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MEMORANDUM

To: Health and Human Services Committee
From: Office of Child and Family Services
Date: April 14, 2021
Subject: LD 81 & LD 1076 – Homeless Youth Shelter Data

Over the last 12 months, what were the total number of beds available for unaccompanied youth at a shelter and what was the occupancy rate?

Based on information from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS):

- New Beginnings (12 beds) – 12-month occupancy rate of 34.98%
- Shaw House (16 beds) – 12-month occupancy rate of 34.87%
- Preble Street (24 beds) – 12-month occupancy rate of 53.18%

If a youth receives an extension to stay in a youth shelter longer than 30 days, are daily extension requests of DHHS required? If not, what is the extension process?

Daily extensions are not required. Generally, the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) Children's Licensing and Investigation Services (CLIS) staff approves a new 30-day period (unless the provider requests a shorter period based on the specific circumstances).

Has DHHS been receiving extension requests for youths staying in shelters beyond 60 days? Does DHHS have data of extension requests before and during the pandemic?

OCFS does not track these requests, but CLIS report that it is rare that they receive a request for a youth to stay beyond 60 consecutive days. After the initial 30-day period, CLIS may be asked to approve an extension at which point they approve a new 30-day period. In the few cases where they have approved a request for a stay beyond 60 days it has been due to the youth having no safe alternative to the shelter.

The two following questions were directed to the shelters, but OCFS has been able to gather data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- How many youth who have come to a shelter have returned to a shelter within a short period of time?
 - OCFS looked at data over a 1-year period (considering this the “short period of time” for the purpose of considering this data). The data below is representative of youth who left and came back at least once within that one-year period.

- New Beginnings: 11 youth had 22 return stays for an average of 2 return stays per youth
 - Shaw House: 40 youth had 305 return stays for an average of 7.6 return stays per youth
 - Preble Street: 86 youth had 696 return stays for an average of 8 return stays per youth
- How many consecutive nights are youths staying in shelters?
 - Data is not available on consecutive nights but OCFS can provide information on the average cumulative length of stay by youth over a 12-month period (below) (Note that this average will include all stays for a youth even if the stays were not consecutive).
 - Cumulative (non-consecutive) Average Length of Stay by youth:
 - New Beginnings: 23.1bed nights
 - Shaw House: 36.3 bed nights
 - Preble Street: 43.8 bed nights
 - Since some youth stayed on more than one occasion in the course of the year, we also calculated the average length of stay by total stays:
 - New Beginnings: 20 nights
 - Shaw House: 6 nights
 - Preble Street: 7 nights

Does DHHS have studies or outcome data about whether 60 days or 90 days or some other period of time is optimal?

OCFS staff searched for any such studies and conferred with Maine Housing and could not locate any such studies or outcome data.

Are youth homeless shelters (licensed under either ch. 8 or 9) currently working under an RFP? What's the relationship between the pending RFP and the current system of shelters (licensed under either ch. 8 or 9)?

As indicated in the letter provided to the Committee on LD 1076, OCFS is currently in the process of an RFP for youth homeless services. The RFP has been released and is in process. We believe the RFP process will demonstrate whether or not there is a need for additional resources to provide this service and allow OCFS to thoughtfully consider any additional funding requests.

How would the Department handle the appropriation in LD 1076 in light of the pending RFP?

The Department would be looking to the Committee and Legislature for their intent for how these additional funds should be used.