**CRC Advisory Minutes**

3/7/19

**Present:** Elena Chace, Jessica Clark, Melanie Cohn-Hopwood, Brianne Edwardsberry, Eric Hanson, Petrina Jacob, Sarah Taddei.

**Excused:** Martha Southworth (Intake/Mental Health- currently not represented)

**Advisory members’ action steps/follow-up requests:**

* **Please share minutes in full or in part as you deem appropriate.**
* **Before next meeting please ask if your team has any feedback, questions, project ideas, resource sharing or topic suggestions for staff meeting review.**
* **Please do review information on Keeping SSI When Hospitalized with Inpatient teams**
* **Do teams have any experience with how Options Counseling works in practice?**

**Next meeting: Thurs June 13, 12:00 - 1:00**

***Style note****- Agenda in black text; discussion, further information and tasks in* ***purple****.*

**Selected Website updates**

* Updated [**Cancer- Financial Assistance**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_PB-CA_Spec%20Pops-CancerPts.html) page (*Petrina*)
* Updated **Programs without Immigration Requirements** patient handouts: [Brief](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/SpecificPopulations/SP_Immigrants_Prms_Undoc/Programs%20Without%20Immigration%20Requirements_short_vs.pdf) version, [Brief - Spanish](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/SpecificPopulations/SP_Immigrants_Prms_Undoc/Programs%20Without%20Immigration%20Requirements_short_vs_Spanish.pdf) version, [Detailed](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/SpecificPopulations/SP_Immigrants_Prms_Undoc/Programs%20Without%20Immigration%20Requirements.pdf) versions (*Elena*)
* **SNAP and Government Shutdown Flyers:** [English](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/Nutrition/Govt_shutdown-Impact_on_Feb_SNAP_2-15-19.pdf) and [Spanish](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/Nutrition/Govt_shutdown-Impact_on_Feb_SNAP_2-15-19-SPANISH.pdf) (Rev 2-15-19)
  + **Note: SNAP benefits should have gone out early this month to most households to minimize the long gap from February benefits distributed early due to the Government Shutdown.**

**Team feedback, questions, project ideas and/or resource sharing?**

* **Expediting Emergency Visas- Congressional staffer turnover-** Rep Capuano’s immigration specialistKate Auspitz was terrific. She was not kept on by Ayanna Pressley. Elena tracked down the person who has that role for Rep Pressley (Ronald Claude, can best be reached via email at [ronald.claude@mail.house.gov](mailto:ronald.claude@mail.house.gov). He does not currently have an operational office phone or fax.) But raises other questions- best to go through Representatives’ offices or Senatorial for example? Even though we’ve had them in to talk before, **consider bringing them in again for staff meeting**- review Humanitarian Parole, criteria (ties to home country), etc. (Not just Oncology- transplant, Pedi, ICUs). **Ellen to gather additional information off-line about questions and determine best way to proceed.**
* **Resources to share (thanks!):**
  + [**The Phoenix**](https://thephoenix.org/) gym - offers a free sober active community to individuals who have suffered from a substance use disorder and to those who choose a sober life. Using a peer support model, we help members heal and rebuild their lives while also striving to eliminate stigma around recovery. From CrossFit and climbing, to hiking, running, cycling, yoga and more, we believe fostering human connections in mental, physical and spiritual fitness is a powerful way to rebuild wounded bodies and spirits, and restore hope. The only membership fee is 48 hours of continuous sobriety… National. Locations in Boston, Woburn, Lowell, Webster and Bourne MA.
  + [**Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing (GRASP)**](http://grasphelp.org/)- created to offer understanding, compassion, and support for those who have lost someone they love through addiction and overdose. National. MA Chapters- Falmouth, Somerville, Western MA, Charlestown, Everett and Salem
* **Discussion- using our resource specialists.** Discussion in one team- want to utilize, but seem to be a disconnect, don’t remember or don’t know if we help in the ways needed. No answers at this time, but additional discussion about needs/gap – need people to assist with applications, finding therapists (search by insurance), helping with time-consuming tasks (example of rare, but time consuming- helping family complete online application for emergency visa). **Worth additional discussion, research to fill these needs. See Options counseling below.**
  + **Additional resource mentioned for finding docs/psychiatrists –**[Zocdoc](https://www.zocdoc.com/). Partners include Tufts Medical Center, Mount Sinai.

**Additional Updates, Reminders and Highlights**

* **Options Counseling (**[**Newsletter article**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/news/2019/2-Newsletter.html#OptionsCounseling)**) -** a **free** program that’s open to anyone over age 17 with a disability and people over 60. **Can assist with completing applications** **and “follow-up as long as needed”.**

