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Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3rd Party Oversight

Weekly Report for Week 15

Project Name: 3rd Party Emergency Shelter Oversight

Submitted to: Anchorage Assembly, Anchorage Mayor's Office, Anchorage Health Dept., and Shelter Operators (Henning, Inc. and The Alaska Hotel Group)

Date: Reporting period February 26 – March 3, 2024

Date Submitted: March 7, 2024

Submitted by: Cathleen McLaughlin, JD/MBA

Monica Gross MD, MPH

A. Background

As required under Contract #2023003145, fully executed on November 17, 2023, RRS submits its Weekly report for Week 15. This report is for the period February 26 – March 3, 2024.

B. Actions and Events During this Reporting Period

1. RRS focus is on operations at the 3 Emergency Cold Weather Shelter sites (CWS, The Alex Hotel, The Aviator).

2. Key topics:

A. **Use of The Client Questionnaire.** To date, RRS has completed 62 Client Questionnaires. The general sense of clients is that the shelter system is meeting their expectations. Three key takeaways RRS has:

1. The moving of clients between the 3 shelter sites has become quite efficient and smooth. Most of the clients interviewed were at the hotel sites with most clients coming from CWS. RRS did not receive 1 concern about the process.

2. Allowing clients an opportunity to move from CWS to a hotel room incentivizes pro-activeness in clients (ie. They have to connect with housing specialists in order to get the opportunity to move up). Even clients who were discharged from hotel rooms to CWS

because they were not ready acknowledged their behavior caused them to be discharged from the hotels but, were created hope for others because they knew they could get back in the queue to try again. RRS believes this process builds positive momentum and stabilizes the sites.

The ECWS system is not ‘warehousing’ vulnerable individuals but quietly incentivizing individuals to move forward.

3. With only 60 interviews done out of 580, RRS senses that many shelter clients believe ECWS decompression and closure is far off and have no sense of urgency to make plans for next steps. The benefit of doing these interviews is to remind clients, as does shelter staff, that clients need to make plans, self-advocate, and take advantage of the services provided.

B. Commencement of review of exit data by RRS.

Alex Hotel has reported that it has had 65 exits to housing since opening in October. Approximately 40 are through the ‘Next Step’ program.

C. **Client Call Log** – This workbook, as reported last week, is now being used as the daily call log and contacts for RRS.

D. **Incidences** – 1 overdose death was reported at the Alex on 3/3/24. RRS was timely notified, an investigation was completed and sent to AHD by the shelter operator.

E. **Shelter Operator’s Brief Weekly Update** - None provided to RRS during this reporting period. (Note: This Brief Weekly Update was submitted and attached to one RRS Weekly Report. The intent behind this was for shelter operators to have the opportunity to include updates on projects and programs from their perspective.)

F. **RRS was presented with a Notice to Cure.** RRS responded to AHD in writing to this Notice to Cure and is awaiting the outcome.

C. Shelter Operations

1. Alex – Non-congregate

The ‘Next Step’ program continues at the Alex. As noted above, there was a death, believed to be related to an overdose, during this reporting period. All processes and notifications were done appropriately. The Alex is close to capacity but, because of move-outs and move-ins, does have some beds available that will be filled within the week.

2. CWS – Congregate Shelter

RRS visited CWS during this reporting period to conduct client interviews. RRS was on-site Thursday, February 29, 2024. Client interviews generally showed health and safety measures were in place at CWS and clients were being served appropriately. Primary areas of client concerns were with limited transportation options to get downtown. While RRS was on site, the 3rd Avenue Navigation van was there to transport individuals to the 3rd Ave. Navigation

Center. There were more individuals wanting to go downtown than space on the van. Due to CWS's location, RRS expects transportation will be an on-going concern raised by clients. AHD has provided bus passes to all sites.

3. Aviator – Non-congregate.

The Aviator is operating at close to capacity. Movement between CWS and Aviator continues to be very fluid.

The rewards program was stopped based on issues raised by AHD. During client interviews, a few clients requested that some type of program like the rewards programs be re-instated in order to provide purposeful activities to clients on-site.

F. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary

RRS continues to recommend that ECWS stakeholders build positive momentum around shelter services. Closure of ECWS is 7 weeks away. It is time for all stakeholders to lean-in to the process of decompression and closure.

Any questions, please contact RRS through phone, text, or email at any time.

Respectfully Submitted, Cathleen N. McLaughlin, J.D./M.B.A. Monica Gross MD, MPH