

Housing Subcommittee report: 9-8-21

Bills MHDCJS' housing subcommittee was involved with:

1. MHDCJS' BILL SB17-021 and SB18-016: Community corrections reversion dollars to fund housing for individuals released from corrections and jails. These bills were then the building platform and expansion that led to the passage of HB19-1009 Substance Use Disorders Recovery Bill.

2. 2019- 2020 Housing subcommittee researched and proposed apartment application tenants' rights bill. Legislative Council found our bill was beyond the scope off MHDCJS. Housing subcommittee's collaboration with a MHDCJS LOC legislator and Colorado Center on Law and Policy lead to the passage of Rental Application Fairness HB19-1106.

3. Housing Subcommittee White Paper and research (Exhibit #1) which was the foundation to HB20-1035

4. HB20-1035 dealt with the Development of Housing Supportive Services in rural, frontier, and underserved communities. 1035 died in appropriations with twenty some other bills due to COVID.

See:

HB20-10235 (exhibit # 2)

HB20-1035 Info-graph (exhibit # 3A)

HB20-1035 One pager with endorsements (exhibit # 3B)

Bill had four major components: specific to individuals living with behavioral health issues who were involved in or at risk of justice involvement 1)state wide training and technical assistance to help communities develop and implement housing programs for indivs. with behav. health 2)

predevelopment grant program; 3) establishing supportive housing services and homelessness prevention grant program; 4) increase and improve data system ; best practices and training materials

5. During COVID the housing subcommittee continued to meet and worked on the following :

a. Presented a formal paper and research with presentation to Governor Polis' Behavioral Health Task Force with specific recommendations for housing for the cross section of individuals with behavioral health and justice involved issues (See exhibit 4 Letter to Gov. Polis and BHTF).

b. Researched, Formulated and Presented a Housing Platform to bill sponsors and BHTF stakeholder groups our Housing subcommittee's Housing Platform that should be used when addressing any legislation regarding behavioral health (see exhibit 5)

c. Researched and made recommendations for amendments to the following bills consistent with our Housing Platform and housing subcommittee's housing white paper.

1) SB21-137: Behavioral Health Recovery Act Bill, housing subcommittee asked for calling out specifically mental health and dual diagnosis not just substance disorders. Asked for amendments to target and fund individuals dual diagnosed individuals with severe mental health. Too often sober living homes cannot meet the need of individuals with severe mental health issues and deny them access to sober living homes or homes specializing in dual diagnosis.

2) SB21-146:Improving prison release outcomes. Specifically Sections 3-6 that the parole plan should specifically

have a discharge plan that provides appropriate housing for this high needs population. Bill was void of any housing or supportive housing services.

3) SB21-242: Housing Development Grants / hotel tenancy support. Housing subcommittee supported, but asking for more guard rails and support for individuals with behavioral health dual diagnosis justice involved for next step supportive housing and addressing zoning ordinances that limit hotel motel stays and/or supportive housing.

6. Housing subcommittee gave stakeholder input and a position paper to Health Management Associates (HMA) who were gathering information for Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA). (See exhibit 6)

7. Since the announcement of the American Recovery Act (ARPA) dollars, HB21-1329, and the implementation of SB19-222, the housing subcommittee as had individual stakeholder meetings with HCPF, DOH DOLA, and OBH giving input and seeking recommendations for collaborative legislation to address gaps.

8. The housing subcommittee has also met and collaborated with Mental Health Colorado, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and other entities regarding possible bills for the next two years

9. The housing subcommittee will be giving recommendations for the use of ARPA dollars. The housing subcommittee hopes to be able to present to this new housing panel in a meaningful way. Housing subcommittee is in the process of drafting a formal letter to the HB21- 1329's Housing Panel with supporting research.

10. IN SUMMARY:

Our housing subcommittee has been very active despite its inability to bring forward bills during the moratorium on interim and year round committees to convene or to submit bills. The housing subcommittee has worked collaboratively with many different groups, agencies and departments.

The legislation creating the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and HB 21-1329 creating a behavioral health subpanel and a housing subpanel to make recommendations for the use of ARPA dollars has put our MHDCJS Task Force and its subcommittees “out of sink” with being totally collaborative with these other groups due to our task force’s mandated time line for bills. We want to be collaborative with these other entities, but we are concerned that our window of opportunities will be lost to advocate for our highest need individuals and our legislative mandated population, individuals with mental health disorders in contact with or at risk of justice involvement, if we wait for these two entities’ recommendations.

For the past year during MHDCJS’ housing subcommittee’s advocacy it has consistently been told that “housing “ is in phase three of the new Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) and the BHA roll out is in phase I. However our housing subcommittee’s platform states **“ones housing status is not an after thought but the lens through which all behavioral health should be viewed”** . Additionally the “housing subpanel created by HB21-1329” has a broader responsibility beyond our task force’s target population and has many competing interests and approaches to addressing our state’s housing problems. Waiting for BHA’s and HB21-1329 ‘s time lines runs the risk of having the state’s most vulnerable,

MHDCJS' target population, continue to fall to the bottom of the funding pot. Communities that do have the ability to take advantage of the new funding streams will be communities with large non-profits with a well built infra structures for housing development, housing vouchers, and Medicaid reimbursement. Other communities not so fortunately situated with small nonprofits doing the lion share of the work addressing the need of our most vulnerable, will continue to be left behind in the present short term once in a life time unique funding opportunities to help the most vulnerable.

Our recommendation is for our bills to go forward to assure that the BHA and HB21-1329's behavioral health and housing panels incorporate this legislation into their recommendations. Our bill recommendations for this year and longer term education legislation are: