

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

HOUSING AND HEALTH SERVICES
COORDINATION COUNCIL MEETING

VIA WEBINAR AND TELEPHONE

January 27, 2021
10:00 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

BOBBY WILKINSON, Chair
DONI GREEN, Vice Chair
SUZANNE BARNARD
REV. KENNETH DARDEN (absent)
DIANA DELAUNAY
HELEN EISERT
CLAIRE IRWIN
MICHAEL GOODWIN
DONNA KLAEGER
DERRICK NEAL
JOYCE POHLMAN
SCOTT SROUFE
MICHAEL WILT (absent)

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
(512) 450-0342

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WILKINSON: Good morning and welcome to this meeting of the Housing and Health Services Coordination Council. Let's start with a roll call of sorts. Suzie Brady?

(No response.)

MR. WILKINSON: Joyce Pohlman?

MS. POHLMAN: Here.

MR. WILKINSON: Claire Irwin?

MS. IRWIN: Here.

MR. WILKINSON: Suzanne Barnard?

MS. BARNARD: Here.

MR. WILKINSON: Scott Sroufe?

MR. SROUFE: Here.

MR. WILKINSON: Michael Wilt? Michael?

MR. GOODWIN: Yes. Sorry. My computer just quit on me, so I had to reboot it.

MR. WILKINSON: Okay. That's Mr. Goodwin. All right.

MR. GOODWIN: Yeah.

MR. WILKINSON: Okay. Dr. Blake Harris?

DR. HARRIS: Hello. Present.

MR. WILKINSON: Doni Green?

(No response.)

MR. WILKINSON: Reverend Kenneth Darden?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. WILKINSON: Donna Klaeger?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. STREMLER: I will say Donna is here, but I
5 can't move her from the attendee list for some --

6 MS. GREEN: Yes.

7 MR. STREMLER: -- reason.

8 MS. GREEN: I apologize. I was having
9 difficulty getting to my controls. So I am here.

10 MR. WILKINSON: Yeah. Okay. All right.

11 Derrick Neal?

12 MR. NEAL: Here.

13 MR. WILKINSON: Dr. Jennifer Gonzalez?

14 DR. GONZALEZ: I'm here.

15 MR. WILKINSON: Diana Delaunay?

16 MS. DELAUNAY: Good morning.

17 MR. WILKINSON: And Barrett Reynolds? Barrett
18 is our newest appointee. Barrett, are you here? Hello?

19 MR. REYNOLDS: Yeah, I'm here.

20 MR. WILKINSON: Okay. Great. All right. So we
21 have a quorum. Let's start off with Jeremy doing the
22 regular housekeeping for the GoToWebinar.

23 MR. STREMLER: Thanks, Bobby. So all of our
24 attendees on the line, this, of course, is what your screen
25 kind of looks like, except the slide is up on the left-hand

1 side. Your control panel will show up on the right-hand
2 side of your screen, giving you your different control
3 options while you are in the webinar.

4 This control panel will show you your different
5 audio settings. You can select computer audio or phone
6 call. If you select phone call, a phone number and access
7 code will pop up for you to call in to be on the line.
8 There is also a questions box down below that.

9 Should you have any questions during the meeting
10 for agenda items, this is a place where you can enter
11 those, and I can say them out loud to the group, if you do
12 not wish to participate verbally. And then, of course, if
13 you are having trouble hearing the presentation or us
14 hearing you, you can always do the sound check feature on
15 your panel to make sure that your computer's audio is
16 working properly with the system.

17 Also, should you call via phone and get
18 disconnected, make sure that you wait a minute or two
19 before calling in again. Sometimes the system takes a
20 minute to recognize that you were disconnected before it
21 will allow you to reconnect via phone call.

22 To participate verbally, you can raise your hand
23 with the control panel. After we show the -- after we
24 speak about an agenda item and it is open for discussion,
25 please feel free to raise your hand and I can unmute you so

1 that you can provide comments to the Council as a whole.

2 MR. WILKINSON: Thanks, Jeremy. Next up, I'd
3 like to thank the newest Governor appointee, and the last
4 one, now we have a full Council, Barrett Reynolds. He's a
5 service-enriched housing representative. Barrett, would
6 you like say a few words to introduce yourself to the
7 group?

8 MR. REYNOLDS: Sure. I don't know what to say,
9 to be honest with you. I'm really honored to be on this
10 Committee. So, yeah. I currently live with -- Austin,
11 over at the Cliff House. We currently don't have a
12 caregiver.

13 I mean, not a roommate right now, but I have
14 been through a group, not really -- not necessarily a group
15 home, but it's been -- I'm not really sure what it's
16 called, but -- so at the House, I've learned how to do
17 things by myself.

18 MR. WILKINSON: That's great, Barrett. Thank
19 you. I'm glad you're aboard. Good to have you here.

20 It's good to have a full Council. For a while,
21 we had -- we were, like, full and stuff. In addition, we
22 have a couple of new agency representatives.

23 Let's see. Suzie Brady from HHSC. Suzie, would
24 you like to introduce yourself?

25 MR. STREMLER: Don't know that Suzie is logged

1 in with us yet. She mentioned she might be late, but --

2 MR. WILKINSON: I'm sorry.

3 MR. STREMLER: Sorry. I hadn't --

4 MR. WILKINSON: Okay, okay. We still have a
5 quorum without her, so --

6 MR. STREMLER: Yes.

7 MR. WILKINSON: And we've got Dr. Blake Harris
8 from Veterans Commission.

9 DR. HARRIS: Good morning, all. I'm Blake
10 Harris. I'm a forensic psychologist and the Director of
11 the Veterans Mental Health Department for Texas Veterans
12 Commission. One of the things our agency is looking to do
13 is to strengthen our response to veteran homelessness.

14 I'm very happy to learn from you guys and to
15 participate as best I can.

16 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Dr. Harris. Next
17 order of business will be the approval of the October 14,
18 2020, HHSCC meeting minutes. This will be a voting
19 item. So I don't know if people had a chance to review and
20 have any comments on the minutes?

21 MR. GOODWIN: Now, I would make a motion that we
22 accept the minutes as presented. Mike Goodwin.

23 MR. WILKINSON: Motion by Mr. Goodwin. Do we
24 have a second? Let the record show -- raise your hand
25 to -- silently to be the second.

1 MS. BARNARD: Sorry. I couldn't find the mute
2 button. I can second.

3 MR. WILKINSON: All in favor, say aye.

4 (A chorus of ayes.)

5 MR. WILKINSON: Opposed, say nay.

6 (No response.)

7 MR. WILKINSON: All right. Ayes have it.

8 Next up, Item 3 is going to be an update from
9 Brooke Boston, the Executive Director of Programs, on the
10 Community Development Block Grant from the CARES Act.

11 MS. BOSTON: Great. Thank you. All right. So
12 I wanted to update you guys on two different passive funds
13 that we have going. The first is one I think we've updated
14 you on once before, which is the Community Development
15 Block Grant funds, and these are specifically part of the
16 CARES Act.

17 And in this one -- I think the last time we
18 would have briefed you guys, we probably told you that our
19 focus was on rental assistance. And as you may have heard
20 in the news since then, there was a huge bill approved
21 recently that provided a huge influx of rental assistance
22 across the country, including to Texas. And so in light of
23 those additional funds, we thought the highest and best use
24 of CDBG was really not to put all of it towards rental
25 assistance, since we now have another great source for

1 that.