Options Counseling Services

* are available by telephone, in-person or email/web
* can be provided at home, at an agency, **a hospital**, rehab or nursing facility
  + Funded by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.   
    **Call MassOptions toll free at 1-844-422-6277 or see the** [MassOptions website](https://www.massoptions.org/massoptions/)**.**
  + **Ask if they’ll present at staff meeting? Yes- group thinks this would be useful.**
  + **CRC welcomes any staff feedback on how this works in practice.**
* **Tip of the Month (March)**
  + **Did you know that there are new ways people can get subsidized housing applications and update their existing public housing applications?** 
    - [**CHAMP**](https://publichousingapplication.ocd.state.ma.us/about_us/) (the Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Public-Housing) **allows those with existing state public housing applications to update their applications all at once**- say with a new address. In the near future you should be able to apply to **state-aided public housing** through the site! (Unfortunately vouchers and federally subsidized public housing units are not yet available through this site.)
    - [**HousingWorks.net**](https://www.housingworks.net/) **allows you to download applications**– they report for ALL subsidized and affordable applications in the area- including applications for federal, voucher and privately managed properties. (**This site also is a good place to search for open waitlists.)**
  + **Will add CHAMP and update HousingWorks on our housing handouts- when we have more detailed information (may require extensive re-write)**
* **Winter Moratorium on Heat Related Shut-Offs extended to April 1 (for those with documented “**[**financial hardship**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_Utilities_Shut-off_Protection.htm#Financial)**”)**
  + **See our** [**Mass. Utility Assistance Handout**](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/UtilitiesHandout.pdf)
* **New website content- from case request: SNAP while hospitalized**
  + **Acute Hospital Stays**- While someone is inpatient, their EBT card stays active and their SNAP benefits are accessible. The account will automatically close if it is not used for 365 days. Generally, you do **NOT** have to report hospitalization to DTA to maintain your SNAP benefits, but if you are receiving other assistance from DTA (like EAEDC), they may have more strict reporting rules that would require that you do report to keep your benefits. If you do not use your benefits for one year, you must reapply. (On [SNAP](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/Nutrition/BN_Nutrition_FoodStamps.html#SpecialTopics) page)
  + **Led to discussion of SSI While Hospitalized -reviewed the following – important for staff to be familiar with this, can be important intervention to watch for situations where those with extended hospitalizations have SSI and may be at risk of losing SSI and then housing.**

**SSI is needs based and benefit level is based on living situation. With extended hospitalization paid by Medicaid, SSA is notified and will cut-off benefits.**

**Keeping Full Benefits While Institutionalized (90 days maximum)**

Generally SSI benefits are greatly reduced when one is institutionalized. Full benefits may be maintained for up to 90 days **if** the placement will be for 90 days or less **and** if maintaining full benefits is necessary to maintain the home or living arrangement while in the facility.

To retain full benefits, one must notify SSA and submit relevant documentation before discharge or by the 90th day, whichever is earlier. Required documentation includes a doctor’s note that the expected stay is 90 days or less and a statement from the patient (or someone knowledgeable about the circumstances) to the effect that full SSI benefits are needed to maintain the living situation.

* + See the SSI Spotlight on [Continued SSI Benefits for Persons Who Are Temporarily Institutionalized](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-temp-institution.htm).
  + **(Find this on our SSI/SSDI Page under SSI >** [**For Those Already on SSI**](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_PB-CA_SSI-SSDI.html#AlreadyOnSSI)**)**
  + **This does not protect benefits for those who are homeless. But should be able to be resumed relatively quickly on discharge**
  + **None of above applies to SSDI-** SSDI is not needs based and does not vary based on living situation.
* **New website content- also from a case request: MA Fair Labor Laws** - protects workers from exploitation (On [Employment](http://healthcare.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_Employment.html) page; and new keywords added: [Fair Labor Laws](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_Employment.html#FairLaborLaws) and [Labor Laws](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_Employment.html#FairLaborLaws)- protections against exploitation)
  + [MA Attorney General's **Fair Labor Division**](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/the-attorney-generals-fair-labor-division)
    - [**Protections Against Retaliation**](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protections-against-retaliation) - includes fact sheets in multiple languages.
      * Workplace protections include:
        + The right to be paid a legal rate of pay, in full and on time, including: Minimum wage, Overtime
        + The right to be free from sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination on the job
        + The right to a safe and healthy workplace
        + The right to organize
        + The right to be classified properly as an employee
      * **Immigrant workers are protected** - Wage and hour laws apply to all workers, regardless of immigration status, **including undocumented workers**. If an employer reports or threatens to report a worker to immigration authorities because the worker complained about a violation of their rights, the employer can be prosecuted and/or subject to civil penalties.
        + Fact sheet [**Advisory on the wage and hour rights of immigrant workers**](https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/05/zu/AG%2520Advisory%2520Immigrant%2520Workers%2520Rights.pdf) is also available in multiple languages on the [site](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/protections-against-retaliation).
    - [**Wage Theft Legal Clinics**](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/free-wage-theft-legal-clinic) (monthly)
* **New website content- from case request:** **Medical Records Requests** **- for supporting materials not shared by** [**electronic records request**](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_PB-CA_SSI-SSDI.html#ElectronicRecords)(which only transfers the official medical record. Additional forms or supporting materials, such as from an MD's office, need to be transferred separately.
  + **Staff can facilitate requests for these additional forms by filling out an MGH fax cover sheet** with patient’s name, DOB, the record request, name of the facility, and where records should be sent. This request should be faxed to Health Information Services at 617-643-9379. This process is considered continuity of care, so a release of information is not typically needed. If the information requested is considered to be too sensitive and does require a release, the sender will be contacted and asked to provide a signed release. **Tip:** if you write “STAT” on the cover sheet they will respond within 24 hours.
  + **CRC to research- what rights do applicants have- shouldn’t SSA staff be assisting patients to get required documentation? (In this case SSA sent letter to pt’s home with deadline within a week, patient would be hospitalized beyond that time.)**
* [**Taxes**](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/New%20Site/Basic%20Needs/BN_PB_CA_FinancialAssist.html#TaxReturns) **- Free Filing Assistance**- These resources are for people with disabilities, seniors, and Low to Moderate-income families (income limits vary by program). See the [newsletter article](http://healthcarestage.partners.org/ss/ssframebottom/staffresources/news/2019/2-Newsletter.html#TaxAssist).

**Next Meeting**

* **Thurs June 13, 12:00 - 1:00, SS Conf room**