Improving the Health Care System

**Medicaid Issues:** Telehealth reimbursements; access to coverage (especially in non-expansion states), ongoing need for dental and other services, growing area for medical respite care (see priority below). Congress has given states extra Medicaid funding during pandemic, prohibited dis-enrollment, and is now considering alternatives for closing the coverage gap population in 12 non-expansion states.

**Resources:** [Telehealth issue brief](#), [Insurance Coverage at HCH Programs, 2020](#)

**Medicare-for-All Issues:** While [Medicare For All](#) legislation is active in Congress, current health care considerations in Congress include incremental expansions of Medicare to dental, vision, and hearing, and lowering the eligibility age to 60.

**Resources:** [C19 & single payer, single payer & other countries](#), webinar: [Covid19 Coffee Chat: How to Be a Single-Payer Advocate During a Pandemic](#)

**Events/Activities:** Medicare For All Act of 2021 [Town Hall Press Event](#) (Bobby at 1:14:09), Medicare For All National Coalition (NNU), Monthly Meetings with Rep. Jayapal’s staff on M4All; planned workshop at 2022 Conference

**Discussion question:** How to balance single payer advocacy v. incremental coverage expansions?

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19

**Issues:** Low vaccine rates among clients, accommodating staff mandates, balancing usual services with ongoing C19 response, community partnerships to conduct testing/vaccines/services in I&Q programs, potential impact of “long-COVID” on clients, impact of hospital “Critical Care Plans” (aka rationing), expiration of current PHE on Oct 20 (though likely extended), staff burnout/shortage

**Recent Resources:** [New staff KATIE LEAGUE, COVID-19 Project Manager](#); [Winter is Coming](#), [Vaccines](#), [HCH Partnerships with CoCs](#), [Use of ARPA Health Center Funding](#), and [Interim Lessons Learned](#) Poverty Policy Podcast Episode 13: [Vaccines](#); [letter to Governors and local officials](#) on vaccine access for PEH (with 93 endorsements); webinar series on C19 partnerships with [Washington DC](#), [Hennepin Health/Minneapolis](#), and [Chicago](#); webinar on [homeless mortality](#) and the impact of C19; [summary](#) of key provisions of the American Rescue Act; [Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates for Staff in the HCH Community](#); [The Biden Administration’s COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate: Information for the HCH Community](#); upcoming issue brief assessing hospital Critical Care Plans and the factors used to ration care; and 18 biweekly e-blasts of the Council COVID-19 “Flash Blasts.”
**Events/Activities:** Weekly meetings with HUD, HRSA, VA, CDC & others; regular presentations at HUD Office Hours; webinars with CDC, ASTHO, and others; staff presentations at CDC-HUD after-action meeting in Atlanta; and biweekly focus groups with HCH clinical staff, and monthly focus groups with consumers.

**Discussion question:** How is your program or community implementing permanent improvements as a result of C19 funding or policy changes? This may mean buying hotels/motels, expanding housing availability, expanding telehealth, developing partnerships with CoCs/public health authorities/others, etc.]

---

**Increasing Access to SUD**

**Issues:** Growing overdose epidemic and need for low-barrier access to care; growing funding and political support for harm reduction programs (to include SSPs); eliminating barriers to prescribe buprenorphine (e.g., “X-Waiver” training requirement, patient limits, scope-of-practice, etc.); ongoing stigma;

**Resources:** Coming soon: Medication Assisted Treatment at HCH Programs, 2020

Coming soon: “HCH on the Frontlines” storytelling portal

**Events/Activities:** Lobby meetings with members of Congress on the MAT Act, engagement with SAMHSA/HHS about SUD/MOUD, promotion and participation in Overdose Awareness Day, Drug Policy Coalition, MAT Act Coalition; planned issue brief to clarify federal guidelines on SSPs and illustrate how to incorporate SSPs into health center operations;

**Discussion question:** How do we best integrate consumer and provider experiences with our SUD advocacy work in an accessible, sensitive, trauma-informed way?