2 So we had already offered entitlement
3 communities, which are the larger communities in Texas, an
4 opportunity to use our funds for rental assistance,
5 piggybacking off of their current rental assistance for
6 pandemic response, and our funds would have provided them
7 additional funds to keep their programs going. So we
8 didn't want to back out on that offer and commitment.

9 So what we have done is for 45 entitlement
10 communities, or big cities and counties, we are still
11 putting 40 million of our CDBG funds towards them doing
12 rental assistance. All of them have already received their
13 contracts. Some of them plan on starting as early as
14 February 1, although most of their start-up dates are over
15 the next 30 days for them to actually roll out the program
16 and get it live in their communities. That may be, in some
17 cases, because their existing programs, which is why we had
18 planned to proceed with them, still have some funds in
19 there.

20 So I would also note that, in all of those 45
21 communities, their contracts require that 10 percent of
22 their funds go towards eviction diversion, which is a
23 specific program we have in place with the Office of Court
24 Administration. So the justices of the peace in those 45
25 communities know that when a household comes and has

1 been -- a landlord has started the eviction proceedings
2 through the courts, the landlord and the tenant have to be
3 told about the program as an option to not have the
4 eviction proceedings go -- finish out through the
5 courts. And then our assistance can help make the
6 payments, helps make the landlord whole, and then the
7 tenant gets cleared.

8 It also is removed from their record, so it
9 wouldn't show up later as an eviction proceeding. So that
10 will also -- as I said, that will be eligible in all 45
11 cities. The total amount that we put towards those 45
12 cities was 40 million.

13 So about 68 to 70 million had previously also
14 been planned for rental assistance, and that has been
15 reprogrammed into mortgage payment assistance. So it's the
16 same idea, except for that instead of tenants, we're
17 talking about -- it's actually homeowners who have been
18 struggling to make their payments.

19 We know that this is a population that has also
20 been struggling quite a bit, and so -- and we've gotten
21 positive feedback about having reprogrammed it to that --
22 for that purpose. We did a plan amendment already with HUD
23 to move the funds to that activity, and that plan amendment
24 was accepted by HUD.

25 And the NOFA, we think, will be going out on

1 Friday. The notice of funds will be for cities, counties,
2 local nonprofits, and then we have a portion of the funds
3 set aside specifically for regional nonprofits or
4 organizations like COGs or community action agencies,
5 specifically for them to help give us broader geographic
6 coverage.

7 So for instance, let's say, if, along the
8 Valley, we get a couple applications from cities, we don't
9 want to see the whole rest of that area not covered. So
10 we're wanting to see a regional provider in that area come
11 in and say, yeah, we'll cover all the rest. And we
12 actually have funds kind of set aside for that purpose.

13 And then other than that, the other activities
14 we had originally planned are still proceeding, which
15 includes 20 million for food bank activities, 5 million
16 that's going towards providers of people with disabilities.

17 And so that one, specifically, for organizations and
18 businesses out there that are -- think of, you know, group
19 homes where they have incurred expenses associated with the
20 pandemic, whether that's: they had to ramp up more
21 staffing, they were struggling to retain staffing, they
22 needed PPE, or they needed to pay for, like, hotel space to
23 quarantine certain people from their home.

24 All of [audio skip] eligible expenses, and so we
25 are getting that program ramped up as well. We also have

1 some funds for broadband planning.

2 And then, lastly, but definitely not least, we
3 also included in the most recent amendment to HUD the
4 ability to use some of the funds to support a statewide
5 HMIS, which is the Homeless Management Information
6 System. Basically, it's kind of the data network behind
7 assisting homeless people across the state.

8 And right now, different homeless providers use
9 different systems, and they don't talk to each other. And
10 so we're putting some funds towards supporting an
11 initiative like that, if that can come to pass.

12 Any questions about that first part?

13 MALE VOICE: No.

14 MS. BOSTON: Oh, go ahead. Okay. All right.

15 So now I'll tell you about the other --

16 MR. NEAL: I do have a question, Brooke.

17 MS. BOSTON: Yes, of course.

18 MR. NEAL: This may be a little old-school, but
19 you would understand. Any funding -- of that funding
20 identified or allocated for transitional housing? We have
21 a lot of folks that are sitting on -- they're homeless but
22 are sleeping on sofas and in spare bedrooms.

23 Any of those funds allocated for sustaining
24 those individuals who may be in a transitional phase?

25 MS. BOSTON: They would definitely be eligible

1 for the rental assistance. So I think if they were in a
2 transitional setting and were struggling to pay the rent
3 for that setting, we can assist with that. It doesn't
4 cover the costs associated with the construction of
5 transitional housing, but it should be able to assist with
6 the rent payment.

7 MR. NEAL: Thank you.

8 MS. BOSTON: Sure.

9 MR. WILKINSON: Let me jump in there a little
10 bit. Related to the new rental assistance money, there is
11 a portion -- 10 percent can be used for admin and/or
12 housing stability services, as it's defined by the Treasury
13 Secretary of the Treasury, not HUD.

14 We're actually looking at maybe supporting some
15 transitional housing with those dollars, if we can,
16 including leasing hotels, if they would let us. It's
17 supportive service rather than, you know, sticks and
18 bricks.

19 It's too soon for that portion. We're
20 interested --

21 MR. NEAL: Thanks, Bobby.

22 MR. WILKINSON: You're welcome.

23 MS. BOSTON: Great. So the other program I
24 wanted to tell you guys about is the Coronavirus Relief
25 Bill Rental Assistance program. It doesn't have a great,

1 easy-to-say acronym. So this assistance you probably --

2 MR. WILKINSON: Brooke, even though it's C-R-B-
3 R-A, just say cobra. It sounds cool.

4 MS. BOSTON: Okay. Cobra. Got it. So this
5 program is 25 billion nationally, and it's administered by
6 the Treasury, not by HUD.

7 The Governor designated TDHCA to be the
8 recipient of this on behalf of the State. And the way is
9 that 55 percent of the funds for a state go to the state
10 for administration, and 45 percent can go to local
11 governments with populations over 200,000.

12 So in Texas, there are 38 communities of that
13 size. We still don't know yet exactly how many of them
14 chose to accept the funds, but the 55 percent for us came
15 out to 1.28 billion, and so we -- and we have to spend it
16 in a year. So we're excited.

17 We think that's a good timeline, because we know
18 everybody needs it yesterday. But if any of you guys know,
19 who have tried to just administer a program, it doesn't
20 make it easy.

21 So I'll tell you a little bit about the program,
22 just so you kind of know what we're up to with it. So the
23 bulk of the funds, 90 percent, can go for rental
24 assistance, and it's specifically for households who are 80
25 percent of area median income or below. And then one or

1 more member of the household has to either have qualified
2 for unemployment benefits or have experienced a financial
3 impact from the pandemic.

4 We don't think that will be a particularly hard
5 benchmark. That could be anything from, of course, a loss
6 of income from a job, but it could also be increase of
7 expenses because you had to have your child at home the
8 whole time, while you're also trying to work, and you need
9 to pay for a caretaker.

10 So -- and then the last, kind of, prong of
11 eligibility is the household has to be risk of homelessness
12 or housing instability by providing evidence of an eviction
13 notice or a past-due notice on utility or rent, and/or that
14 the household lives in an unsafe or unhealthy living
15 condition.

