

# ShelterNet (Formerly HMIS) April 2005 Newsletter

## ACC IMPLEMENTATION

We have chosen to begin our ShelterNet implementation at Fairview's Addictions Crisis Center (ACC) so that we could climb up that learning curve with a Fairview program. And under Jim Hulse's fearless leadership, we are way over the top of that curve! Sometime in February, Jim and Justin moved into the ACC, commandeering a good part of the bottom floor, to learn as much as they possibly could about the operation of the ACC and how to transition from paper to computer via ClientTrack.NET (our chosen software program) with as little disruption to our daily operations as possible. As a NYS regulated facility with a medical component, the ACC uses approximately 30 forms in its daily operations! Justin has been able to reduce this paper flow to a one-page diagram, and Jim has customized ClientTrack so that the majority of these forms will now be completed electronically. In March, Ron Poff joined the ShelterNet team to help alleviate bottlenecks in the programming and hardware aspects of the project. Ron comes to the project with an A+ Networking Certification, and some good experience with networks, hardware, and computers. Also of note, we have a new director of the ACC. Tina Van Noy, a seven-year employee of Fairview, has taken the position, and is a critical ShelterNet player, along with Pat Haley, Fairview's Clinical Director.

We passed a milestone on April 12, when DSI (the ClientTrack vendor) created a training database for us which includes all of Jim's customization. Training of ACC staff in ClientTrack has officially begun! Justin has been working with staff since January to build skills and confidence in typing and general computer usage. For the next 6 weeks, he and Ron and Jim and Fairview management will continue to train staff in basic skills as well as use of the program, security measures, and making the transition from paper to computer in client record-keeping. We plan to switch from the training database to the live database on June 1, and our goal is to ensure that every staff member successfully completes 4 dummy intakes before that date. We're planning an agency-wide kickoff party in late May to celebrate this first step, complete with prizes, awards, and commemorative t-shirts. It promises to be a fitting celebration!

## COMMUNITY AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

Implementation at the four other participating agencies is within sight! Here is our best guess at the timetable:

Agency	Live Date
ACC	6/1/2005
YWCA	9/1/2005
YMCA	11/1/2005
VOA	2/1/2006
Catholic Charities Teen Transitional Program	3/1/2006

Site surveys have been completed at the YWCA and the VOA to help prepare for the hardware upgrades that will be necessary to connect them to the ShelterNet system. We hope to have all agencies connected by the end of June so that we can begin using the Shelter-Net.org website (see below for more about the website) as a means of communication. Legal agreements have been prepared and given to the Executive Directors of each agency, and we expect to have them all executed in the near future.

Justin and Mary plan to visit each agency in the next two months to take an in-depth look at how you operate and how your paperwork flows. For each agency's implementation, Justin will create a one-page snapshot summary of the information flow, and Jim and Ron will get to work performing the customization necessary to ensure a seamless transition from paper to computer. Our goal is to substitute software for pencil and paper in providing service to clients, and hope to mold the software to suit our needs, rather than changing the way we operate our programs to conform to the needs of the software. This requires a fair amount of effort and resources in the implementation phase, but should pay big dividends in the future! Training is another critical aspect of implementation, and we have the resources to ensure that staff at each agency is properly trained. It is never too early to start working on keyboarding skills, and Justin will be happy to get anyone started on that at any time. Justin is somewhat nomadic at the moment, so call Mary at 722-8987 ext. 221 if you would like to get hold of him to begin some basic training. We have found at the ACC that it was immensely beneficial to begin acclimating staff to the concept of computerization long before actual implementation takes place.

### **SHELTER-NET.ORG**

Shelter-Net.org is ready to be developed. Plans for the website include project-wide updates, schedules, downloadable information and forms, and progress notes. Jim and Mary and Kim from Fairview's business office plan to start construction this month.

### **CASH MATCH GRANTS**

Mary and Michele have recently submitted a number of grant applications as they strive to obtain the \$65,000 of cash match necessary for the project. Applications have gone out to the Hoyt Foundation, the Bernice Gould Memorial Fund, and the United Way Venture Grant Program, with the Verizon and Decker Foundations on the horizon. UHS has committed \$20,000 to ShelterNet. Many thanks to Dr. Leslie Major for his interest and contributions to this project!

### **SHELTERNET COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD LATE MAY-EARLY JUNE**

We have held off on meeting as a group during the ACC implementation phase, but plan to hold a meeting sometime before mid-June. The agenda will focus mainly on standardizing our approach to the following areas:

Intake processes

Collection of data on homelessness

Informing clients of our participation in ShelterNet and their right to privacy

Collection of data on waiting lists and turnaways