



Location: Shields-Carter Room, Brookens Administrative Building, 1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, IL 61802  
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81393675682>  
Date/Time: January 25, 2023/5:45 PM

*Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order establishing a pandemic disaster in the State of Illinois that covers the County of Champaign, and the CCMHB President's determination that holding this meeting is not prudent at this time due to health concerns with COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations reported in the County, this meeting will be held remotely, via zoom, with a required representative at the physical meeting location listed above. The public may watch the meeting live through this link or later among archived recordings at <https://www.co.champaign.il.us/mhddb/MeetingInfo.php>*

## **Champaign County Mental Health Board (CCMHB) Study Session Agenda**

Zoom Link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81393675682>

Meeting ID: 813 9367 5682 1-312-626-6799

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll call
- III. Approval of Agenda\*
- IV. **Citizen Input/Public Participation** *All are welcome to attend the Board's meeting to observe and to offer thoughts during this time.  
The Chair may limit public participation to 5 minutes per person and/or 20 minutes total.*
- V. **Chairperson's Comments – Dr. Jon Paul Youakim**
- VI. **STUDY SESSION – Mid-Year Progress Reports from New Programs**
  - a) **CU at Home-Shelter Case Management** (pages 2-13)  
*Melissa Courtwright, Executive Director of CU at Home, will present on the Shelter Case Management program, newly funded in PY23.*
  - b) **Champaign County Health Care Consumers – Disability Application Services** (pages 14-39)  
*Claudia Lennhoff, Executive Director of CCHCC, will present on the Disability Application Services program, funded in PY22 and PY23.*
- VII. **Agency Input**  
*The Chair reserves the authority to limit individual agency representative participation to 5 minutes and/or total time to 20 minutes.*
- VIII. **Board Announcements**
- IX. **Adjournment**

\* Board action is requested.



2

# Mid-Barrier Shelter Program

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Champaign County Mental Health Board Presentation

Vl.a)

# Our Agency Transition

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## Previous Services

Day-Time Drop-In

Case Management

Warming and Cooling Center

Emergency Overnight Shelter

High Barrier Program Homes

## Current Services

24/7 Mid-Barrier Program

Intensive Case Management

Life Skills Development Groups

Communal Environment

Trauma Informed Design and Services

# Vision, Our Mission

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Vision: To be part of a system that provides pathways out of homelessness for individuals and that through those pathways people will find stability.

Mission: C-U at Home exists to support and empower individuals who are experiencing homelessness. We provide a safe environment where individuals can progress toward stability and access essential resources such as shelter, laundry, showers, food, and supportive services.

# Definitions



- **Mid-Barrier:** Part of a system of care in which individuals experiencing homelessness are provided with intensive case management, basic needs are met to support stability. Clients must complete an intake process and agree to participate in the CUH Shelter Program. Clients must consistently demonstrate that they are working toward their goals. Each intake, case plan and goals are evaluated and developed on a case-by-case basis, structured to meet, and address the needs of the environment and the clients.
- **High-Barrier:** Part of a system of care in which individuals experiencing homelessness are provided with case management, basic needs are met to support stability. Clients must complete an intake and agree to participate in the CUH Shelter Program. Clients who enter at this phase have already demonstrated that they have some resources and capabilities to meet their goals. Each intake, case plan and goals are evaluated and developed on a case-by-case basis, structured to meet, and address the needs of the environment and the clients.

# Definitions

**Intensive Case Management:** Assist clients by developing case plans, enhancing life skills, addressing health and mental health needs, engaging in meaningful activities, and building social and community relations.

## Characteristics:

- One-on-one case manager to client relationship using a trauma informed care, client-centered approach
- The case manager assisting clients in accessing services that the client identifies as needed to attain his or her goals.
- The case manager often accompanies clients to meetings and appointments in support of their goals/needs.
- Case managers are available on a regular schedule; caseloads are often shared to assure coverage of 7 days per week/12 hours a day.
- The staff to client ratio is generally lower
- The duration of the service is determined by the needs of the client, with the goal of transitioning to services outside of the organization in a timely manner



# The Right Space

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**Communal:** A community of individuals that are pursuing common interests and goals. Individuals have personal living space and shared space. Client share responsibility for the common areas.

**Trauma-informed Design:** Provides spaces that are inviting, demonstrates safety, and provides some degree of privacy, while not interfering with staff needs to support clients in reaching their goals.



