to help.

The Mayor opened the floor for discussion. Providers shared the need for shelter space available year-round for those who cannot be served by current options. Mayor Sorace expressed willingness to have a follow-up meeting to discuss shelter needs. Low barrier emergency shelter is needed. The Mayor's office to send out a questionnaire to the group for areas where they can help. Mayor Sorace provided the Housing Hotline for landlord and/or unsafe housing issues (for Lancaster City only, not County-wide; issues in the county are the responsibility of the municipality): 717.291.4706. Ongoing MDJ education is occurring on landlord and tenant rights.

### CHART UPDATES

No update

### CASEWORTHY UPDATES

No update

### SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER UPDATES

No update

### AGENCY GOOD NEWS, SHARING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Healthy Beginnings is hiring a Masters of Social Work (MSW) position with Drug and Alcohol background; this position is posted on the Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health website.

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Domestic Violence Services is looking for a bilingual MSW position.

The Salvation Army Coats for Kids event is this weekend.

United Disabilities Services is holding an open house this Thursday from 4-7 PM.

St. Joseph's Children's Health Initiatives is hosting two events coming up: a parenting session and an additional session

The Christmas Eve Turkey Giveaway at Clipper Stadium will be held the Saturday before Christmas.

Calvary Treasures Thrift Shop has a shed with used refrigerators for sale. Their phone number is 717.824.8826.

Anyone impacted by flooding should call 211. They are working with PEMA for assistance (renters and/or owners).

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 2:30 pm at Burle Industries, New Holland Avenue, Lancaster.

Minutes and Agendas are posted to: [www.PA211East.org](http://www.PA211East.org).

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Toni at [gainer@uwlanc.org](mailto:gainer@uwlanc.org)

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