16 So the assistance can pay for up to 15 months of
17 rent, rent arrears, utilities, utility arrears, and the
18 fuzzy pot called "other expenses related to housing." We
19 don't know yet what that is allowed to look like from
20 Treasury.

21 We know some things we'd like it to include,
22 such as late fees. And we're hopeful about that, because
23 we know that helps a tenant really get cleared of their
24 past financial problems far better than if they're still
25 stuck with a bunch of late fees after the arrears

1 themselves have been cleared.

2 So as Bobby mentioned, the other 10 percent of
3 funds has to be used jointly for our admin expenses and
4 housing stability services, and we haven't quite figured
5 out what that's going to look like, in part because we are
6 still in the process of calculating how much admin we think
7 we're going to need.

8 We are -- the State is going to administer this
9 program directly to tenants and landlords. We are not
10 using subrecipients. We believe that was the best way to
11 get the funds out quickly, especially because the
12 subrecipients we typically use, which are cities and
13 counties and nonprofits, are also now flooded with tons of
14 great money coming from the CARES Act and from the
15 Coronavirus Relief bill, the 45 percent of funds we
16 mentioned.

17 And so we didn't even feel like it was, kind of,
18 fair to try and pile this on them, and we didn't think it
19 would hit statewide as quickly as we would like to see
20 people get access to the money. So our estimate is we
21 think this will help probably 80,000 households.

22 I'm hopeful that's a low estimate and that it
23 will be a little more, but it's just really hard to know,
24 as you guys know, because you don't know how much rent
25 arrears someone has until they apply. You don't know if

1 they were in a high-rent market.

2 So obviously, if it's a family of four in Austin
3 who had a pretty expensive, you know, or high rent, and
4 they had a lot of arrears, you're going to help them with a
5 lot of -- you know, the cost to assist them will be more.
6 So that would affect how many people we can ultimately
7 assist.

8 We're selecting a vendor to kind of build us a
9 system to do this. We are almost done with the interviews
10 for that process and hope to have someone on board quickly.

11

12 Our plan will be to do an extensive outreach and
13 marketing initiative to share the information with not only
14 just your typical news avenues, but then also working with
15 community action agencies, sharing information, you know,
16 through this Council, through the Texas Interagency Council
17 for the Homeless, COGs, kind of just everywhere we know who
18 has access to this population so that they can share the
19 information, and then, of course, the landlords.

20 The program is -- the system is being designed
21 so that landlords can do this on behalf of their tenants.

22 MR. REYNOLDS: What --

23 MS. BOSTON: Excuse me? Yeah, yeah. So this
24 isn't -- I mean, a tenant can always still apply on their
25 own, but it's very nice that -- we think landlords will be

1 incentivized to try and kind of turn in, let's say, eight
2 people in a property who all meet the criteria. They can
3 do it for them. That's the one for the landlord, one for
4 the tenant.

5 And hopefully, it gets things moving more
6 quickly than if we have to help each tenant one by one by
7 one. We're prepared to do it either way, but -- so we're
8 planning on doing a lot of collaboration with the Texas
9 Apartment Association and the Texas Affiliation of
10 Affordable Housing Providers.

11 We're also going to try and do some targeted
12 outreach to small mom-and-pop landlords or -- and I don't
13 know quite how that looks yet, because they don't tend to
14 be TAA members, but we know they are often the landlords of
15 people who would meet some of these eligibility criteria,
16 so.

17 And then I would -- just a last note about this
18 is that the eviction diversion activity I mentioned to you
19 guys before, rolling out in the 45 cities right now with
20 CDBG becomes statewide as soon as this money gets turned on
21 and the system is open. We've set aside the funds for
22 eviction diversion, almost kind of like as a separate pot
23 in the system, just in case if the funds -- everyone
24 applies, you know, in a mad dash and it ends up get used in
25 30 or 40 days, we don't want that to mean that someone who

1 might be having an eviction -- or excuse me -- an eviction
2 proceeding start, let's say, 30 days from now, that the
3 judge then can't refer them because there's no money left.

4 And I think that's it. We've got our hands
5 full, but we're excited about it. Any questions?

6 MR. STREMLER: So a couple people have their
7 hands raised. I think, first, I'll unmute Donna
8 Klaeger. As I said before, she is on the Council,
9 obviously, but I have not been able to move her over as --
10 from the attendees list.

11 But Donna, if you want to unmute yourself,
12 you'll be able to.

13 MS. KLAEGER: Thank you so much. Brooke,
14 there's a lot of funding available for 200,000 or more
15 populations or whatever. Can you address, especially this
16 eviction diversion program? And you said, when it opens
17 statewide, will it actually be able to assist our rural
18 communities?

19 MS. BOSTON: It will. It can be any household
20 anywhere in the state, and the way the, kind of,
21 relationship will work, because we don't have a local
22 provider on these State funds, is that the court will refer
23 the landlord and/or the tenant to our customer service
24 center.

25 We will have a specific customer service center

1 with some staff trained explicitly in eviction diversion
2 handling, and they will, kind of, hand-hold whichever
3 person is on the end of the phone, whether that's the
4 landlord or the tenant, with how to proceed with an
5 application and get the assistance.

6 MS. KLAEGER: So will our JPs be trained on the
7 information that you are providing, or can you provide us
8 that, or a link for me to refer them to?

9 MS. BOSTON: Yes. We don't have the information
10 yet, of course, because --

11 MS. KLAEGER: Right.

12 MS. BOSTON: -- the -- yeah. But we will --
13 sure. We'll coordinate through Jeremy and make sure that
14 we share the information the minute it's available. But
15 yes. The Office of Court Administration has been training
16 the JPs as we go along.

17 So for instance, I want to say it was two weeks
18 ago. I was part of their training for the 45 communities
19 who just got the eviction diversion activity. And then
20 they'll roll out, you know, several more statewide
21 trainings in the next few weeks for the new money.

22 MS. KLAEGER: Okay. And the 45 that -- are they
23 all urban communities? Is that correct?

24 MS. BOSTON: They are.

25 MS. KLAEGER: Okay.

1 MS. BOSTON: Yeah.

2 MS. KLAEGER: Great.

3 MS. BOSTON: Jeremy can --

4 MS. KLAEGER: Well, I --

5 MS. BOSTON: -- if you like.

6 MS. KLAEGER: That would be wonderful, and I --

7 so I will alert all -- we have four communities that the

8 Community Resource Centers work with, and we'll -- I'll

9 actually alert them of this training in the future.

10 So do you have any idea of the timing?

11 MS. BOSTON: For going statewide?

12 MS. KLAEGER: Yes, ma'am.

13 MS. BOSTON: I would think early-ish March.

14 MS. KLAEGER: That's good.

15 MS. BOSTON: But that's very --

16 MS. KLAEGER: At least you didn't say July.

17 March is good.

18 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. So --

19 MS. KLAEGER: Thank you --

20 MS. BOSTON: -- we're still --

21 MS. KLAEGER: -- so much for your --

22 MS. BOSTON: -- and all of their, you know, go-

23 live dates are different, and so I don't know for sure, but

24 now that I've interviewed enough of them, you know, I've

25 seen enough of their go-live dates to feel like I can at

1 least say, regardless of who we pick, March-ish sounds
2 pretty safe.

