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## **Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Oversight**

### **Weekly Report for Week 16**

**Project Name: 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 March 4 – 10, 2024**

**Date Submitted: March 13, 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 16. This report is for the period March 4- 10, 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 RRS Client Questionnaire is a Way to Engage in a Bigger Conversation.** To date, RRS has completed 90 Client Questionnaires. The general sense of clients continues to be that the shelter system is meeting their expectations. Most surveyed appreciate the Emergency Cold Weather Shelter program and the opportunity to be warm and dry. Many are also stating that, despite having case managers, housing specialists, and advocates available to them, they are unsure of what they are going to do when the ECWS shelter sites close. This is not a criticism of the programs in place. This is simply recognizing the reality: many in the population being served, despite housing applications, getting IDs, getting food stamps etc. remain in limbo.

B. **All 3 ECWS sites are well-operated.** RRS visits each ECWS site at least once a week. Through the past 16 weeks, RRS has sensed all sites have grown into their own rhythm and processes. There is an environment of friendliness at all sites. Clients have generally reported that they have been treated with respect by shelter staff.

C. **Addressing the High Level of Mental Health Needs.** Henning, Inc. has a mental health specialist on staff who focuses on serving clients with significant mental health issues. All stakeholders in the ECWS system are acutely aware that more mental health services need to be available for our most vulnerable. To that end, Henning, Inc. is exploring ways to partner with other mental health specialists in Anchorage so that highly vulnerable individuals, who are not capable of managing their mental health needs without encouragement and support, can be more closely monitored.

D. **Review of exit data by RRS.**

Alex Hotel has reported that there were no exits to housing during this reporting period but expects 9 exits in the next reporting period. A total of 45 exits to permanent supportive housing have occurred to date through the 'Next Step' program.

The Aviator has reported that there have been 34 exits to housing to date.

CWS exits were primarily to the Alex and Aviator. This integrated process continues to be beneficial to clients and, even after the ECWS sites close, RRS recommends integration between homeless service providers be encouraged.

D. **Client Call Log** – This workbook continues to be used as the daily call log and contacts for RRS. It is submitted to AHD daily. There were no significant on-site instances to report during this period.

D. **Incidents** – No overdoses have been reported.

E. **Shelter Operator's Brief Weekly Update** – No written report was provided to RRS during this reporting period. However, during the weekly check-in, RRS was informed about the development of a more robust response to mental health client needs.

F. **RRS was presented with a Notice to Cure.** During this reporting period, the Notice to Cure was resolved between RRS and AHD.

**C. Shelter Operations**

1. **Alex – Non-congregate**

The 'Next Step' program continues at the Alex. The Alex is well-run and clients interviewed do feel a sense of community at this site.

A concern by a business owner in the area was raised. The concern was forwarded to AHD, RRS, and the shelter operators. All stakeholders are motivated to be good neighbors and are aware of the concern so it can be addressed more fully.

RRS will be at the Alex for client surveys on March 14, 2024.

2. **CWS – Congregate Shelter**

RRS visited CWS during this reporting period to conduct client interviews. Client interviews generally showed health and safety measures were in place at CWS and clients were being served appropriately. Primary areas of client concerns continue to be limited transportation options and difficulty walking on the streets due to icy or snowy conditions. As noted in previous reports, due to CWS's location, RRS expects transportation will be an on-going concern raised by clients which RRS hopes will abate when walkways are clearer and the weather warms.

3. **Aviator – Non-congregate.**

The Aviator is operating at close to capacity. Movement between CWS and Aviator continues to be very fluid. A few clients who were at CWS had returned from the Aviator. Those interviewed did not disagree that they needed to return to CWS to re-set.

There have been no overdoses during this reporting period. While doing client surveys, clients did not report any health and safety issues, nor did RRS observe any.

**F. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary**

RRS continues to recommend that ECWS stakeholders build positive momentum around shelter services and exit plans. Closure of ECWS is 6 weeks away.

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**