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Emergency Cold Weather Shelter 3rd Party Oversight

Weekly Report for Week 21

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 April 8 - 14, 2024

Date Submitted: April 17, 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 21. This report is for the period April 8 - 14, 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. **Client engagement, stabilization, and exit plans.** As noted in the decompression plan below, 2 of the 3 ECWS sites are slowly beginning to reduce usage.

During this reporting period RRS interviewed clients at CWS and the Aviator. RRS has also received calls from clients at all 3 sites. Each client concern was forwarded to the shelter operators and the clients were notified of the outcome of RRS looking into their concerns.

Most client concerns focused on clients' frustrations for being discharged from the hotel programs and having to return to CWS due to rule violations. While it is true that the ECWS program is a low-barrier shelter program, the non-congregate (hotel) sites do expect a higher level of accountability of the client. Curfews and regular room usage at the Alex and Aviator were

key to stabilize the sites and to help clients appreciate the value of a room versus a cot. For most, the hotels have been a positive stabilization program. For others, the clients were not ready to be accountable enough to remain in the hotel programs. In speaking with these disgruntled clients, RRS messaged that although they may be disappointed in losing the opportunity to be in the hotel programs, they now know what is expected. This is a lesson that goes beyond shelter beds.

As RRS has stated in prior reports, a step-up/step-down shelter program incentivizes clients and helps stabilize. ECWS was operated this season very efficiently in this regard and should be considered as a model for future ECWS programs.

B. All 3 ECWS sites continue to be well-operated. RRS will not reiterate what has been reported in prior reports except to state that all 3 sites have policies, processes, and practices that cause the ECWS to be well-operated.

C. Review of exit data by RRS.

During this reporting period, 5 clients were housed from the Alex.

D. Decompression of ECWS Sites

Under the decompression plan, CWS will continue to accept clients up to 200. On April 17 the CWS census was 190.

The Alex has stopped taking new clients and is currently at a census of 62. This is 10 less than last week, with 5 discharged to housing, and 5 discharged for rule violations.

The Aviator will no longer transport or intake new clients. The reduction in clients will be done to ensure the Aviator stays within the budget assigned, and drop down its client population by attrition. Currently, The Aviator has a targeted census of 248 (from a high of 274).

RRS continues to support this decompression process because it is the least disruptive.

E. Client Call Log – This workbook continues to be used as the daily call log for RRS. It is submitted to AHD daily. All matters brought to RRS’s attention by clients and community members were timely noted and addressed by RRS, AHD and the shelter operators.

F. Incidences – No overdoses were reported from CWS, Alex or Aviator.

C. Shelter Operations

1. Alex – Non-congregate

The Alex continues to be operated well. Next Step program continues as planned and scheduled. 5 clients in the Next Step program have exited to housing during this reporting period.

2. CWS – Congregate Shelter

CWS continues to be operated well. The only client concerns RRS received related to CWS clients wanting to be moved to the 2 non-congregate sites or were upset that they had been discharged from the hotels unfairly and wanted to be allowed to return to the hotels. All of these concerns were addressed by RRS and Henning, Inc. and resolved appropriately.

3. **Aviator – Non-congregate.**

The Aviator continues to be operated well. No new clients will be accepted at this site and the number of clients will step-down, primarily through attrition. Aviator management plans to begin doing an in-house interview process to encourage clients to take this time to make a discharge plan.

D. Recommendations, Conclusions and Summary

RRS continues to recommend that ECWS stakeholders build positive momentum around shelter services, exit plans and solution-based practices. RRS will not re-iterate its reasoning for recommending a year-round low-barrier shelter but continues to support this concept.

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