3 MS. KLAEGER: Sounds great. Thank you. Thank
4 you for all your work. We appreciate you.

5 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. Thank you.

6 MR. STREMLER: So there is one more -- another
7 question from a Chris Jackson. Chris, you're unmuted, if
8 you want to ask your question.

9 MR. JACKSON: Yes. As stated, my name is Chris
10 Jackson. I'm from the Panhandle Regional Planning
11 Commission, which is the Council of Governments in the
12 Panhandle area. And I currently know that we are -- and
13 I'm also, in conjunction of helping with this program, in
14 charge of an eviction diversion program.

15 So one of my questions is that -- will that
16 program be receiving new funding, or once those funds
17 expire, that's it, and now we're continuing on to this new
18 program outlook?

19 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. That's -- great question.
20 Yes. You're correct that, as the -- so to kind of fill
21 everyone in, we decided to test the idea of an eviction
22 diversion program first with just several small pilots
23 across the state.

24 And Panhandle, as he mentioned, was one of the
25 providers for us in testing that model. The funds for that

1 were a very small amount of community services block grant
2 CARES funds, and so as those deplete, then those contracts
3 will end. So yes.

4 But the timing works out that, as those funds
5 are depleting, the program will be going statewide, so --
6 through this other program. So assistance wouldn't be
7 available through the Regional Planning Council any longer;
8 it would be available directly from the State.

9 MR. JACKSON: All righty. And if you don't
10 mind, if I could just have a few more inquiries.

11 MS. BOSTON: Of course.

12 MR. JACKSON: So from what I understand, that
13 under the new program, it seems to be quite a few
14 improvements from the one that we had. So like, I'm very
15 excited for what it can do.

16 If I heard correctly, that some of the things or
17 qualifications is whether you were approved for
18 unemployment, you have notice of eviction, which means that
19 it's been taken to the courts and hopefully a JP has
20 relayed the information, and then finally that also if
21 there's proof of past-due utilities, as well?

22 MS. BOSTON: Right. You don't have to have all
23 of those things, but any one of those things can help you
24 qualify.

25 MR. JACKSON: Awesome, because I know there's

1 plenty of people who aren't necessarily getting evicted,
2 but utilities was of great concern. So I'm glad to hear
3 that.

4 Additionally, I notice that it could cover up to
5 15 months. Did I hear that correctly?

6 MS. BOSTON: You did.

7 MR. JACKSON: Wow.

8 MS. BOSTON: The way the program works is, we
9 would -- when someone first applies, we can cover their
10 arrears and commit for up to three months. But if someone
11 had arrears for eight or nine months and -- because of
12 either, you know, their landlord being willing to just let
13 them stay or because of the eviction moratoriums, you know,
14 we can pay that full arrears and then commit to the next
15 three months.

16 So let's say, if someone had nine months of
17 arrears and then we commit three, we can't get up to the
18 15 months until they reapply for the next three months,
19 because we're only allowed to commit three months at a
20 time.

21 MR. JACKSON: Most certainly. That's
22 awesome. I know that you stated that, for advertising, it
23 would be outlets, councils and governments. I know the
24 PRPC would be more than happy to be -- relay any
25 information and developments with the program, because --

1 so something that I specifically am passionate about.

2 And even though that we won't be administering
3 it to any degree anymore, I would always be willing to push
4 that information out there to the general public. That
5 really concludes all of my questions.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. Thank you so much for
8 offering that. I'm planning on doing a presentation
9 through TARC, which is the Texas Association of Regional
10 Councils, hopefully to start sharing the word with every --
11 all of the councils.

12 I want to say it's in a week or two, so thank
13 you.

14 MS. GREEN: Brooke, this is Doni Green. I'm
15 having difficulty getting to my hand to raise it, but I did
16 have a question about training. And after the last
17 meeting, I had reached out to you to see if your staff
18 might be available to do some training for our Aging and
19 Disability Resource Network. And you made that happen.

20 We've had tremendous interest in the program.
21 We actually maxed out our Webex license and had to put
22 people on a waitlist.

23 MS. BOSTON: Wow.

24 MS. GREEN: I wondered if you would be amenable
25 to doing another round? I think those who attended would

1 be really interested in the updates. And then we did have
2 others we couldn't accommodate.

3 I'm thinking that we would want to target 2-1-1
4 call-takers and, again, Aging and Disability Resource
5 Center call specialists. But we found that our community-
6 based providers were really interested, as well.

7 MS. BOSTON: Good. Yeah. We'd be happy to.

8 MS. GREEN: Super. Thank you.

9 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. All right. Thanks.

10 MR. STREMLER: And then also, just as a reminder
11 to everyone as well, if you -- there is a specific listserv
12 set up to distribute information about the new money. So
13 if you go and join the TDHCA listservs -- of course, there
14 were some questions in the chat about, you know, being able
15 to provide the Council with emails to update when things
16 are happening, and I'd be more than happy to do that, but
17 also suggest you also sign up for the TDHCA listservs,
18 because all the information regarding updates and when
19 programs are going to be starting for the new money will be
20 sent out through listserv updates as well.

21 MS. BOSTON: Thanks for the plug, Jeremy. I
22 can't believe I forgot.

23 MR. WILKINSON: There's a link right on our home
24 page now for that one. So we know everyone's interest in
25 the new rental assistance.

1 I'd like to just thank Brooke and the team.
2 They've just really been knocking it out of the park trying
3 to get this new money set up and I'm excited to get it all
4 rolled out quickly.

5 You know, we usually go through subrecipients,
6 and that's great. With so much new money, we need to just
7 set up a statewide direct program. So it's new for us.
8 It's exciting. You know, a little anxious. But I think
9 it's best for Texas. So we're looking forward to it.

10 If there's no more questions on rental
11 assistance, we'll move on to the next item, which will be
12 an update on the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance
13 Program by Spencer Duran. Spencer?

14 MR. DURAN: Hi. Good morning, everybody. Thank
15 you so much for your time. I just have a quick update on
16 the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program.

17 Just to refresh briefly for some new folks, it's
18 a project-based rental assistance program for extremely low
19 income people who have disabilities, who then also meet one
20 of our target populations. So we make -- we have contracts
21 and partnerships with currently 80 properties that are
22 housing folks, and the referrals come through local
23 disability service providers and local disability service
24 coordinators.

25 And so I'm just going to give you an update. We

1 usually update this group because it's all about housing
2 for people with disabilities, and it's somewhat of a
3 supportive housing program as well. So currently, we have
4 445 households that are receiving assistance, and 2,300 are
5 on the waiting list.

6 We have also recently shrunk our list of
7 counties that have open waiting lists. We're down to eight
8 counties that are currently receiving new referrals. So
9 the program is, you know, fully operating in all of its
10 areas, but we've just closed the waiting list to new
11 applicants because we can serve -- we can meet the needs
12 based on the existing waiting lists.

13 So it's also -- it's a grant-funded program. So
14 we have a fixed amount of assistance that we can provide,
15 and so we have 445 housed currently around the state, and
16 we think that we can house 50 or 60 more households under
17 our current two grant awards before topping those grants
18 out.

