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Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3rd Party Oversight

Weekly Report for Week 12

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 5 - 11, 2024

Date Submitted: February 14, 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 12. This report is for the period February 5 - 11, 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) and the warming sites at CWS, Aviator and Golden Lion.

2. Key topics:

A. **Closure of Warming Site at CWS** – As of 2/14/2024, the remaining warming site at CWS was closed. RRS received no client complaints regarding the operation of any of the warming site.

RRS confirmed with AHD's Housing and Homelessness Coordinator that although the warming site is closed, community providers such as APD, the hospitals, AFD and ASP can transport individuals to CWS 24/7 so long as CWS is not at capacity. Capacity is currently 200. Community providers that transport are encouraged to call CWS prior to transport to confirm CWS has availability.

RRS strongly supports having a 24/7 access to low barrier shelter cots for APD, hospital discharges, AFD and ASP. As noted in APD's presentation before the Assembly's Public Safety Committee on February 7, 2024, emergency service providers have been challenged with where to take individuals who have no place to go after the emergency service is rendered.

B. Creation of Suboxone Program at Aviator – At the weekly report-out meeting between shelter operators, AHD, and RRS, it was reported by Henning, Inc. staff at the Aviator that a new collaboration was created between the Aviator and Fireweed Health Clinic. The goal is to provide clients who are interested an opportunity to receive Medically-assisted Treatment (MAT) to address addiction issues. The program started at Aviator during the week of 2/12/2024. If the project proves viable, the goal is to extend it to the other shelter sites.

C. Mixed Use at the Aviator – RRS appreciated meeting with the Aviator management group to discuss unique challenges the Aviator has to address in the next few weeks regarding safety, security and optics.

The Aviator will be opening some rooms to the public during Fur Rondy. Mixed use of the Aviator can pose challenges which the Aviator is taking steps to address, such as enhanced security around the perimeter of the building. As with all low-barrier shelter locations, the Aviator draws some individuals who are not residing at the Aviator and who do not have legitimate reasons to be on the property. The Aviator has enhanced its security outside by doing perimeter walks with 2 staff, every 30 minutes.

D. Re-Tooling of Third Party Oversight Duties and Responsibilities.

As noted in Weekly Report #11, RRS, AHD, and the shelter operators discussed and agreed that RRS will no longer lead a townhall at CWS, but will join CWS's weekly townhall that is set for Wednesday's at 3:30. RRS attended the last CWS townhall which was led by shelter staff.

RRS also agreed to create a client questionnaire that will be used at all 3 shelter sites so that there is uniformity in the questions RRS asks clients. RRS will also be with a shelter staff while in each of the 3 shelters to ensure that shelter staff is aware of the on-site interactions.

RRS has created the client questionnaire and will begin using it February 15, 2024. It will be distributed to shelter managers and AHD February 14, 2024. n February 1, 2024 AHD set a meeting with RRS and Henning, Inc. to discuss the duties and responsibilities of RRS under the Third Party Oversight contract. RRS can provide more details if necessary. The parties reached an understanding and agreed upon action items that were confirmed by email.

E. Incidences – 2 overdoses were reported at the Aviator, both resulting in the use of Narcan. There were no overdoses at the Alex. RRS does not have data regarding overdoses at CWS.

F. Client transportation - Bus passes have been distributed at each location based on need and client purpose. RRS learned that bus passes at Alex are not provided for

clients to use to go look at housing. This was a concern raised by one Alex resident at the weekly townhall.

G. **Client concerns made to RRS** – All client concerns during this period were Level 1 (non-emergent). RRS texted shelter managers when a client contacted RRS so the shelter manager was aware of the concern and could address it. RRS did get one phone call from a shelter client, while at the airport, who called to simply say he had used the resources offered him by shelter staff and had been provided a plane ticket to reunite with family in the lower 48.

H. **Shelter Operator’s Brief Weekly Update** - None provided to RRS during this reporting period.

C. Shelter Operations

1. Alex – Non-congregate

Since beginning the ‘Next Step’ program at Alex Hotel, 28 - 30 exits to housing (completed or in process) were reported by the Alex shelter manager. A few clients were discharged for program rule violations. No overdoses were reported. All complaints and concerns from clients at Alex were reported by RRS to Alex site management and resolved.

2. CWS – Congregate Shelter

RRS did attend the CWS townhall on February 7, 2024. RRS has been asked to schedule specific times to come to CWS with the shelter management. RRS will be scheduling these times now that the client questionnaire has been created.

All client concerns RRS received were texted to shelter operator management timely. RRS does not resolve the concerns but simply receives them and reports.

3. Aviator – Non-congregate.

The Aviator bed audit process has shored-up bed usage, in part because of the revised process to discharge individuals who do not use their beds for 2 nights in a row unless there is a legitimate reason. This bed audit process caused approximately 50 beds to be opened up and available for CWS clients in the last month. As of February 9, 2024, almost all beds were in use.

F. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary

RRS continues to recommend that ECWS stakeholders build positive momentum around shelter services.

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