



Getting to Zero: Not Without Housing

April 26, 2018 Meeting Summary

On April 26, 2018, Getting to Zero (GTZ) San Francisco Consortium hosted a quarterly meeting at 25 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, for city leaders, citizens and consortium members to discuss the housing crisis in San Francisco and its effect on HIV care.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Diane Havlir, MD, Professor of Medicine, UCSF and GTZ Co-Founder

Havlir provided brief comments on HIV and housing data in San Francisco, which show that disparities in access to health care and housing are disproportionately affecting people with illness, including people living with HIV. She emphasized the importance of collaboration with existing organizations and open dialogue for prevention and response efforts. We cannot get to zero without housing, says Havlir.

PRESENTATION OF POLICY STATEMENT

Joe Hollendorner, CEO, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, GTZ Steering Committee

Hollendorner expanded on the challenges San Francisco is facing with HIV and housing, noting a significant gap in viral suppression between the housed living with HIV (67%) and homeless living with HIV (33%). New permanent supportive housing units are needed; however, this will take years. Hollendorner presented GTZ's call to action for housing policy reform: (1) provide same-day access to emergency housing, navigation centers and shelters for people living with HIV and other serious medical conditions, including the ability to stay in emergency housing until stable housing is available; (2) expand eligibility for rent subsidies to include those with less than 50 percent rent burden, the marginally housed, and the homeless; and (3) support an additional \$3 million in housing subsidies for seniors and adults with disabilities, including people living with HIV (proposal originally put forth by Homeless Emergency Service Providers Association (HESPA) and also supported by SF HIV-AIDS Provider Network (HAPN) and Long Term Care Coordinating Council). Subsequently, Hollendorner explained San Francisco's use of Coordinated Entry to prioritize vulnerability for housing. He proposed three modifications to the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT)—the tool used to determine vulnerability—to more accurately reflect the seriousness of HIV: (1) revise "Mortality Risk" and weight more heavily, (2) incorporate HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases into Mortality Risks; (3) revise "Medical Risk" and weight more heavily.

RESPONSE BY JEFF KOSITSKY AND BARRY ROEDER

Jeff Kositsky, Director, Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, San Francisco

Kositsky indicated that San Francisco is concerned about housing and is faced with significantly limited resources. Of note, the city has more permanent supportive housing per capita than any other US city except Washington, D.C.. Further, San Francisco has 24 percent of Bay Area's homeless population and 50 percent of its permanent supportive housing. The director responded positively to Hollendorner's notes on Coordinated Entry, saying the suggestions

seemed “spot on” and assured there is opportunity further incorporate health into the vulnerability assessment tool (per Kositsky, Coordinated Entry should be “up and running” by end of 2019). Kositsky indicated that acuity of illness should weigh heavily in the determination of vulnerability. He said that 1,300 new permanent supportive housing units are “in the pipeline,” with 800 are for people with disabilities. Kositsky also encouraged the audience to engage Mayor’s Office of Housing and Housing Authority. He proposed that the audience consider other ways to address the problem, including prevention (keeping people housed), supporting GTZ’s GTZ request for rental subsidies. He discouraged consideration of unlimited stays in shelter, citing the unintended consequence that doing so ends up denying access of shelter to others. He said San Francisco is faced with the challenge of balancing limited resources, increasing demand, showing compassion, and providing services to keep the city safe and healthy for all. He thanked the consortium for the invitation to join the meeting.

Barry Roeder, Mayor’s Office of Housing, San Francisco

Roeder, an HIV survivor for 20+ years, indicated that the Mayor’s Office is developing a five-year housing plan for HIV and he encouraged the audience to provide input. He shared that since Plus housing launched in October 2017, the Mayor’s Office has granted fifteen awards for 500 applications submitted. Roeder also encouraged the audience to consider presenting additional data to show directly how housing would benefit health outcomes for HIV.

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Moderator: **Diane Jones**, RN, GTZ Steering Committee

Panelists: **Adam Leonard**, NP, Larkin Street Youth Services; **Client #1 (J)**; **Deborah Borne**, MD, HHOME; **Client #2 (M)**; **Erin Collins**, MSW, Ward 86 (HIV Clinic at ZSFG)

A panel that included three frontline providers and two clients presented perspectives on HIV prevention and care in the context of homelessness. J, a 21-year-old SF resident seroconverted while attempting to be on PrEP while homeless. He started HIV treatment immediately after diagnosis. He is currently housed through Larkin Street Youth Services, employed, and speaking out against racism, homophobia and HIV stigma. M, a transgender older adult, has been living with HIV and homeless for decades. She is now housed at the Empress Hotel. Housing has allowed her to embrace her authentic identify and to begin a gender transition. She spoke eloquently about the challenges to succeed in permanent housing after years of homelessness.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

The discussion was opened to include perspectives of audience members, including more testimonials about the humanitarian crisis that people living with HIV are facing regarding housing instability and homelessness in SF, and the many programs struggling to support their clients. A strong consensus emerged that GTZ needs to continue pursuing this issue. The GTZ steering committee is meeting to identify next steps and provide opportunities for the members interested in getting involved.