19 And once we do that, we will then move on to our
20 third grant, which will house an additional 130 households,
21 and that third grant will mostly be absorbed through new
22 construction properties that are coming online towards the
23 end of the year. So we should have, you know, a big push
24 now, and then we have a flurry of new construction
25 properties opening their doors towards the end of the year.

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I also wanted to kind of recap some 2020 stuff, since we haven't -- I haven't chatted with you all since October. One of the big highlights of 2020 was, we operated our new Money Follows the Person demonstration grant funded -- a risk mitigation fund. And so those MFP dollars go toward damages that are done to units from 811 applicants that are unreimbursed.

So we made \$6,000 in damage payments last year, which went to seven units. So those are, you know, seven happy property managers that we were able to make whole through these MFP dollars. In addition, we used -- we had one household that benefitted from the barrier-busting activity, which is where a property manager agrees to house someone who wouldn't normally meet their rental criteria by paying them one month's rent.

So that was one. And that was landlord debt, I believe. So that was -- MFP with the risk mitigation, those two activities, it was an initial success, pretty small start, but we will be continuing that activity into 2021.

So we have some really good ideas about how to kind of tweak it for 2021, and we'll be kind of getting those funds back out the door very soon. We also recently had a rule change that impacts property management.

1 It's kind of in the weeds on how the program
2 works but, basically, we have a -- you know, we do have
3 rules for the program, just like any other TDHCA
4 program. And this rule requires that properties check with
5 us before reinstating a terminated household.

6 So if the household goes over the income limit,
7 then we terminate them -- we terminate their assistance.
8 If their income goes back down, under the 811 income limit,
9 then we could potentially start serving that family again,
10 but we're just asking the properties to check with us, just
11 to make sure that we have grant authority available to fund
12 that household.

13 So it's kind of a budget, you know, program
14 management rule. But I just wanted to mention that
15 because, you know, this -- you know, we do have rules for
16 the program. And if anybody is interested in how that
17 process works, you can always please let me know.

18 And we'll be putting that rule out for public
19 comment soon, and it will be going out to the 811 TDHCA
20 email listserv. So if you haven't signed up for the 811
21 listserv, it's a good time to do that. You can do that
22 through TDHCA webpage.

23 And then the last thing I want to mention is, in
24 October, the Board approved a preference for the 811
25 Program. And this is a tool that we're going to be using

1 to ensure that we have a more equitable distribution of who
2 is being served.

3 Right now, 80 percent of the families are coming
4 from referrals from the local mental health authorities or
5 local behavioral health authorities. So those are mostly
6 people with serious mental illness.

7 So you know, we have 90 percent that is being
8 used by one target population. So we want to kind of
9 spread that out a little bit more evenly, to youth exiting
10 foster care, to people exiting nursing homes, to people
11 exiting state-supported living centers, and the other
12 target populations.

13 So I will definitely make sure to keep this
14 group up to date as to how that preference evolves, since
15 you all were really helpful in kind of crafting this policy
16 solution. But we have not yet started the preference yet.

17
18 We have some policy work to do, but mostly we
19 have some technology updates that need to be done. Our
20 database has some updates, so we can kind of track the
21 households by target population as an indicator, so we can
22 then manage our referrals more efficiently using that
23 preference.

24 So with that, if anybody has any questions, I'm
25 happy to answer them.

1 MR. WILKINSON: Any questions on the 811 Program
2 for Spencer?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Spencer. Up next,
5 Jeremy will update us on Council projects.

6 MR. STREMLER: Yeah. So I have just a few quick
7 updates. Obviously, since Danny is no longer filling this
8 role and I'm taking over, I want to give an update on a
9 couple things that he was working on.

10 Of course, the first one is the service-enriched
11 housing database, and just trying to follow up on a similar
12 update that he gave you in October. You know, we're still
13 trying to get a better list from HUD separating what
14 properties are 202 versus 811, and which ones, you know --
15 it may be a combination of the two. We're still -- you
16 know, I've been working with Spencer and his contacts at
17 HUD to try and give us a better list of that information so
18 that we can actually provide a helpful list of properties.

19 Then, of course, as most of you were there, last
20 week we did our TDHCA 101 presentation. I felt it went
21 well. I hope all of you felt it went well as well. And I
22 know that a few of you have already mentioned that you
23 would like the recording of that presentation and the
24 slides, and I know Donna and Diana have both mentioned
25 wanting a copy of that.

1 If anyone else would like copies of that, please
2 send me an email, and I will be sure to get you that.
3 Since the recording is a rather large file, I will have to
4 send it over a secured file transfer protocol link that our
5 agency provides for us to send big information, big data
6 information. And so again if anybody would like that,
7 please feel free to reach out, and I'll provide that to
8 you.

9 Then, on another thing that Danny was working
10 on, is the Policy and Planning Subcommittee. And so after,
11 you know, thinking it over more and talking through it
12 with, you know, some of us here at TDHCA, we think that the
13 best way to utilize that committee moving forward -- and of
14 course, this is open to any thoughts anyone has as well --
15 is that -- so starting out, after each Board meeting, I
16 will send you an update of everything that the Board has
17 approved to go out for public comment, you know, the blurb
18 from the Board agenda and then a link to the public comment
19 page where it will be.

20 And then, should anybody on the entire Council
21 wish to provide their own individual public comment, you'll
22 have the information to be able to do so. Should a number
23 of people come back and say that they think the Council as
24 a whole should provide comment on something, then, I think,
25 as kind of an ad hoc group, we can get together, set a

1 Policy and Planning Subcommittee meeting, and then craft
2 whatever that response might be that y'all as a Council
3 might have, and move forward from there.

4 Because as of right now, I think, you know, if
5 we set up a meeting between every quarterly meeting, we
6 might not necessarily be speaking about anything. So I
7 think -- we think that, you know, sending out that
8 information after every Board meeting as what's available
9 for public comment from TDHCA can help to either facilitate
10 ideas or comment that individual members might have that
11 they can then, of course, submit on their own, or as a
12 group, might want to provide comment for.

13 And I will send out an example of what those
14 emails will look like, either -- before the end of this
15 week. And it will be with what Spencer mentioned, because
16 that was the one -- one of the things that was approved for
17 public comment by the Board at this past Board meeting was
18 the information Spencer just spoke about.

19 So I can send you an example of what that email
20 will look like that you'll receive after the Board meeting
21 every month that you can then -- we can then take from
22 there to decide whether to meet as a committee, or if
23 individually you'd like to make a comment.

24 So I'm open to any suggestions or questions
25 about that that anybody might have. If that seems like

1 something that everybody thinks will work, or if, you know,
2 we're totally off-base, and you want to have set meetings,
3 you know, that's y'all's call.

4 If there are no objections, we'll move forward
5 with that and see how that goes. And of course, we can
6 always change our minds if we like, on that type of ad-hoc
7 version of the Policy and Planning Subcommittee, moving
8 forward.

9 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Jeremy. Any
10 questions for Jeremy on the Council updates?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. WILKINSON: All right. If not, next up, we
13 have Ms. Joyce Pohlman from HHSC updating us on the Housing
14 Choice Plan. Joyce?

15 MS. POHLMAN: Good morning, everyone, and thanks
16 for this opportunity. As many of you know, the Health &
17 Human Services Commission has been working on something
18 called the Housing Choice Plan. This was recommended by
19 the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee, which is a group
20 that advises HHSC on policies regarding behavioral health.