# The Right Services

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Trauma-Informed Services Definitions

Safety: Physical and Emotional

Choice: Individual has choice and control

Collaboration: Making decisions with  
individuals and sharing power

Trustworthiness: Task clarity, consistency and  
boundaries

Empowerment: Prioritizing empowerment and skill  
building





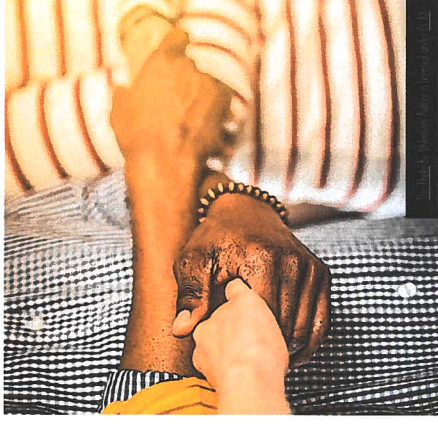
# The Right Services

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## Trauma-Informed Services Principles in Practice

- Common areas are welcoming, and privacy is respected
- Individuals are provided clear and appropriate messages about their rights and responsibilities
- Individuals are provided a significant role in planning and evaluating services
- Respectful and professional boundaries are maintained
- Providing an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed with each contact at the agency

9



# Program Update

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## Mid-Barrier

Program Launch December 12<sup>th</sup>

- 14 Male Clients
- Mid-Barrier Men's Shelter-14
    - 2 Open Beds
    - Hotel Program: 0
  - 10 Female Clients
    - Austin's Place-8
    - Hotel Program-2
  - 1 Transgender Client
    - Austin's Place-1



Program Plan

Clients meet at least weekly with their case manager to develop client-centered case management plans.  
Service Contacts: 150 male contacts; 75 female contact

# Program Update

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High-Barrier

Data: December 12<sup>th</sup>-January 12<sup>th</sup>

5 Houses

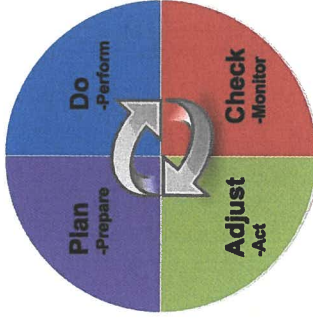
- 6 Male Clients
- 4 Female Clients
- No Beds Currently Open

Program Plan

Clients meet initially with their case manager 2/month to develop client-centered case plans

Service Contacts: 25 male contacts; 15 female contact

Plan-Do-Check-Act Cycle  
(PDCA)



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# Program Update

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## Client Staff Ratio

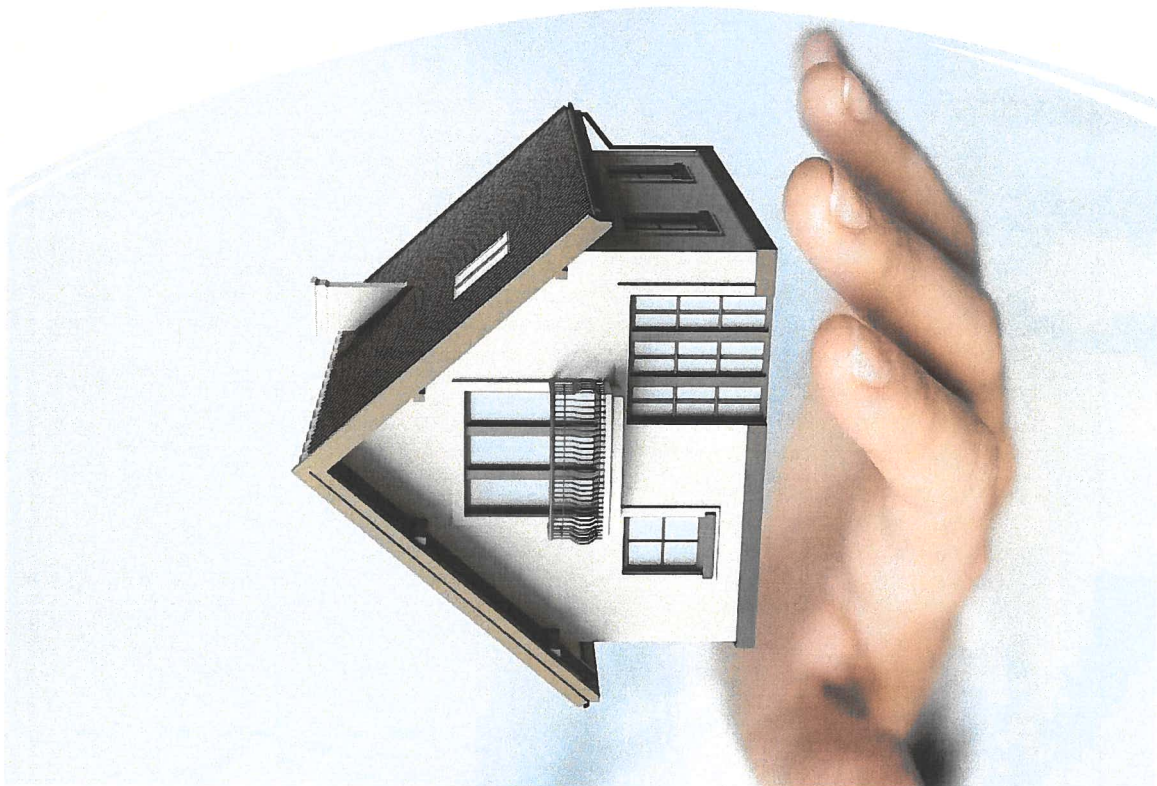
Currently 16 client: 1 staff

Desired 20 clients: 1 staff

## Future

Mid-Barrier: Serve 40 clients, Mid-Barrier 1, 2 and 3

High-Barrier: Turn current home purchases into High-Barrier home to increase capacity



