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Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) Monitoring Report Quarter 3 FY2014 (January, February, March 2014)

The Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) has been established in recognition that recovery can only begin in a safe, healthy, and decent environment, a place one can call home. The Office of Substance Abuse and Adult Mental Health Services recognizes the necessity for rental assistance for persons with mental illness, particularly those being discharged from hospitals, group homes, homeless shelters, and places considered substandard for human habitation. There is not a single housing market in the country where a person receiving Social Security as his or her sole income source can afford to rent even a modest one-bedroom apartment. According to a report issued by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, *Priced out in 2012* in Maine, 95% of a person's SSI standard monthly payment is needed to pay for the average one-bedroom apartment statewide. In Cumberland County the amount is 94% and Sagadahoc 98%. In the City of Portland 115% of a person's SSI is necessary to pay for the average one-bedroom apartment and in the KEYS area (Kittery, Elliot, York and South Berwick) 110%.

BRAP is designed to assist individuals who have a psychiatric disability with housing costs for up to 24 months or until the individuals are awarded a Housing Choice Voucher (aka Section 8 Voucher), another federal subsidy, or until the individuals have an alternative housing placement. All units subsidized by BRAP funding must meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Housing Quality Standards and Fair Market Rents. Following a **Housing First** model, initial BRAP recipients are encouraged, but not required to accept the provision of services to go hand in hand with the voucher.

The monitoring of the Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) is the responsibility of the Office of Substance Abuse and Adult Mental Health Services (SAMHS) and particularly the Data, Quality Management, and Resource Development team.

The bullets below highlight some of the details regarding persons who are currently waiting for a BRAP voucher: The percentage terms reflect the percentage of relative change compared to the last report. As is reflected by the bullets below (see table and graph on last page), the BRAP program has made very efficient utilization of the influx of funds in this fiscal year.

- Priority #1 applicants (Discharge from a psychiatric hospital within the last 6 months). Riverview and Dorothea Dix consumers are typically not waiting more than 3 business days from the date of a completed application. There are no Priority 1 applicants waiting for a BRAP voucher.
- Priority #2 applicants (Homeless) have decreased from 83 to 68 persons down 18%
- Priority #3 applicants (Substandard Housing) remains at 3 persons.
- Priority #4 applicants (Community Residential Facility) have decreased from 10 to 6 persons, down 40%.
- Persons on the waitlist greater than 90 days have increased from 16 to 34 persons, up 53% --we will reach out to all persons in this category to confirm their continued interest in BRAP.

Since inception of the wait list, there has been a total of 2,767 BRAP vouchers awarded broken down as follows: Priority #1, 1,267; Priority #2, 1,202; Priority #3, 38; Priority #4, 243. Note that 17 vouchers have been awarded to persons with no priority. In the last quarter 99 vouchers were awarded.