21 And the Advisory Committee was looking at this,
22 because there's a real need to expand housing opportunities
23 for individuals with behavioral health needs. The focus of
24 the plan is on persons with mental health conditions,
25 persons with substance use histories, and/or persons with

1 intellectual and developmental disabilities.

2 We are -- we looked at what the current
3 availability of housing is for these individuals. What are
4 the options that they currently have available? What are
5 the gaps in that array of housing? And what are barriers
6 to obtaining that housing?

7 Because of looking at barriers and gaps, we
8 extended our review to include persons with justice
9 involvement, as well as persons who are older adults and
10 persons with physical disabilities. So we took a broad
11 perspective in this plan.

12 And I want to thank the Texas Department of
13 Housing and Community Affairs for being an active
14 participant in the year-long process to develop this
15 plan. We very much appreciate your contributions and
16 review of our drafts, and also acknowledge that Claire
17 Irwin provided some support to us on the chapter on housing
18 for persons with older adults.

19 So we had some real experts on this. The
20 current status of the plan is that we have completed a
21 draft. It's about 90 pages long. So it's in the review
22 process. You can imagine that it takes a while to review
23 that many pages of content, as well as a large number of
24 recommendations that were made by the committee to expand
25 housing options.

1 We are hoping that that review will be completed
2 soon. Our initial objective was to get it done this month.

3 With the Legislature in session, that might be delayed a
4 little bit, but we are anxious to get our plan back out
5 there in the community, so people can begin action on that.

6 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Joyce. Any questions
7 for Joyce on the Housing Choice Plan?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. WILKINSON: Next up, we have a member
10 presentation from Dr. Jennifer Gonzalez. Dr. Gonzalez?

11 DR. GONZALEZ: Hi. Thank you. Am I able to
12 share my screen? Or how would you like to --

13 MR. STREMLER: So I have the slides integrated
14 into our slide show here, so I'd be more than happy to go
15 through them for you.

16 DR. GONZALEZ: Awesome. Okay. Well, thank you
17 so much. I just wanted to take a few minutes to introduce
18 myself and my work. So I am the Senior Director for
19 Population Health at Meadows Mental Health Policy
20 Institute.

21 I joined back in 2019, a year and a half ago so
22 it seems like forever ago, with the goal of building a data
23 team and a data infrastructure within the Institute to
24 house health information, but it's turned out that I worked
25 on projects in the children's space and the veterans'

1 space.

2 And I brought my own research projects that I'll
3 tell you a little bit about, a couple of them. And so
4 because I think I'm coming from a different perspective
5 from many of you, I wanted to give you an overview of what
6 I do and how I might be able to contribute.

7 So I'll tell you a little bit about myself today
8 and my background, and a little bit about the current --
9 some of the current projects related to homelessness that
10 I've been working on lately, and how those relate to the
11 goals of the Council.

12 So the next slide. So this is what I really
13 look like during the week. So I'm originally from New
14 Jersey. I have -- I went to the University of North
15 Carolina. I got a degree in criminal justice and a
16 master's degree in criminal justice.

17 I thought I'd be a terrible police officer
18 coming out of school, and so I was good at the school
19 thing, so I kept on going. I then -- I transitioned over
20 to epidemiology to look at substance abuse and focused more
21 heavily on that topic.

22 Many people asked me what epidemiology was
23 before the pandemic. I don't get that question anymore.
24 So hopefully, I don't need to explain it to you all, but I
25 do apply the principles associated with infectious disease

1 control to behavioral health problems, so mental health and
2 substance abuse.

3 In large part because I have this background in
4 criminal justice, a lot of this focus is on justice-
5 involved people, and unfortunately, many of those people
6 are homeless and have behavioral health problems. So I
7 haven't been able to avoid working with homeless folks and
8 getting involved in this process.

9 So that's kind of how I got to the homeless
10 space. So I got my PhD at the University of Florida. I
11 stayed there for a year and did a post-doc in psychiatric
12 epi, and that's when I moved. After a year of that, I
13 moved over to Dallas.

14 I took a job at The University of Texas School
15 of Public Health as an assistant professor. I was tenured
16 a couple of years ago, and then I had -- over the course of
17 my, what I call, short career, actually seven years, I had
18 over \$10 million in federal and state and foundation
19 funding for my research projects.

20 So I had a fairly big portfolio happening. And
21 then the pandemic came, and I decided to leave the -- my
22 tenured faculty position right before that. So it's -- who
23 knows if that's a good decision in retrospect? We will
24 find out.

25 But I joined -- the Meadows Institute just

1 seemed like a wonderful opportunity to really spread my
2 wings and just make different projects meaningful. Next
3 slide. Great. I'll tell you a little bit about two of my
4 current projects now.

5 The first one is -- we call it a Link2Care
6 study. This is my -- one of my favorite studies. This is
7 a clinical trial where -- that's funded by the National
8 Institutes of Health. So it's a \$3.2 million federal
9 initiative that we're running right now in Dallas, Texas,
10 with The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center, for those of you
11 who are familiar.

12 It's a five-year project. Now, with COVID, it
13 will probably be six or seven years. Who knows? But we're
14 recruiting 432 people who are homeless who are coming out
15 of the Dallas County Jail, justice-involved homeless people
16 who are in need of some kind of service, right? Like,
17 everybody is going to be needing service.

18 But these are people who could use employment
19 assistance, housing assistance, mental health treatment,
20 substance use disorder care, assistance getting medication
21 and whatnot. And we have -- we're randomizing people into
22 groups that will test whether or not it's helpful to get
23 prompts or measure -- or reminders to get in touch with a
24 care coordinator or direct links to that care coordinator
25 reminder, and if that helps them in turn get rearrested --

1 use more services, and because they use the services, are
2 they less likely to be arrested again and stay homeless?

3 And so we're also just using these data because
4 they're so rich. We're asking questions on the cell phone
5 every day of these people. So they complete smartphone
6 assessments and they get paid. They can get up to \$700 for
7 being in the study if they do everything. And so we're
8 asking them all these questions.

9 We know where they are. We take their GPS
10 location every 15 minutes and record that in a geospatial
11 database. So we just really want to understand what the
12 causes are of people coming in and out of jails and
13 homeless shelters, and how can we stop that process, and we
14 think that this might be a really nice way to learn what
15 the intervention points are.

16 So I'll show you a slightly older version of the
17 app on the next slide. And you can see, this shows when
18 their next appointment is. So they come and see my
19 research team every -- five times over the course of six
20 months. And this will tell them when they need to be --
21 make it easy to call research staff, and they can see how
22 much they're going to get paid when they come to that next
23 appointment. And they get their money on a credit card, so
24 they can go to the ATM and use it, and just take it out and
25 use it however they like.

1 They can call their care manager easily. If
2 they're having an emergency, they call the crisis line, and
3 we visit that helpful website every quarter or so. It has
4 links to bus routes, AA and NA meetings, and all useful
5 resources for people.

6 But if anybody knows of any suggestions, we're
7 happy to -- we'd love to incorporate those into that
8 helpful websites link. And then we have the DART so that
9 those -- that's where the bus routes go.

10 And so the whole point of this app, really, is
11 to test the -- we have three groups that are randomized
12 people to -- one group doesn't get a phone at all. So we
13 just want to know, like, what do -- what does the baseline
14 look like? What does -- what is the rate of people getting
15 out of homelessness and getting rearrested for people who
16 don't -- who just are in usual care, get treated like
17 normal?

