

Surviving Abuse, Exploitation and Neglect Committee.
Donut Holes subcommittee meeting notes.
July, 7 2020 12:00 PM

12:05

- Chair Jessica Emerson presents her outline for our first meeting.
- Lists vulnerable groups, what supportive services are still needed, which vulnerable groups are falling through the cracks and where, identifying stakeholders and how to best engage them, and providing short term recommendations.

12:11 What are the vulnerable populations in need?

- Sex workers, trafficking survivors
- LGBTQIA+
- Homeless
 - Unaccompanied minors
- Immigrants
 - Undocumented left out of unemployment benefits.
 - Need to push for state financial assistance
- Youth - DSS, CPS, juveniles, unaccompanied minors, group homes.
 - Many homes are run by churches, many are falling through the cracks and not getting the services they need. Independent monitors do not have access.
- Adults Protective Services population
- People in nursing homes and assisted living.
- Physically and mentally disabled.
- Persons with physical disabilities
- Adult men who seek day labor
- Others who congregate at liquor stores.
 - Sometimes in very large groups. No way of tracking with COVID-19.
- Patient rights- enforcing their safety.
 - Hospital staff not as accountable as they used to be.
- People who use drugs
 - Rate of general use and overdose has risen significantly. Many users cannot get to the services that they need.
- Individuals experiencing interpersonal violence.
 - Trapped in homes with abusers.
- Urban Poor
- Rural Poor.
- General reminder: people who lack of internet access
- Caregivers- family caregivers at home often at risk of injury.

Issues:

- Maryland Legal Aid: Elder abuse/financial exploitation: Found that some people in their own homes who are being taken care of by their families are being pressured into signing documents (ex: signing away their homes). Attorneys now cannot get to these clients houses to help them review documents.

- After COVID: there is going to be a huge volume of evictions for failure to pay rent.
- After COVID: People on subsidized housing being evicted for drug use.
- Keep in mind: there are many people who are vulnerable and do not know it, because they have been so neglected/unaccounted for.
- Individuals in Homeless shelters cannot escape exposure.
 - Those who ask for money on the street are seeing a deep decline in income.
 - Lack of people on the street and people fearing being exposed.
- General Issue: lack of internet services- applies across different vulnerable groups.
- Isolation- mental health.
- Sex workers: not able to have clients in the same way or number. They still need to make a living. Taking on higher-risk activities.
 - Most services/benefits are only available to trafficking survivors. Not all sex workers are trafficking victims/survivors.
 - Many want to seek shelter or go to emergency rooms but scared/can't because of COVID. Especially those with kids.
- Courts requiring virtual mediation- people experiencing interpersonal violence are not able to present their cases.
- Homeless and unaccompanied youth-more vulnerable to abuse, assault, exploitation.
 - Some are undocumented-even less access to resources. Difficult to get access to documentation because all of these places are closed.
 - Many being forced back into abusive homes.
 - House Bill 206 passed July 1, 2020: allows unaccompanied minors who need shelter or supportive services to be able to obtain such without needing an adult present.
 - Those who have aged out of foster care: Ages 18-24: have no supportive communities and fall into abysmal situations.
- Immigrants: ARE a donut hole.
 - Are disproportionately represented in hospital deaths because do not come until it is too late.

12:53: What can be done? What services and/or laws are *missing* to service problems that have been exacerbated or created due to COVID?

- Do research into populations that we have highlighted but need more information.
- ****SURVEY?** Work in tandem with the Civil Legal Needs and Services Subcommittee?
 - Expand survey to ask what is missing??
 - No open-ended questions. Provide a checklist-make sure options are as inclusive as possible.
 - Instead of sending to service providers, we need to make sure everyone who is included in social services (the vulnerable groups themselves) have a voice-*empowerment*.
 - *How can we get the survey out to these groups/populations?*
 - Ask: What do you need?
 - Do not speak over these groups.

- Make sure they recognize the commitment we have and that they *will see results*.

1:17-1:25 Next meeting: Tuesday July 21, 2020 10:00AM

- For the next meeting: Each person crafts questions on the population that they work the most with.
- Laura, Shelly, Jessica set up a time to meet with Ann Sheridan from Civil Legal Needs and Resources.
- Think about what exactly we are going to promise these groups- aside from a survey-how will we help them in their situations and expand the legal system to better include/help them?