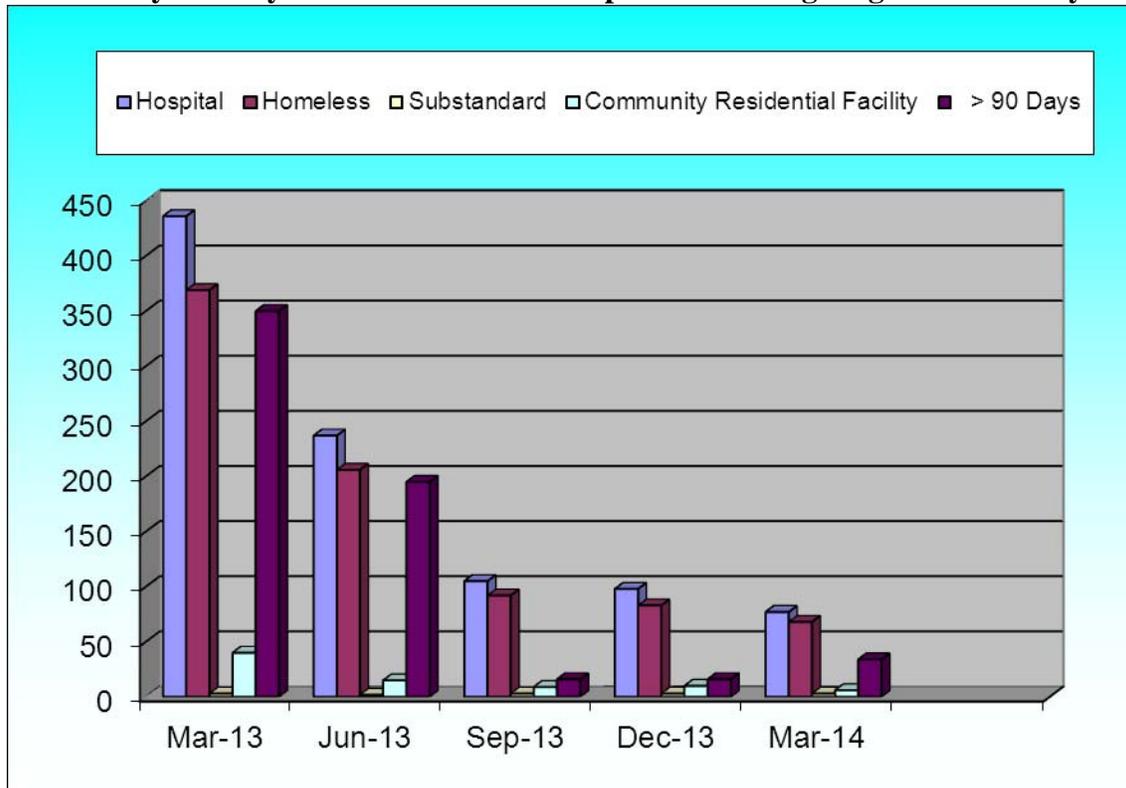
The current BRAP census as of March 31, 2014 is 1,132 vouchers issued well above our targeted goal of 930 vouchers. Due to management of voucher funding we have been able to continue progress in decreasing the waitlist. However, the number of persons waiting more than 90 days has increased substantially over the last quarter and we will be reaching out to each of these persons to determine their ongoing status. The overall budget for FY 14 increased to \$5,372,414.00 which is allowing us to better meet the waitlist needs and push for expansion into more rural areas where vouchers have not been traditionally utilized due to housing stock as well as community education and partnership. This is being done through our established administrative agents as well as the developing relationships with the PATH program, Continuums of Care, and Homeless Councils. We now have several persons housed in Washington county and continue to address the more rural parts of the State through partnering with the previously mentioned groups as well as using our existing, contracted LAA's for reaching out to those communities. Our office has met with these agencies with specific goals of increasing utilization where the clients are, rather than where the vouchers can be used by quickly finding new resources and increasing community education and partnerships.

State General Funding for FY15 has been approved by the Legislature, as a part of the SAMHS's Base, at \$5,372,414.00

The number of persons on the program for greater than 24 months remains steady at 50% of the entire program. This is principally a result of decades of federal and state cuts to low-income and supportive housing programs, including persons who will not qualify for Section 8 due criminal history. The lack of availability of these resources, particularly Section 8 at the federal level, has translated to increased pressures on state programs such as BRAP.

SAMHS administers a substantial number of Shelter Plus Care vouchers, more than any other state on a per-capita basis. The census was 898 as of March 31, 2014. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and has seen significant growth over the last decade, the result of SAMHS aggressively applying for and receiving new grants each year. It should be noted that HUD has eliminated new project funding through an overall reduction of over 5% in this latest funding round. Maine's Shelter Plus Care program has retained its current level of federal funding. Because of HUD's elimination of funding for new projects, SAMHS did not apply for additional federal funds. The FY2014 annual budget for Shelter Plus Care is \$7.9 million. The total dollars for all SPC grants (one year renewals to 5 year new contracts) administered by SAMHS is \$14,101,781. Shelter Plus Care (SPC) provides permanent rental subsidies (housing vouchers) and supportive services (provided by MaineCare) to literally homeless individuals with: severe and persistent mental illness (63%), chronic substance abuse and mental illness (30%), and chronic substance abuse and HIV/AIDS (7%).