# Questions and Response

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# Disability Application Services

## Presentation to CCMHB by: Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC)

14



V.I.B)



## **This presentation will cover:**

- What is “disability” as a benefit
- The need for Disability Application Services
- CCHCC’s Disability Application Services program
- CCHCC Program updates

**What is “Disability”  
as a benefit?**

# What is “Disability” as a benefit?

- “Disability”, as a benefit refers to the income supports programs that provide beneficiaries with monthly income, made available by State and

## Federal governments:

- **SSDI** – Social Security Disability Income – available to individuals who have had paychecks and worked enough quarters. Paid through Social Security Administration (SSA); a form of early retirement due to disability. Benefit amount is based on earnings history.
- **SSI** – Supplemental Security Income – means-tested program for low- or no-income individuals (federal/state partnership). Benefit amount in 2022 in IL is \$841/mo.

## About “Disability” as a benefit, cont’d.

“Disability” is granted when an individual can successfully demonstrate that their health condition(s) prevent them from engaging in Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) employment.

- This means that, because of their disabling condition(s), they cannot earn enough to live on.
- For 2023, SGA for non-blind individuals is \$1,470 per month. So, if someone is “disabled” and earning less than the SGA amount, they should consider applying for disability. (Notice that SSI does not pay SGA! For 2023, SSI will pay \$914 per month.)



## About “Disability” as a benefit, cont’d.

When someone qualifies for “disability” – whether SSDI, SSI, or both, they also become eligible for many more benefits and resources on the basis of having been deemed “disabled”.

- Benefits can include subsidized housing, LIHEAP, free phones, free or reduced cost transportation, tax breaks on home property taxes, etc.
- Therefore, qualifying for “disability” can lead to even more benefits and more affordable living.
- SSDI beneficiaries can start receiving Medicare coverage after a 24 month “waiting period”.

# The need for Disability Application Services

# The need for Disability Application Services

- Applying for “disability” is notoriously difficult.
  - It is time-consuming, tedious, and attention to detail and ability to respond in a timely manner is crucial.
  - The people who are most in need of “disability” benefits are often the people who are least able to navigate the complex and tedious application system.
  - Consistent and ongoing medical documentation is essential. Technological capacity is very helpful.

## The need for Disability Application Services, cont'd.

- Applying for "disability" can take months, or even years, especially in Illinois.
  - In IL, the **Disability application denial rate is 71.1%**.
  - In IL, the Disability application approval rate is 28.9%.
  - If one's application is denied, one can file appeals. Sometimes this process can take years. Approval rates increase significantly by the time someone reaches the ALJ Hearing stage (years later!).
  - Having a disabling condition (or conditions) is NOT enough. One must demonstrate how the condition(s) impact ability to function **and** earn SGA.

## The need for Disability Application Services, cont'd.

- People need help knowing about, and applying for "disability".
- Attorneys do not help with initial applications. However, they can assist with appeals, and then they will be paid out of the client's "lump sum payment", once (and if) the client is approved.
- *CCHCC is one of the only organizations in Champaign County to provide disability application assistance services to community members. And we are the only organization that simultaneously helps with health care navigation and documentation for disability.*
  - Rosecrance provides some assistance to their established patients.



## The need for Disability Application Services, cont'd.

- Research shows that people who have "advocates" helping them with disability applications are far more likely to be approved for benefits.
- People who are homeless are more likely to have qualifying disabling conditions.
  - People who are homeless are more likely to have traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), making the application process even more challenging.
- People who have been incarcerated are more likely to have qualifying disabling conditions as well (Reentry population).

## The need for Disability Application Services, cont'd.

- Medical providers often cannot and do not provide documentation on how the disabling condition(s) limit the person's ability to function.
  - This documentation and the ability to articulate it, is crucial for a successful application.
- Champaign County residents are under-enrolled in SSI/SSDI. *CCHCC believes that too many county residents are functionally disabled but have not accessed the benefits for which they might qualify.*
- Not only do the individuals need this benefit, but getting people qualified will also benefit the community and will help reduce strain on social services.



