

Gig Harbor Key Peninsula Housing & Homeless Coalition -

Meeting Agenda -October 17, 2024

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

*-PC Human Services - Valeri Almony -

*TPCHD - Jennie Schoeppe -

Presentations:

*Lindsay Finney MSW, LICSW | Mental Health Clinician - Social Worker

Mary Bridge Pediatric Care Continuum – Manager of Children’s Advocacy Center of Pierce County

Phone: 253-403- 7899 | Email: lfinney@multicare.org

Pierce County “Hub Data” as of 10/11/2024 (Family Promise of Pierce County)

Families on waitlist for housing - 60

Children - 113

Children Under 3 - 17

Children 3-5 yrs old - 10

Children over 5: - 82

Current count of children waiting for emergency shelters - 137

Community Events:

Oct. 18 - TCC GH “Campus Job Fair” - 10am - 1:00 pm

Oct. 21 - Fentanyl Town Hall - Key Peninsula Civic Center - 7:00 p.m.

Nov. 19 - TCC GH “English Acquisition Classes” - Sign Up.

*****SVdP Community Resource Center** 4009 South 56th St, Tacoma WA 98409

Open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10am - 3pm

For client referrals, email assistance@svdptacoma.org

For information on programs or volunteering, visit: <https://www.svdptacoma.org/>

***A University of Washington professor and author offers a **compelling analysis of the root causes of homelessness in our region** in this video clip.

Prevention Pilot Update -

*****Aging Homeless Crisis** - Age-related challenges to housing security include the struggle to afford rent increases on a fixed income, the need for accessible housing and additional services, and increasing vulnerabilities and risk factors, such as physical and cognitive disabilities

***** Food Backpacks 4 Kids's /, Food 4 All,** has two new volunteer opportunities:

Please email info@foodbackpacks4kids.org for more information and use the link below to sign up for volunteering at our new farm.

.Washington State Parks - Michael Farley, Park Ranger 3 / Asst. Area Mgr So. Sound Joemma Beach, Penrose Pt. Kopachuck, Jarrell Cove, Hope, Harstine&McMicken Isl. St.

***Kitsap Legal Services** - www.kitsaplegalservices.org 360) 479-6125

***Protecting our youth with facts about fentanyl -**

Chelsea Amato [Fentanyl-Facts-Not-Fear-Flyer-EnglishDownload](#)

Just over 3 years ago, Pierce County Council passed a 0.1% sales tax to fund work to improve Behavioral Health in our community. They did so as more people and more younger people were dying of fentanyl overdose at heartbreaking rates. January 2020–June 2022, 60 people under age 24 died of fentanyl overdose in Pierce County. And fentanyl was involved in another 342 drug-poisoning-related emergency visits.

Tacoma-Pierce County Opioid Task Force gave us funds to create and run a youth fentanyl prevention campaign last year.

Public health at its best. This work is an example of what public health does best: Confront big health threats to our most vulnerable neighbors. In this case, that's youth at risk of fentanyl overdose.

We used approaches honed during our [award-winning responses to complex public health threats](#), like COVID-19 and mpox, to partner with the community and reach our youth. We:

- Talked face-to-face with people in our community.
- Gathered local data to learn more about the youth who need help.
- Asked local youth to help develop messages.
- Educated youth about fentanyl and how to make decisions that reduce harm.
- Worked closely with local groups that work with youth.

Reaching youth where they are—millions of times.

You probably saw our fentanyl facts messages—especially if you're a younger person. In a few short months, we launched a campaign that drew 25.45 million ad impressions and 75,000 visits to our new fentanylfacts.org website. We ran the ads where kids go online.

Grants went to: Clover Park School District Innovative Change Makers
 Multicultural Cultural Child Family Hope Center Our Church Foundation Priceless
 Inspiration Foundation, Recovery Cafe Orting, Tahoma Indian Center Therapy Fund
 Foundation

What's next? - Our work on this campaign was a constant reminder of fentanyl's unique danger and how much work we all have left. Fentanyl presents an ongoing threat to you. Fentanyl is a strong opioid—as much as 50 times stronger than heroin. An amount as small as 2 grains of salt can cause an overdose. And it can be mixed into other drugs like pills, meth, cocaine, or molly without you knowing because you can't taste or smell it.

It's never safe for youth to use illicit drugs. But we know some do—and in the age of fentanyl, far too many of them overdose. That's why our messaging offers ways youth can stay safer if they use drugs. In public health, we call it harm reduction.

We make sure youth know it's only safe to use drugs prescribed by your doctor. We also help them understand [they can stay safer when they:](#)

Use test strips. Carry naloxone. Don't use alone.

Or don't use in the first place.