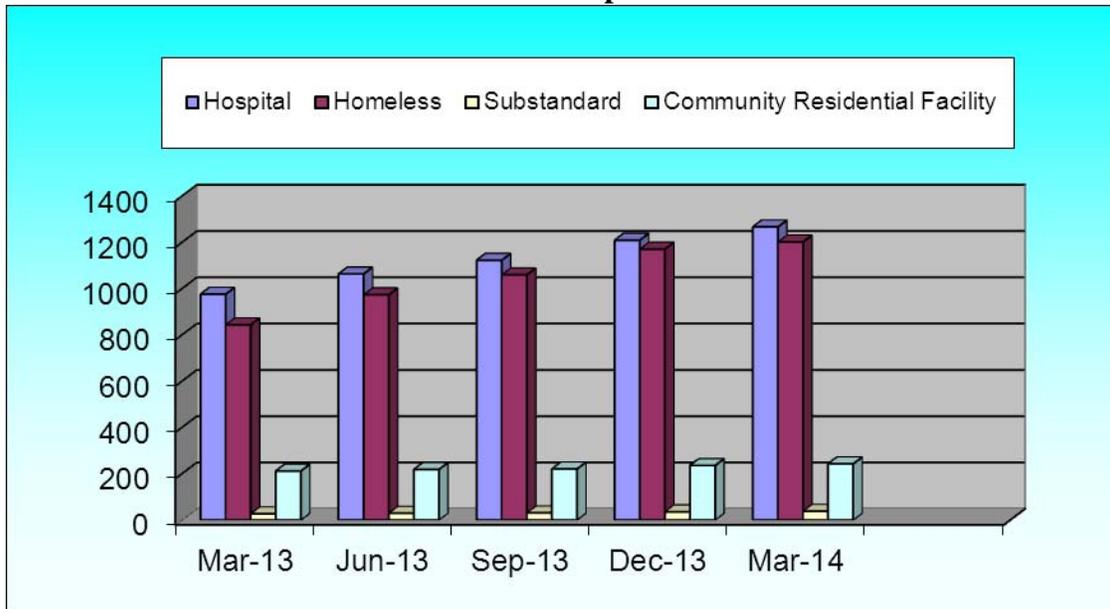
**BRAP Waitlist Status--Graph:
Detail by Priority Status to include those persons waiting longer than 90 Days**



**BRAP Waitlist Status—Table:
Detail by Priority Status to include those persons waiting longer than 90 Days**

Reporting Period	Mar-13	Jun-13	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	% Change relative to Last Report
Total number of persons waiting for BRAP	436	237	105	98	77	-21%
Priority 1—Discharge from state or private psychiatric hospital within last 6 months	22	12	1	2	0	-100%
Priority 2—Homeless (HUD Transitional Definition)	369	206	92	83	68	-18%
Priority 3—Sub-standard Housing	3	2	3	3	3	0%
Priority 4—Leaving a Community Residential living facility	40	15	9	10	6	-40%
Total number of persons on wait list more than 90 days awaiting voucher	350	195	16	16	34	53%

**BRAP Awards—Graph
Cumulative Since Inception of Waitlist**



**BRAP Awards—Table
Cumulative Since Inception of Waitlist**

Reporting Periods	Mar-13	Jun-13	Sep-13	Dec-13	Mar-14	% Change relative to Last Report
Cumulative number of persons awarded BRAP	2,071	2,300	2,450	2,668	2,767	4%
Priority 1—Discharge from state or private psychiatric hospital within last 6 months	976	1,064	1,123	1,210	1,267	4%
Priority 2—Homeless (HUD Transitional Definition)	844	974	1,060	1,171	1,202	3%
Priority 3—Sub-standard Housing	27	30	31	36	38	5%
Priority 4—Leaving a DHHS funded living facility	212	219	221	236	243	3%

*Note: 17 persons awarded with no priority