# **CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program**



## CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program

- CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program is a new program made possible through the CCMHB.
- CCHCC's program is focused on serving individuals with behavioral health issues and homeless individuals.
- CCHCC's services are provided free of charge.
- CCHCC's program is "conflict-free" – meaning that CCHCC serves clients *regardless* of who their healthcare providers or other service providers are, or if they do not yet have health care providers.
- CCHCC is *the only* organization in the county that makes these services available to county residents at large.

## CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program, cont'd.

- CCHCC is in an ideal position to provide these services, because we can also link clients with health care access and resources (for example: health insurance, Rx cost assistance, SNAP/LINK, access to health services, case management services, housing vouchers, etc.).
- Most CCHCC program staff are bi-lingual (English/Spanish).
- CCHCC has staff trained in SOAR.
- CCHCC has years of experience helping people apply for disability benefits (though we have not had enough capacity to offer this service in a more expansive way).



## CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program, cont'd.

- SOAR is a methodology for doing disability applications and getting them approved rapidly, especially for homeless individuals and/or individuals who cannot always actively participate in their own disability applications.
- SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery, and is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) for eligible adults and children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

## CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program, cont'd.

- CCHCC uses **both** the SOAR method, as well as more traditional methods for working with individuals who are applying for disability.
- The SOAR method depends a lot on the local Social Security Administration (SSA) office and staff, and requires building a relationship between the SSA and community agencies. This is especially challenging during the pandemic.
- **CCHCC works with clients who are at various stages of the disability application process** – some clients need help with submitting an initial application, while others come to CCHCC needing help with an appeal, and many are simply unsure where in the process their disability case is. CCHCC helps clients at all stages of the disability application process.

## CCHCC's Disability Application Services Program, cont'd.

- Part of our work involves identifying what kind of medical documentation is needed for the client's case, and helping them access that health care.
- Program staff for this program include:
  - Claudia Lennhoff, Exec. Dir., experienced with disability applications;
  - Paulette Coleman Peebles, SOAR Trained, experienced with disability applications;
  - Ashley Buckley, some experience with disability applications, and extensive experience in medical documentation; and,
  - Full-time Disability Application Services Specialist

# CCHCC Program Updates

## CCHCC Program Updates

- Goal is to serve 30 individuals in this program year.
- Approved SSI/SSDI applications submitted so far: 3
- Pending new applications: 13
- Pending appeals: 4 (at different stages of appeals)
- Early retirement – applied for early retirement Social Security payments: 2
- Clients being served have come from: Urbana, Champaign, Tolono, and Rantoul.
- Staffing updates – new hire



## Some ugly truths, and the need for system change

- If you receive SSI and you turn age 62, the State of IL *requires* you to apply for early Social Security Retirement (you cannot, by law, wait for your age of retirement).
- Not only do you then lose out on your *earned* retirement benefits, *which are reduced for the rest of your life*, but your SSI is *reduced* by the amount you receive in Social Security retirement benefits. The combined income from both sources cannot be over the SSI income of \$914.
- This is NOT a federal requirement, but a state requirement. IL is one of a few states that do this. *This rule constitutes a loss of life-time income for the beneficiaries.*

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## Some ugly truths, and the need for system change, cont'd.

- While SSI income cannot be garnished, Social Security Retirement income *can* be garnished.
- But here is the really ugly part: if you have any deductions being taken out of your Social Security Retirement income – such as past child support or student loans – SSI is *blind* to these deductions and assumes you are getting your full Age 62 retirement income, and your SSI will *not* increase.
- In other words, if you are having deductions from your Social Security Retirement income, your SSI will *not* increase in order to bring you back up to the basic total monthly income of \$914.

35

## Some ugly truths, and the need for system change, cont'd.

- A client example: Because of the SSI and Social Security Retirement rule in Illinois, CCHCC has a client who went from a benefit of \$841 (2022) from combined SSI and Social Security Early Retirement, to an income of only about \$400 per month because of monthly deductions as a result of child support payments (the children are adults).
- This client does not have a problem making child support payments; however, he cannot live on \$400 a month (who can?). And, because he is receiving Soc. Sec. benefits, he is *not* eligible for Township assistance.
- We are filing for a child support modification order and an audit of his child support payment history.

36

## Some ugly truths, and the need for system change, cont'd.

- CCHCC is advocating for a change in this SSI rule.
- The impact of this rule on older disabled SSI beneficiaries is so brutal and counterproductive, and IL is in a small minority of states that have such a rule.
- The mental health impact from this situation on our clients is absolutely devastating. It makes people hopeless and endangers their living situation.
- Everyone – including former spouses owed child support – would benefit greatly from the State of IL dropping this rule.
- At the very least, SSI should be allowed to “see” and respond to a reduction in Soc. Sec. Retirement payments, so that SSI could be increased to ensure the beneficiary is getting a monthly minimum of the established SSI income.

37

# Questions?

38



Thank You!

# Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC)



39



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