---

**Advancing Medical Respite Care**

**Issues:** Growing role amid C19 response; growing interest in/implementation of Medicaid reimbursements (CA, WA, MN, NY, MI); receipt of contract to write Washington State Medicaid report;

**Upcoming Resources:** MRC-CoC Partnership publication with the Framework for an Equitable C19 Homelessness Response outlines issues surrounding MRC-CoC relationships; features interview in Yakima plus focus group findings from MRCs and CoCs (November 2021); Washington State Medicaid paper establishing MRC as a statewide Medicaid benefit includes feedback from listening sessions, speaks to psychiatric needs, and makes recommendations for reimbursement (January 2022); Health Centers and MRC Programs issue brief outlines how health centers can maximize MRC services/programs (Spring 2022).

**Discussion question:** What conversations are you having with your Medicaid leadership, community hospitals, or other stakeholders about expanding MRC and/or creating funding opportunities?
Other Issues

Evictions & Housing: Action Steps for HCH Community of Evictions, Poverty Policy Podcast episode 12: Evictions,

Criminalization: Statement with National Coalition for Housing Justice (NCHJ) on criminalization

Taking Action & Getting Involved

1. Subscribe to the Mobilizer (issued last Thursday of every month) and take the action steps outlined in each issue

2. Subscribe to the C19 Flash Blast (issued every other Wednesday)

3. Attend Policy Committee (2nd Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 EST; contact Regina at reed@nhchc.org)

4. Attend Administrators Committee (2nd Mondays, 12:00-1:00 EST; contact Michael at mdurham@nhchc.org)

5. Submit policy/advocacy-related conference proposals (due date: October 31, 2021)

6. Use our work to advance your work (issue briefs, webinars, etc.)

7. Listen, rate, review, and share the Poverty Policy Podcast on Apple, Stitcher, Soundcloud

8. (For providers and consumers) Set up a 15-minute informal phone interview with Regina at reed@nhchc.org to discuss your experience with barriers to care for substance use disorders/medications for opioid use disorders (SUD/MOUD) or health insurance coverage.

9. If you are operating an syringe services program (SSP)—or want to be—set up a 15-minute informal phone interview with Katie at kleague@nhchc.org to discuss your challenges and lessons learned to inform our SSP work.

10. Take action at the local level by submitting an op-ed to your local media about the importance of ending homelessness, getting involved in your local chapter of Healthcare-NOW!, writing/assigning policy papers and articles for classes, joining local/professional association advocacy groups, or taking other individual action.

Primary Partners

- National Association of Community Health Centers
- National Alliance to End Homelessness
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- National Low Income Housing Coalition
- National Homelessness Law Center
- Drug Policy Alliance
- End Substance Use Disorder
- Healthcare-NOW!
Active Coalitions
(* = dues paying member)

1. Partnership for Medicaid*
2. Medicaid Waiver Task Force - lead by Georgetown University Center for Children & Families
3. Mental Health Liaison Group* - lead by American Psychological Association
4. Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) United* – lead by Coalition for Health Funding
5. Friends of HRSA - lead by American Public Health Association
6. Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Coalition - lead by private consulting group
7. Big Tent Protect our Care - lead by Families USA
8. Campaign for Guaranteed Health – lead by Healthcare-NOW!
9. SAVE for All – lead by Coalition on Human Needs
10. COVID19 Policy Group - lead by Coalition on Human Needs
11. Made to Save C19 Vaccine Coalition - lead by Made to Save
12. Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose - run by American Society of Addiction Medicine
14. MAT Act Strategy Group - lead by End Substance Use Disorder
15. Coalition for Housing and Community Development Funding* - lead by National Low Income Housing Coalition
16. Homeless Advocates Group – lead by National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
17. Housing Not Handcuffs – lead by National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
18. Bring America Home Now! Campaign - lead by National Coalition for the Homeless
19. Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition – lead by the National Low Income Housing Coalition
20. National Coalition for Housing Justice - lead by National Low Income Housing Coalition

Sign-On Letters: We have supported our coalition partners on a wide range of issues by signing on to ~50 Congressional & Administration letters