18 Then we have a group that receives a phone
19 without a fancy app like this, so -- it's not so fancy.
20 But it does ask them questions every day, but it doesn't
21 prompt them to call their care manager, give any reminders.

22 And so that's just answering the question: does
23 having this phone or not increase the likelihood that they
24 will get out of homelessness or stop being rearrested? So
25 we don't think that that's the case, but we don't know. We

1 don't know.

2 And so the Link2Care app, we call it, that
3 reminds participants to contact their care manager at least
4 twice a week, and it -- we use the daily assessments to
5 figure out what their needs are and link them to care
6 through the phone.

7 So we think you need help with this domain, and
8 so that's what they are linked directly to that service.
9 So we track every click that they make on this app, and
10 hope that they use it, and if they do, we will pull
11 information on case management from HMIS, in addition to
12 any service used at The Bridge, and hopefully, some other
13 providers will share information with them as well.

14 And we can look at their rearrest outcomes,
15 getting out of homelessness, as a function of these --
16 using services. So we're very excited about this. Next
17 slide.

18 And another project that I'm working on in
19 collaboration with our veterans' team is with Haven for
20 Hope out of San Antonio. And this is just kind of a basic
21 needs assessment. For those of you who are familiar with
22 the Meadows Institute, we do landscape assessments or
23 system assessments to try to figure out what the gaps are
24 in the services in their community.

25 So this is one of the first ones that we've done

1 with a homeless shelter. It's really a focus on veterans
2 who have some unique needs, compared to homeless folks who
3 are not veterans.

4 And we're looking at the social services and
5 behavioral health services that are provided at Haven for
6 Hope within their veterans program. So they have a
7 specific program targeting veterans. And we really want to
8 know if they're being linked to the appropriate services.

9 Like, are the appropriate needs assessments
10 being done? And are those -- the results from those being
11 used to drive what care people need?

12 It sounds like a simple thing, but I think you'd
13 be surprised at how often that does not happen. And so if
14 not, how do we fix that process? How do we address -- are
15 people not using those services that they're referred to
16 and how do we fix that?

17 And then we have to project the future needs.
18 This is always the hard part. Is the capacity sufficient
19 to meet the demand?

20 So everybody wants to know about how COVID has
21 impacted their operations and will change the demand. And
22 that's a really hard question to answer, but that's the
23 thing I'm trying to use data to project.

24 So this is one where I think I could contribute
25 in terms of linking or working with the HMIS work group in

1 getting some of these shelters that we work with on board
2 with data sharing. So just an example. Next slide.

3 And then some fun other things that I do.
4 Because I'm a data nerd and I enjoy just coming up with
5 things, we do a lot of projections. So if you all have
6 heard of the unemployed -- the number of suicides and drug
7 overdose deaths that we project to occur because of COVID-
8 related unemployment, that was our -- that was my
9 projection, my work.

10 So what we found is in -- that in Texas, we
11 expect an additional 300 suicide deaths per every 5
12 percentage increase in COVID-related unemployment. It
13 could have been 10. So you'll have to excuse me for not
14 knowing my own data.

15 And then there was 425 substance -- drug
16 overdose deaths which I think we're going to surpass, if I
17 were to revise my projections. But these were done in
18 June.

19 And so these are really fun. I think I draw
20 from literature and I apply it to, like, the real data on
21 deaths to figure out what the situation is going to look
22 like next year and how we can prepare for that.

23 We also -- my team is also working on the Dallas
24 Diversion Center, a pre-trial diversion center at Homeward
25 Bound. It's a treatment facility in Dallas, that will look

1 very much like the Houston Diversion Center in terms of
2 having inpatient crisis beds and availability of care
3 coordinators there.

4 And it's meant to be a place where people with
5 mental illness can come instead of being placed in jails or
6 booked into jails to better link them to treatment. So
7 we're looking at that, the outcomes of that and how well
8 it's being implemented, and which I think will be key.

9 We work with the specialty courts quite often in
10 Dallas County, and there are -- there are specialty courts
11 that have many people who are homeless in them. So we have
12 looked specifically at that group and found -- so we are
13 finding some interesting things. So I look forward to
14 sharing that with you guys in the next couple of months.

15 And then I do support other teams who are
16 working with the Department of Family and Protective
17 Services on expansion of community-based care for children
18 in foster care. And we plan out how to best roll out those
19 types of programs so that they are as seamless as can be,
20 whatever that means, that they're not disjointed and
21 unplanned.

22 And then we're always working on expanding
23 collaborative care across primary care settings, and this
24 is a huge deal. It's not just co-locating behavioral
25 health services with physical health services, but really

1 integrating them to improve behavioral health. So all of
2 these kind of touch the homeless space in different
3 ways. And so I wanted to mention that to the group and I'd
4 love to share results as I get them.

5 Next slide, on what I can bring to the
6 Council. So I think that I could provide an unbiased
7 assessment of what is -- what works well in terms of
8 programming and policy and what doesn't work so well,
9 because I read research all day.

10 It's a joy to do that. I read it on the
11 weekends and at night, and it's a lot of fun for me. And
12 so I just kind of accumulate this knowledge and I can't get
13 the research bug out of me, even though I have left my
14 research -- my projects -- my research position.

15 I can help identify options for evaluating
16 programs and policies, if we have any evaluation of work
17 that needs to get done for any of these programs. I can
18 help figure out who the right team is to do that and some
19 funding options perhaps.

20 And I can work -- I am certainly able to help
21 the data sharing and data warehouse group with their
22 integration projects, and that's what I love every day.
23 Because you'll see on the next slide -- I just wanted to
24 wrap it up and show you what -- this is what, like, my work
25 looks like on any given day. It's my statistical software

1 package.

2 And I wish that I -- with a cat. I call this
3 "stats with cats." There's actually a blog called that.
4 So this is the joy of working at home during COVID.

5 So thank you all for listening to my
6 presentation. I hope I didn't bore you to death, but I
7 hope it was useful, and you get a sense of what I do at the
8 Meadows Institute. So thank you. And I'm pleased to join
9 the group.

10 MS. GREEN: This is Doni Green. I've got a
11 quick question. I really enjoyed the information. It
12 sounds like a really interesting project. I was looking at
13 the app, and I didn't see any content that's kind of
14 specific to their physical health needs. And you know, are
15 you addressing that piece?

16 And you know, I worked with Parkland Hospital
17 over 30 years ago, and I know things have changed since
18 then, but back in the day, they had a homeless nurse
19 liaison. And her job was to work with Parkland patients
20 who were homeless in order to meet those physical health
21 needs.

22 DR. GONZALEZ: Yeah, that's a good point. I do
23 know that Parkland had a facility on-site at The Bridge. I
24 don't know that we -- we don't do any, like, intervention
25 within the app. It's all, kind of, through the case

1 manager.

2 MS. GREEN: Okay.

3 DR. GONZALEZ: Our -- part of our assessments,
4 the needs assessments, is about physical health problems --

5 MS. GREEN: Uh-huh.

6 DR. GONZALEZ: -- and so if you needed, like, a
7 checkup or we're incorporating things about vaccinations
8 now, and so that does link -- not to a Parkland homeless
9 liaison. So I'm going to check into that. But it does
10 link to the Parkland clinic that's on-site.

11 MS. GREEN: Okay.

12 MS. GONZALEZ: No. But if there's any other
13 resources -- maybe that should be a resource. That's --

14 MS. GREEN: Or perhaps --

15 DR. GONZALEZ: -- super helpful.

16 MS. GREEN: -- which is kind of a good starting
17 point for people who are looking for various social
18 services.

19 DR. GONZALEZ: Yeah. Okay. I'll get with The
20 Bridge on that. Thank you.

21 MS. POHLMAN: This is Joyce Pohlman from the
22 Health & Human Services Commission, and I found your
23 presentation very interesting. Many of the things that you
24 identified are barriers that we also address in the Housing
25 Choice Plan, and I'm looking for solutions.

1 I was particularly interested in the Link2Care
2 project that you have going on, and the focus on the
3 cycling of homeless individuals in and out of jails and
4 emergency rooms and state hospitals. So to the extent that
5 you are finding local initiatives that can be implemented
6 to address ending that cycle, we would be very interested,
7 because it's a tough nut to crack. And I'd be curious as
8 to what you're finding.

9 DR. GONZALEZ: Absolutely. Thank you so much
10 for offering that. I'll follow up with you after this,
11 just to --

12 MS. POHLMAN: Thank you.

13 DR. GONZALEZ: -- give you a brief update. I
14 had to leave my picture of the cat up, but thank you.
15 Thank you for that.

16 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Dr. Gonzalez. That
17 was very interesting. Any other questions on -- for Dr.
18 Gonzalez or her work?

19 (No response.)

20 MR. WILKINSON: Okay. If not, we'll move on to
21 Jeremy's update of our HUD one-year action plan.

22 MR. STREMLER: Yeah. So I just wanted to give a
23 quick update to the Council. Because both when we do the
24 five-year consolidated plan, y'all, of course, are part of
25 the consultation, and you know, soliciting any research or

1 other things that need to go into the five-year
2 consolidated plan that kind of set the groundwork for how
3 we then respond to the issues we just, you know, identified
4 in our market analysis, and you know, needs assessments of
5 the state and populations that we intend to serve with
6 these programs.

7 So we've begun the creation of the 2021 one-year
8 action plan, and you know, that will be taking place over
9 the next few months. And then there will be, of course, an
10 official public comment period in April/May, where we will
11 release the text, of course, for public comment.

12 But this is just kind of an opportunity to let
13 you know that we've begun working on it. And while this
14 specific program -- this specific plan does not cover, of
15 course, any of these emergency COVID-related programs that
16 we're talking about, this is, you know, just for our normal
17 annual allocations from HUD to operate our regular programs
18 that happen year over year: ESG, HOME, through all of
19 those programs, the TBRA single family development, you
20 know, reconstruction assistance.

21 All of those programs that -- our National
22 Housing Trust Fund that we operate, Suzanne's CDBG program,
23 and then DSHS's HOPWA program -- are all governed under
24 this plan. And this is just kind of an opportunity to let
25 you know that this work has started, and that if anybody

1 has any questions or comments on how we ensure that those
2 programs are prioritized and operated for the 2021 program
3 year, which of course will start September 1, 2021 and run
4 through August 31, 2022, I'm more than happy to hear them
5 now, or you can also send me an email with any comment or
6 suggestion you might have related to that.

7 But like I said, there will be an official
8 public comment period coming in April through May. There
9 will be a 30-plus day comment period open then.

10 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Jeremy. Next up on
11 the agenda is public comment. So I'd ask anyone from the
12 public who wishes to comment, to select the raise-your-hand
13 option and then Jeremy will unmute you to allow you to make
14 a comment.

15 We'll wait a few seconds here.

16 MR. STREMLER: Yes. I've got one person here,
17 Ginny Lewis Ford. It looks like you're self-muted. If you
18 want to unmute, you can go ahead and do that and make your
19 comment.

20 MS. LEWIS FORD: Hi, everyone. This is my first
21 meeting to listen in on, and I was so impressed with all
22 the information and work going on here. And I'm the
23 Executive Director of the Texas Association of Regional
24 Councils, all the COGs in the state of Texas, and really
25 commend you for your work.

1 And Brooke, you're on the hook for
2 February 18. So you have the date straight. And we
3 appreciate -- we work with so many folks on this call and
4 are a willing partner in any of your work. We can be
5 helpful in providing information or distributing
6 information.

7 I just want to offer that we're here to help
8 you, and it's wonderful to be able to access all this
9 virtually, although I know everyone misses being in person.

10 I just wanted to let you know I was on, and really
11 appreciate the work you're doing and the opportunity to
12 listen in as a member of the public.

13 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Ginny. That is --
14 for anyone else who's watching, that's the perfect kind of
15 public comment that I like to see, offering help. I'm just
16 kidding.

17 Any further comments from the public? Raise
18 your hand.

19 (No response.)

20 MR. WILKINSON: Okay. We can move on to -- I
21 saw that, Suzanne. I have mine blocked.

22 Move on to general updates. One thing that's a
23 little different that caught our eye recently -- I don't
24 know if any of y'all have seen it -- there's a new filed
25 bill, H.B. 1225 by Representative Elizabeth Campos from

1 Bexar County. I believe she's a freshman.

2 And it would have this Council do an annual
3 review and evaluation of 2-1-1, which is operated by
4 HHSC. So it's a bit awkward, seeing as this Council has a
5 large HHSC component. We're not necessarily a totally
6 outside entity.

7 Fiscal notes, it's probably going to be, you
8 know, hundreds of thousands of dollars, I'm sure. I don't
9 expect this to get legs, but if it does, we'll keep y'all
10 updated.

11 I don't know that we're necessarily the right
12 entity to do an annual review of 2-1-1, but it's just
13 something interesting that popped up in filed bills that
14 involves this Council. So I wanted you to be aware.

15 Next meeting is April 14. All of our fiscal
16 2021 meetings are listed at the bottom of the agenda, so if
17 you want to plan ahead. And if anyone has any other
18 suggested agenda items for the next meeting or the next,
19 you know, shoot Jeremy an email, and we can probably get
20 that on the agenda and talk about whatever y'all wish.

21 With all that, I think that we're about ready to
22 wrap up. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

23 MS. GREEN: So moved.

24 MR. WILKINSON: I've got a motion and -- I'm
25 sorry. I was muted. So I had a motion. Do I get a

1 second?

2 DR. HARRIS: Second.

3 MR. WILKINSON: Ah, there we go. I heard a
4 second. All in favor, say aye.

5 (A chorus of ayes.)

6 MR. WILKINSON: All opposed, say nay.

7 (No response.)

8 MR. WILKINSON: All right. The ayes have it.
9 Y'all have a great day. Thank you, everyone.

10 (Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the meeting was
11 adjourned.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 MEETING OF: Housing and Health Services Coordination
4 Council

5 LOCATION: Austin, Texas

6 DATE: January 27, 2020

7 I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,
8 numbers 1 through 56, inclusive, are the true, accurate,
9 and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording
10 made by electronic recording by Nancy H. King before the
11 Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

12 DATE: January 29, 2021
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19 _____
(Transcriber)

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21 On the Record Reporting &
22 Transcription, Inc.
23 7703 N. Lamar Blvd., Ste 515
24 Austin, Texas 78752
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