



**Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness  
Legislative Action Committee**

Thursday, November 17, 2016  
12:30-1:30 p.m.  
Christman Building, 208 N. Capitol Ave, Lansing, MI

**Meeting Attendance:**

<i>In Person</i>	<i>Call</i>
Peter Ruark-Michigan League for Public Policy	Terri Ariss - Livingston County Homeless Continuum of Care committee
Lyn Raymond-Lakeshore Housing Alliance	Nina Lavi - Michigan Primary Care Association
Stephanie Kasprzak, Monroe County Opportunity Program	Rick Stravers -Open Doors Kalamazoo
Ashita Ghelani, Mid Michigan Recovery Services Inc.	Paula Kaiser VanDam - MDHHS
Ryan Hannon-Goodwill Northern Michigan	Douglas Russell - Room at the Inn Marquette
Angel Foster – Central Michigan COC	
Shelley Jipson-Lomax – Michigan County Social Services Association	
Danielle Redilla – Oakland Integrated Healthcare Network	
Eric Hufnagel, Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness	
Laurel Burchfield – Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness	
Gerry Leslie - Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness	
Jason Weller-Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness	
Toni Young-City of Lansing	

**Call to Order:** Eric Hufnagel called the meeting to order at 12:35 pm.

**Introductions:** Everyone in the room and on the call introduced themselves and their agency/organization/region.

**Overview of LAC:** This is the first meeting of LAC. Eric Hufnagel introduced MCAH’s Legislative Action Committee and read the following statement: LAC is a new volunteer group seeking to shape policy on issues of homelessness in Michigan. Together, we identify and work towards policy that better represents the needs of the homeless population throughout our state. We discuss and strategize with viewpoints from the field, urban and city communities and the state capitol. We train and educate ourselves and decision makers on the impact of policy on

individuals and families experiencing homelessness. We engage and advocate with legislators to enact change and improve the lives of our clients, friends, family and fellow Michigianians.

LAC will be a state-wide body and will seek adequate representation from the field. This will be a vehicle for policy change and a formal mechanism to bring issues as identified from LAC members to MCAH's Board of Directors and Policy Committee.

Expectations are that LAC will meet on a monthly basis by phone for 1 hour. This group will be receiving additional communications for ongoing engagement between meetings. There is a possibility for subcommittees depending on need and interest.

**Election Update:** Jason Weller (MCAH) presented an update after the November elections.

*National level:* Overall, Michigan stayed constant with 5 Democrat and 9 Republic in Congress. There was turnover in District 1 w/ incumbent retiring, but the district remained Republican. Jason and Eric Hufnagel stressed that the national level needs to be a focus of LAC. There are unknowns with a Trump presidency; we don't know yet about agency positions, but will share that information as it becomes available. Trump's goal to "drain the swamp" may mean new ways of doing things with a new administration. This also means competition with other issues that are going to be trying to get a foot in with new administration. We need to talk about why our priorities are important and not to move backwards. Need to be vigilant and prepared early and use messaging and regular communications through multiple vehicles. We don't know what funding will be like and if tax changes will affect revenues. Funding for housing has been a bi-partisan issue in the past and we don't necessarily see this changing.

MCAH also hosted a Region 7 legislative meeting on Wednesday with representatives from local agencies and staff from Senators Stabenaw and Peters and Representative Walberg's offices. This was a successful event with education and good questions from the staff. This is a model that can be replicated as a way to build and maintain relationships with policy makers. Terri Ariss reported that staff from federal offices attend Livingston County COC meetings and signed the veteran pledge.

Stephanie Kasprzak urged the group to be adaptable and use HMIS data for our messaging. Jason Weller agreed that reliable data has been key to HUD funding in the past.

*State level:* The Michigan House was up for election. 3 vacant seats went to 2 Democrats and 1 Republican with the Republican's maintaining majority in both House and Senate. Term limits means new faces and opportunity to engage. MCAH did a literature drop to existing House and Senate offices, but will need to do a new literature drop with new legislators in January to educate them about homelessness.

*Local level:* Elected officials at the local level have relationships with those at the federal level. Use that opportunity to talk to Michigan elected officials to reach federal level. Put in plug for federal level funding when talking about other issues

*Questions for group:* are there champions at any level who you work with? MCAH/LAC will continue to identify champions for our efforts, but please let us know of anyone who has been a champion for your efforts. Email Eric ([ehufnagel@mihomeless.org](mailto:ehufnagel@mihomeless.org)) or bring to next meeting.

Gerry Leslie wanted to know what kind of data resonates when you're talking to elected officials. This will help HMIS.

*Additional comments:* Danielle Redilla expressed concerned about ACA and Medicaid loss with new administration. Peter Ruark also is concerned about TANF funds being used properly. Michigan allocation has been the same since 1996, and we don't see that changing for the better in the future. If Michigan's General Fund gets tighter, then there will be more pressure to put TANF funds into GF and other programs.

**Identifying policy priorities for 2017:** The group brainstormed on policy issues that could be identified as priorities for LAC in 2017. This list is not exclusive, but will be considered by MCAH Public Policy Committee for recommendation to the Board.

- Effect of homelessness on children.
- How local city councils can influence affordable housing developments such as through the number of units and zoning.
- Mental Health, including access to all care.
- Resources for permanent supportive housing. Look at other models happening outside MI.
- Michigan Energy Assistance Program and other ways to help people pay energy bills. What MI is doing right needs to be protected, but we need to push on what Michigan needs to do better.
- Public transportation including increased resources and more initiatives.
- More coordination of services at the local level. Model of interdisciplinary team (IDT) as a way to enhance collaboration (meets regularly, separate from COC)
- More rapid rehousing funding, More resources in general.
- Continue emphasis on veterans, don't let it backtrack/drop. Replicate model for doubled-up veterans.
- Source of income protection as anti-discrimination. Holland as an example.
- Family Independence Program-Increase monthly benefit.
- Increase maximum monthly benefit to get closer to fair market rent
- EITC
- Change to Food Assistance program: policy that will eliminate foods assistance for able bodied adults without dependents who are working less than 20 hours/week.
- State ID. Could be a non-partisan issue. Some concern that existing programs (HMIS ID card pilot in Detroit, SOS pilot in Oakland) are piecemeal and will create separate IDs for each county.
- HUD regulations on documenting chronic homelessness. Requires a diagnosis by doctor for permanent supportive housing program, but not everyone can or will go to doctor. Try to get exceptions within HUD regulations.

#### **Calls To Action**

- National Alliance to End Homelessness: [FY 2017 Homelessness Funding Campaign](#)
- National Law Center on Poverty: [Housing not Handcuffs Campaign](#)
- [National Homeless Information Project](#): campaign on chronic homeless vouchers.
- National Low Income Housing Initiative: [Call for funding for housing opportunities](#)

**Next Meeting:** The group decided to do a one hour call each month between 12:00-1:00 pm. Monday is the preferred date. MCAH will put out doodle poll to identify the best week in December.