

HUD Exchange - HMIS Project Monitoring, 5/5/20

Brian Roccapiore: All right. It is 1:30. I just saw the little record button come on. So welcome everybody to HMIS Project Monitoring. I'm Brian Roccapiore. With me, Nastacia' Moore from C4 Innovations; and in the background, we have Nicole from ICF who is going to be taking care of all of the technical stuff for us today.

Before we begin, a couple housekeeping items. We are going to be recording today's session, so get ready for a lively, lively recording so you can relive this magic in the future. We're going to have about 60 minutes of content for you. We're going to try to have 10 minutes of Q&A at the end of this.

During this, all the participants are going to be in listen-only mode. As you've all realized, during this pandemic, with all of the Zoom calls and Go-To-Webinars and whatnot, that people don't know how to mute themselves. So we're just saving you all from the barking dogs and the people aggressively typing on their keyboards.

We encourage you to submit stuff in the chat box down below. There's a little thing that looks like a chat bubble down there. There is both a chat box and a Q&A box. Ideally, if we could all just use the chat box, that would be fantastic so we can have everything in one convenient little place.

If there are any technical difficulties that come up, just type that into the chat box and Nicole from ICF will be able to take care of that for you. And if you're having any trouble hearing the audio through your computer speakers, just go ahead and type that in the box and they'll get you the call-in number for everything. With that, there's the Q&A box which I just told you not to use.

So the chat box -- when you type things into that chat box, there are a couple different options for you. You can send it to the host, you could send it to the presenters, you could send it to all participants or all attendees. Please select all participants. If you select all attendees, that means Nastacia' and I don't get to see it. If you want to talk bad about us in the chat box, that -- you can go ahead and send it to all attendees and we won't be able to see a thing that you're doing in there.

But if you want us to see it and be able to answer questions, you've got to use the all participants options. That gets everybody to communicate at the same time. So if we could all do that, that would be awesome.

Up next, NHSDC, the reason we are all here. I will save you all from me reading that to you, but I will say that I've been going to NHSDC conferences for years and they are really, really great. As HMIS practitioners, our work can be oddly isolating in that no one truly understands what we do. When I was an HMIS lead, I was the only person in my state with my job, so I had to go to things like this so people could actually understand what I was talking about.

And when we're doing things like this and presenting things like this, it's always super nice to have a live audience because the real benefit of the NHSDC conferences is to be able to have that peer-to-peer learning. So we're going to do our best to kind of create that virtually today -- as best we can through chat boxes and Q&A and calls.

So when we ask you to hit up that chat box, if you could do that, that would be awesome. We're going to go over some brief introductions on ourselves, so if you want to use that chat feature -- again, that little chat box down in the bottom -- and introduce yourself to everybody, which it looks like everyone is doing right now. That's awesome. That would be great.

So by way of introductions, my name's Brian Roccapiore. I work with the Cloudburst Group. My official job is senior technical assistance provider -- that's a fancy way of saying I get all of the data portfolio work that happens through Cloudburst, so a lot of homelessness program stuff. There are a number of you on this call whose names I recognize from the HMIS's admin call, so you might recognize my [inaudible] from there.

I am comfortable with awkward silences, so get ready for some of that today. And prior to my time at the Cloudburst Group, I spent six years as the HMIS lead from the state of Connecticut. So just a little bit of background on that. It is a 1,200-ish project, HMIS implementation, with like 1,500 or so users spanning the entire state. So I am intimately familiar with different variations on project monitoring because I had to do it all of the time.

And over there on the left in the picture, you can see my lovely family and the people who will be making noise in the background today. So with that, I will toss it over to Nastacia' and she can introduce herself.

Nastacia' Moore: Hello and welcome. My name is Nastacia' Moore. Just a tidbit about me before we get into our content. I come from C4 Innovations. They are based in Boston, Massachusetts. My work is in SPARC, so Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities. I do the training and TA.

Right now, my current areas and focus of work is interpreting HMIS using a race-equity lens, so really diving into race equity and what race equity looks like in CoCs. And previously, I worked for Indiana's Balance and State, and so I may be familiar to some, and if so, hello. But yeah. We can go ahead and get into it.

All right. So we want to know where you're from. What type of organization do you represent? So there should be a poll that comes up. There are over 230-something people on here, so I expect this poll to be at close to 100 percent. So what type of organization do you all represent?

Brian Roccapiore: We'll give it a little bit of time. I did this yesterday and it is clear how many people are paying attention and how many people just have us minimized in the background by the amount of non-answers that we get in these questions.