Learn more at FentanylFacts.org. [Follow our social media accounts](#) and [sign up for the Your Reliable Source blog](#) for regular updates on this and other important public health topics.

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2023 Healthy Youth Survey results offer signs of hope and resiliency among Washington students



Featured Article

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Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Among Older Adults

Age-related challenges to housing security include the struggle to afford rent increases on a fixed income, the need for accessible housing and additional services, and increasing vulnerabilities and risk factors, such as physical and cognitive disabilities. Photo credit: iStock.com/FamVeld

In October 2023, the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University (JCHS) hosted "[Older Adults' Pathways Into – and Out of – Housing Insecurity and Homelessness](#)," an event to discuss new research on housing stability challenges that older adults in Massachusetts face and some of the programs and services in place to help mitigate those challenges. Samara Scheckler, a research associate at JCHS, presented research findings, and Emily Cooper, chief housing officer for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and a special advisor on housing at MassHealth, and LaTanya Wright, director of outreach at Hearth, shared their experiences serving older adults in the field.

Research Contextualizes Challenges and Needs

Scheckler framed the conversation by presenting research that she and her JCHS colleagues have conducted on the prevalence of homelessness and housing insecurity among older adults in Massachusetts, the barriers and challenges these older adults must overcome, and the types of services they might need. For this research,

Scheckler defined "older adults" as those 50 and older, noting that individuals experiencing homelessness typically exhibit aging conditions such as memory loss, falls, and functional impairment at younger ages than do housed individuals. In addition to those experiencing homelessness, the researchers considered individuals who were housing insecure, meaning that they had difficulty paying rent, paid a large portion of their income toward rent, lived in overcrowded housing, or moved frequently. The researchers differentiated between those who had been chronically homeless and aged into the category of older adults and those who suddenly became homeless at an older age.

The researchers used data from the Massachusetts Homeless Management Information System and conducted interviews with practitioners from organizations in Boston's Continuum of Care. Scheckler reported that the 65 and older age group is the fastest growing among those experiencing homelessness. In 2020, one-third of the chronically homeless population was age 55 or older. Older adults are less likely to have earned income and are more likely than younger adults experiencing homelessness to rely on public benefit programs. Age-related challenges to housing security include the struggle to afford rent increases on a fixed income and the need for accessible housing and additional services, which further narrow the already limited supply range of suitable units. Aging also involves increasing vulnerabilities and risk factors, such as physical and cognitive disabilities, which are further compounded by the lack of long-term care services and healthcare access. In sum, said Scheckler, "Age intersects with other factors that increase the risk of housing insecurity, and older adults may rely more heavily on social policy and public programs to remain stably housed."

Although older adults may have a greater need for public programs, they also face additional barriers to accessing those supports. For example, qualifying for Social Security disability insurance may take too long, and modifying a home for aging in place may be too expensive or prohibited for renters. Shelters typically require people to be able to feed and bathe themselves — areas for which older adults might need help. Some services may be available only after a crisis occurs, limiting the potential for preventative approaches. Age-related factors such as cognitive decline or lack of technological literacy, which housing instability can worsen, may prevent older adults from accessing needed services. Scheckler and her colleagues made several recommendations based on their research. They suggested reducing application and wait times for services, simplified application processes, low-barrier services, building trust, case management, and continuous contact to encourage service providers to be more proactive and intervene before the loss of housing; issuing small amounts of financial assistance to keep people housed; offering assistance for home modifications; and increasing options for affordable housing with services.

Prevention and Mitigation

Cooper reinforced the importance of focusing on prevention — intervening before a loss of housing — and serving those already experiencing homelessness. In terms of keeping people housed, she noted that the state has 110,000 subsidized housing units for older adults. Cooper believes that resident services coordinators, who played a critical role in keeping people safe during the coronavirus pandemic, should be in each building to support resident health and wellness. The state also is investing in eviction prevention, stationing service providers in housing courts to respond to crises that might otherwise lead to eviction. Although MassHealth cannot use its Medicaid funds to construct or rent housing, it can use them for "health-related social needs services," including housing search support and home modifications. Massachusetts Medicaid helps people find and move into housing by assisting with paperwork and helping residents adjust to new housing, often through community service providers who bill Medicaid for their services. One of those providers is Hearth, a nonprofit provider with the mission of eliminating homelessness among the elderly. Wright said that Hearth works to prevent homelessness through landlord mitigation, helping older adults find resources for arrears and utilities, and helping individuals get back into housing through case management. Hearth also has 228 housing units with onsite services. Wright underscored the need for more funding for assisted living, home modifications, and supportive services.

