



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Housing Conservatorship Workgroup: Meeting Minutes

Friday, November 1, 2019 @ 1:30-3pm
1380 Howard, Room 515

In attendance:

Chair	Angelica Almeida, Ph.D. (SFDPH)
Workgroup Members	Kelly Dearman (Seat 1), Jessica Lehman (Seat 2), Simon Pang (Seat 3), Rachel Rodriguez (Seat 5), Sara Shortt (Seat 6), Dr. Mark Leary (Seat 7), Dr. Irene Sung (Seat 8), Jose Orbeta (Seat 9), Jill Nielsen (Seat 10), Dara Papo (Seat 11), Sgt. Kelly Kruger (Seat 12)
Evaluation Team	Rami Arafah (Harder+Company Community Research), Tsuyoshi Onda (Harder+Company Community Research)

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Opening Remarks

Angelica Almeida, Ph.D. welcomed the workgroup and members of the public in attendance, and provided an overview of the agenda. Workgroup members were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, their affiliation, and their seat number.

Workgroup Roles and Responsibilities

Angelica Almeida provided an overview of the workgroup’s roles and responsibilities. The workgroup’s charge is to evaluate effectiveness of the implementation of the new Housing Conservatorship program, using the key data points identified in the San Francisco ordinance and Senate Bill 40 legislation, and to review outcomes for those conserved. The workgroup is responsible for providing reports on progress and effectiveness, with the first preliminary report first due to the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor’s office by January 21, 2020. Annual reports are then due in January of subsequent years (2021-2023).

The workgroup will meet every few months, with more frequent meetings leading up to implementation. The next meeting will be held on November 18th, with the goal of providing an overview of the conservatorship process. A subsequent meeting will be held on December 16th to discuss data gathered for the preliminary report.

Workgroup members asked for clarification on their expected tenure with the group, as well as an anticipated timeline for reviewing initial data.

Overview of Housing Conservatorship

Angelica Almeida provided a high-level overview of the context and landscape surrounding the pilot Housing Conservatorship program. According to Dr. Almeida, the landscape of need in San Francisco has changed, with the current epidemic centering on methamphetamines and opioids. This is a complex issue and there is not agreement on how to address this. Individuals served by the Housing Conservatorship program are unable to care for themselves, due to a combination of serious mental health and substance use disorder, and subsequently cycle in and out of crisis. Dr. Almeida noted that San Francisco has a history of innovation to expand and adapt care to meet the needs of its population, and that the framework of the cycle of acute mental illness and substance abuse was the impetus for this initiative, because staff were unable to actively intervene with the tools in place previously.

Following her landscape overview, Dr. Almeida then summarized the history of the Housing Conservatorship legislation (SB 1045 and SB 40), including the changes enacted in SB 40 around additional legal protections and reducing the term of the conservatorship from 12 to 6 months. She also provided an overview of eligibility criteria, referral sources, and patients' rights. It is estimated that approximately 50-100 individuals in San Francisco are eligible for the Housing Conservatorship.

Finally, Dr. Almeida summarized the general intake and program flow for the Housing Conservatorship. Treatment in the program is grounded on the following principles: recovery and wellness, trauma-informed care, gender-responsive care, and cultural and racial humility. Workgroup members shared questions and thoughts around counts of 5150s toward eligibility, offers of housing through the conservatorship process, and requirements for justifying continuance of the conservatorship every 60 days.

Evaluation Planning

Rami Arafah, Ph.D., Senior Research Consultant at Harder+Company Community Research, provided an overview of the Housing Conservatorship's evaluation strategy, approach, and early steps. Harder+Company will serve as an external evaluator supporting the efforts of the workgroup. In compliance with SB 40 and SF Health Code requirements, the evaluation will involve gathering and analyzing individual-level data, including: number and status of individuals under Housing Conservatorship; effectiveness of conservatorships and key outcomes; number and source of 5150s in San Francisco; placement in various facilities and/or permanent supportive housing; homelessness and treatment engagement after conservatorship; substance use treatment and relapse; and a demographic analysis of who is conserved. The evaluation will utilize a mixed methods approach whenever possible, gathering data from multiple voices to hear the perspective of those impacted.

Dr. Arafah provided an initial timeline for preliminary evaluation reporting, as well as an overview of what data will feasibly be ready by the January, 2020 due date. This will likely not include any individual level data, and will focus instead on population level data on 5150s in San Francisco. Initial steps in the evaluation include a process to assess where data will be sourced from, and multiple workgroup members will likely be called upon for their support.

Workgroup members shared a number of questions and thoughts related to the evaluation, covering: suggestions on other data to track; helpfulness of existing electronic health record systems; frequency of data shares with the workgroup; clarification on wording within the Health Code requirements; timeline for tracking individual progress after conservatorship; timeline for incoming referrals to the Housing Conservatorship and subsequent data tracking; overlap of individuals conserved with emergency department high utilizers; anticipated housing status during conservatorship; process for counting 5150s outside of San Francisco toward eligibility; and the process for being released from conservatorship if it is found that an individual's mental illness is no longer acute.

Public Comment

Members of the public shared the following comments:

- Offering the opportunity to give public comments after each major agenda section would be best.
- Best practice shows that expanding conservatorship to substance users is not effective, and the hope is that substance users are not prosecuted for small possession.
- The Board of Supervisors asked for a legislative analyst report that came out in July, but the Board voted in June. The report notably showed that among those with a 5150, 64% were conserved for over 5 years, and 37% over 10 years. Housing conservatorship is another tool to put people away. Finally, 9 of 12 members of the workgroup are appointed, and there is concern about the lack of representation in the working group.
- The Workgroup needs to include the perspective of those affected by conservatorship, and needs to listen to those affected by this. The side effects of psych medications are grave and workgroup needs to consider how people are being compelled to use them, and how due to their physical side effects

individuals end up shaving 20+ years off their lives. In addition, complying with a treatment plan is not the same thing as truly a sign of improvement. The threat to the black/Hispanic community is real, and the workgroup needs to be careful about the use of law enforcement and needs to consider the effects of relocation trauma.

- The possibility of using housing conservatorship could work, but what safeguards are put in place if system becomes overwhelmed. SF is already limiting LPS conservatorships due to lack of resources, and given that how are we going to do this so that it doesn't negatively impact voluntary services for those that want it.
- How will the workgroup ensure that the full service providers are accountable and getting the care that they need? Once the six-month period of conservatorship ends, how long do you follow somebody?
- Mandatory housing conservatorship treatment is not necessarily effective. *[This member of the public shared a print copy of a letter from their labor union addressing the Housing Conservatorship pilot. Dr. Almeida created a digital copy of the letter and distributed it to workgroup members.]*

Closing and Next Steps

The next Housing Conservatorship Workgroup meeting will take place on Monday, November 18th at 12:30pm.