Nastacia' Moore: Yeah. That's how we measure this; right?

Brian Roccapiore: That's how we measure success here. Yeah. Absolutely.

Nicole: The poll will be closing in 20 seconds.

Nastacia' Moore: [Inaudible] lead, HMIS lead, our homeless service provider, government organization. We are curious to know.

Brian Roccapiore: And I know not everybody's going to fit cleanly into one of those boxes. Some of you are probably all -- oh. Mostly HMIS leads. All right. Target audience.

Nastacia' Moore: Nice. Totally appropriate. Well, welcome again.

Brian Roccapiore: Welcome to everybody except the 41 people who did not answer that question. I don't know what you're doing right now that's more important than what we're doing but -- just kidding. Welcome to you anyway.

Nastacia' Moore: It's all good; right? So let's get into our learning objectives. Our plan for today's conversation and presentation will be for you all to, one, identify key components of HMIS project monitoring. That is why we're here. To participate. As Brian said, we encourage you all to participate in, one, the polls, and two, the comment box. This is as interactive as it can get right here, so we encourage it, especially on our end.

In addition, we hope that you all will learn about best practices related to HMIS and project monitoring. If you all are ready to go, type in we are ready to go. Nice.

All right. So let's talk about why project monitoring is important. The importance of project monitoring is to ensure that participating organizations are in compliance with procedures, privacy and security policies.

This includes the data quality plan and any locally determined requirements laid out in the CoC's HMIS government. Also, folks, I want to note that HMIS project monitoring is important to meet all the goals laid out in HUD SNAPS data TA strategy. These goals represent three separate capacities that you all will need to understand to develop solutions to end homelessness within your local jurisdictions.

Now, let's talk about these goals SNAPS. HMIS project monitoring is used to, one, ensure that HMIS leads are supporting all participating organizations in their data entry processes. This includes a high level scope of data quality. We also want to make sure that we are adhering to data quality standards. So this is reviewing standards of completeness, timeliness, accuracy that's laid out in the DQMP, data quality management plan framework.

And then three. We want to ensure that data in the system can be used for planning processes at both project and systems level. Now, I want to touch on this last point here. Monitoring is cited in the CoC Interim Rule. So it's good for you to know that monitoring participating organizations is cited in the CoC Interim Rule. While implementation of project monitoring most likely is the

responsibility of the HMIS lead, the results of any monitoring should be communicated within you all's CoCs.

And then lastly, not one-size-fits-all. So within this HMIS project monitoring space, let's just have the idea or notion that not all practices work within a sector and so we have to be open to learning our community's needs and different approaches to their needs.

Strategy 1. Improve the capacity of people setting up, operating, and benefitting from data systems. So SNAPS understands that community's needs and supports to make improvements are -- they do it within a three to five-year improvement period in order for those continuums to make those improvements.

What we are looking for is how communities use their data to optimize systems of care and ongoing system performance improvements. This includes -- what does this include? Looking at how communities determine optimal resource allocation. And so as one is conducting project monitoring, they should ensure that HMIS leads are being supported, are participating in data entry processes, and that the data comes at a high level of data completeness.

And I know data quality is huge and we are always talking about how important data quality is. Well, this is -- and this is why. What they are using that for is what planning, ranking, and the review process. Now, if this has gone over folks' head and it's like, okay; what is Nastacia' talking about? For more information and to read up on how you can achieve these goals, there's a HUD system performance improvement brief that will kind of walk you through the fundamentals and the practices of resource allocation efforts.

Strategy 2. Strategy 2 encourages communities to improve data quality efforts so that their data accurately reflects full scale of homelessness in their community. Does your data tell an accurate story? I always like to say, do you own your data? And people are like. So this is what this is for. HMIS project monitoring sits into all three of the strategies as laid out in the HUD SNAPS data TA strategy, but mostly it's relevant to this Strategy 2.

So when you think about project monitoring, think about the process in which your CoC and HMIS leads ensures that organizations entering data into HMIS are meeting the baseline requirement. With that being said, data should -- and again, you're going to hear this like a million times -- should be what? Complete, timely, and accurate, as defined in the data quality management plan framework.

So HMIS project monitors, this is for you. Your duty is to uphold those communities to operate data systems that allow for what? Accuracy, comprehensive and timely data collection, usage and reporting. So if this doesn't resonate right away, that's okay. This is just giving you a snapshot of what these strategies are. For additional information, you can look on the HUD site for HMIS budgeting and staffing. It's a good resource to understand capacity and implementation for goal 2.