Policy Directions

"There's a strong need to have structures in place to address not only the current elderly population but [also] ... to prepare for the [next] generation" who will age into these challenges, said Wright. Policymakers and service providers must address current challenges and anticipate needs as people age amidst mounting affordability pressures. Cooper said that one helpful approach would be to build stronger connections between service organizations that target homelessness and elder services organizations such as the Area Agencies on Aging. The populations these organizations serve overlap, and although they are the primary points of intake for older adults with housing insecurity, they lack each other's knowledge and capacities. Ultimately, Cooper emphasized, the underlying problem is the insufficient supply of affordable housing. "[The more we can build, the better off we are in preventing some of these people [from] becoming homeless and helping people who are homeless move into housing."

TPCHD UpdateContact: [DOH Communications](#)**OLYMPIA** – The statewide 2023 Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) results are now available, representing the voices of over 217,000 Washington students in grades 6-12. The survey focuses on the health and well-being of young people. In 2023, students reported improved health behaviors and mental health along with increased social support. While concerns remain, the findings suggest positive changes in adolescent health and well-being.

These results are an opportunity to carry this momentum forward and continue focusing on prevention and resiliency among youth in Washington.

“The Healthy Youth Survey provides educators and policymakers with important insight into our students’ well-being,” said State Superintendent Chris Reykdal. “Our students are telling us that they are continuing to recover from the impacts of the pandemic—they are resilient, and hopeful, and they are getting access to the supports they need. While we still have work to do, the focused work of our educators, the support of our families and community members, and the resources provided by our Legislature are making a difference.”

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a large decrease, roughly 50%, in most youth substance use. While the long-term impacts are unknown, in 2023 we see that substance use has mostly remained stable, both in Washington and nationally, according to the 2023 HYS and Monitoring the Future surveys. Among 10th grade Washington State HYS participants in 2023:

- 8% reported current vaping
- 9% reported current alcohol use
- 8% reported current cannabis use

Exceptions to this stable trend were increases in misuse of prescription drugs, pain killers, and other illegal drugs compared to 2021. While representing a relatively small proportion of students overall (each under 3%), these findings show more prevention work is needed. There was also an increase in 2023 in the number of 10th graders who reported ever having alcohol, but this remains lower than students reported in 2018 (49% in 2018; 32% in 2021; 40% in 2023).

Will Lukela, Agency Director of the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board advocates for continued collaboration, “The Liquor and Cannabis Board’s focus is on preventing youth access to alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, and vapor products and these data make it clear, comprehensive prevention services need to remain a top priority.”

Mental health outcomes among 10th graders are improving, but remain highly concerning, especially for youth who already face more barriers to mental health support. According to the new data, depressive feelings and contemplation or planning suicide significantly decreased from 2021 to 2023. Even so, 30% of 10th graders reported persistent depressive feelings, and nearly 15% reported contemplating suicide. While this is an unacceptable level of youth struggling with suicidal thoughts, it is also the lowest rate we have seen in Washington in 20 years.

The same improving trends seen among youth in general were also seen among sexually or gender-diverse (LGBTQ+) youth and those reporting a disability. However, many of these students still experience far higher levels of mental health issues. Depressive feelings were nearly two times

higher for students who identify as female compared to male, more than two times higher for LGBTQ+ youth, and three times higher among students identifying as having a disability.

“We hope to leverage these positive trends in the 2023 survey to close disparity gaps where they exist in communities throughout our state. We want to ensure we continue to see positive trends for years to come for all families and communities. It is important to maintain focus on adolescent substance use and mental health, while also using prevention strategies to address other challenges facing young people including disordered eating and violence,” adds Michael Langer, Assistant Director at the Washington State Health Care Authority.

10th graders report significant increases in social support. Compared to 2021, more students reported:

- Having adults to turn to when feeling depressed (50% in 2021 vs. 59% in 2023)
- Having people from school who would help them (72% in 2021 vs. 77% in 2023)
- Receiving information from their school about the warning signs of suicide (47% in 2021 vs. 56% in 2023)
- Greater levels of success on academic indicators (52% in 2021 vs. 56% in 2023)

“Overall, we are encouraged by these results after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic,” shared Dr. Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, a pediatrician and Chief Science Officer at the Washington State

Resource Links / Materials:

- Greater Lakes www.glmhc.org
- Refugee Women’s Alliance - www.rewa.org
- Legal Aid www.tacomaprobono.org
- Tacoma Rescue Mission www.trm.org
- MDC www.mdc-hope.org
- Work Force Central www.workforce-central.org
- Blue Star Families www.bluestarfam.org
- Safe Streets www.safest.org
- “A Place Called Home” book by David Ambroz

- “Love in the Time of Fentanyl” www.meaningfulmovies.org
- Miracle Messages - reach lost family - www.1800MISSYOU.org