And then also there's another resource, the CoC data quality brief, that further defines what HUD means by data quality, including exploitations, timeliness, and accuracy targeted to this goal. All

right. And then we have Strategy 3. So Strategy 3 is a charge to the federal government to use you all's data to inform coordination and decision-making efforts necessary to achieve a goal for the federal-situated planning.

So to paint a picture, the federal government coordinates to receive and use the data to make informed decisions and coordination with you all's other datasets across and within agencies. This is why the data has to be reflective of your community and this is why folks need to be confident in standing behind their data.

We encourage your CoC leadership and HMIS lead agency staff to identify how these goals compare to your CoC's existing efforts to enhance local data, and then in doing so, communities can better understand their status across each of the goals and their characteristics to set up goals that align with each strategy.

All right. So I want to see who's still with us, so another poll. Is your community conducting HMIS project monitoring? Yes, absolutely perfect. Yes, but we need some assistance in making it better. No, we're not doing it and we need assistance in starting the process. Nope, we don't want to do it. We want no part. If it's anything other than what's listed here, type it in the chat box.

Brian Roccapiore: Be honest. We can't see who's voting for what in here, so don't feel any need to hide who you are in this one.

Nastacia' Moore: And again --

Nicole: The poll will be closing in 20 seconds.

Nastacia' Moore: The poll will be closing in 20 seconds and I want to make sure you all are still with us. Nice. Working on making it better. I'm reading some of the answers in the chat. Our monitoring needs help, but we have the capacity to manage it. Great. Yes but not for all projects. CoC-funded projects only at this point. Rachel, absolutely.

Brian Roccapiore: All right. So we got the results in and 15 people said they're monitoring and it's perfect. And my question to the 15 of you, why are you in this workshop? If your monitoring is perfect, there are better things you can be doing with your perfect person time. And the vast majority of people fell into the, we're doing it but we could use some assistance in making it better.

Nastacia' Moore: Absolutely.

Brian Roccapiore: And that -- yeah. And that's the great thing about this is we're all kind of in that boat; right? And everybody can learn from everybody else. And we're going to get to that in the next group discussion about what's working, what isn't working, and we can all pick each other's brains for that.

Nastacia' Moore: Absolutely. All right. So let's talk. Let's have some additional discussion around project monitoring and what this means. So I kind of chuckle here because this was supposed to be a group discussion where we heard folks out loud, but we're in a virtual space, so now it's just a chat; right, Brian?

So I want folks to think about two -- there's two specific things I want folks to think about. What do you think are the key components of HMIS project monitoring? One. And how do you currently conduct HMIS project monitoring? So two things. We can start to popcorn in.

Brian Roccapiore: Mm-hmm. So while we are waiting for the chat box to populate, there was a question that came in about strategies to get agencies not required to participate in HMIS to participate. They have been trying to get some agencies to participate for years. That is always an issue. The rescue mission of the world who don't have to participate, the privately-funded shelters, the people who you ask politely but just sit there and nod their heads.

I found coordinated entry to be a big [inaudible] in terms of getting folks to participate. When I was an HMIS lead, we had special rules in terms of how we would pay for HMIS that would allow for the non-mandated parties to come in at a lower, no cost to come into the system.

And ultimately, when my community started to prioritize based off of a list that was solely in HMIS and we were pulling the homelessness verifications from our system, those projects that were always hesitant to participate eventually saw the benefit that it actually was a way to better serve the people who were experiencing homelessness and a faster way of getting them rehoused. So that's my little spiel on it.

And Nastacia', I see the chat box is blowing up. Do we have anything good coming in there?

Nastacia' Moore: It is on fire. Yes. So first things we think are the key components of project monitoring. Firstly -- well, first off, I want to say folks are definitely paying attention. You're right. Data quality seems to be the majority. Monthly reports. Monthly DQ providers taking ownership, understanding regulations are critical to apply to practice and meet desired outcomes. What else do we have? Transparency. Absolutely.

Understand -- oh. They're going so fast. Understanding the regulations that are critical to our ability to apply practice and need the desire outcomes. Yes. All of these are correct. This is exactly what I think when I think about key components of project monitoring. And then, how do you currently conduct the project monitoring? You all are saying monthly checks, and every now and then checks. So this is awesome. This is right on point. Brian, did you want to include anything on this piece?

Brian Roccapiore: No. We're getting a lot of really good stuff in the chat box and I believe all of the chats are also going to be available after the sessions are over. So if you are frantically copying and pasting, don't worry about that. We got you at the end of this. And I did want to add one more thing.

With the volume of stuff going -- flying by in the chat box right now, there's a good chance we're not going to hit every single point that comes up in there. So if there is an unresolved question at the end of this, which there will be at least one, the HMIS AAQ -- I believe there's a link to it at the end. If not, I will dig it up and post it in the chat in a little bit. Please take advantage of that. Any questions related to the system can go through there and you'll get an officially-sanctioned HUD answer that will come out of it. It also --

Nastacia' Moore: Absolutely.

Brian Roccapiore: -- might be the case where somebody asks a hyper-specific question that requires a little more nuance and thought around it that I don't think everybody would appreciate Nastacia' and I sitting here thinking about it for 20 minutes. So we'll direct those questions right to the AAQ desk too. And a lot of what's going on in here is what I'm going to talk about in a little bit, specifically things like how often do you do things?

A lot of the data quality stuff in here appears to be on a monthly basis, some quarterly. And some of the bigger things take place annually, like the actual going somewhere and making sure there's a sign on the desk and you don't see people's passwords sticky-noted to the front of their screen, things like that. You know, that actual requires feet on the ground, looking at things. But there's technology exists; right?

Clearly, we're all sitting here and you guys can talk to the both of us right now. So taking advantage of that where you can to ease the burden. Even from my state Connecticut, if there's one thing you probably think about when you think about Connecticut is that we're all sitting on our yachts. But other than that, you know, my state is pretty small; right?

However, the northwest part of my state, it still took me two-and-a-half hours to drive there. So there is a better use of my time than spending five hours a day in a car to go look if there's a sticky note on someone's computer. And we'll get to all that stuff in a little bit.

Nastacia' Moore: Mm-hmm. Absolutely. So, Brian, I am actually going to turn this over to you so that you can facilitate some conversations around HMIS project monitoring -- what it is, what it feels like, what it looks like. We are going to dive into your world.

Brian Roccapiore: All right. So jumping in again with a poll. If you are conducting HMIS project monitoring within your communities, which entity(ies) is involved in the process? And I do clearly recognize that this should be a multiple-choice question. So go ahead and we will do that, and I will steal ICF's thunder and say the poll is closing in 20 seconds. So we have ourselves a timer and we know when we can stop answering. And this is also a gauge to see how many people are currently paying attention. We were doing pretty good last time.

Nastacia' Moore: We are at over 270 people, so let's see what we get.

Brian Roccapiore: Yeah. We've got a couple people chatting in all of the above. No answer from 180 of you. That's cold. There's some people who are apparently having technical

difficulties with the poll, so I won't take personal offense to it. So who should be involved in your project monitoring? Should it be just limited to federal partners who participate in HMIS?

No. Absolutely not. It shouldn't just be limited to your CoC or your ESG projects. Anybody who is participating in HMIS, regardless of what their funding stream is, should be part of your HMIS project monitoring. In order to maintain a high-quality HMIS, all projects used in the system should be monitored against the same standards for the same project types. And all of that really should be laid out in your data quality management plan.

Someone had asked in the chat box at the last NHSDC session that there was guidance or some examples of DQMPs, data quality management plans, that were coming out from HUD. That is part of the HMIS lead series tools and are currently under review. Anything that's literally not COVID-related has kind of taken a back seat to all other projects right now, so while the focus is clearly on COVID, that is still something that HUD is moving forward with and I would expect to see somewhat soon.

So while the HMIS participating organizations and the HMIS leads play the biggest part in project monitoring, the CoC should also be an active part of that process, because ultimately they're the ones that are responsible for all of this stuff. They are the ones who are going to be judged in the competition process when the data quality hits the floor and we all have a vested stake in it.

So you could think about it as the CoC doesn't really need to attend the monitoring process but should be aware of what's going on in that monitoring process, both the good and the bad. The CoC should also be involved in any kind of approval of documents that take place for project monitoring, making sure that the HMIS lead is on the same page as the CoC. So any kind of checklists you have put together, any performance improvement plans that result from the monitoring, any kind of governance or agreements that are used to determine what projects do and how they're monitored.

The HMIS project monitoring is focused on the users who are accessing the system and the data that's entered into it. So if there's a disconnect between the staff who collect the data and the clients who actually enter the data in the system, because that's how it works in some regions, it's going to be to your benefit to make sure that both of those types of staff are present for the monitoring. Thank you.

So the key components to the project monitoring. HMIS organizations should understand what they're being monitored against. This should not be a surprise process, it shouldn't be a got you kind of thing. There should be a clear, written procedure about what's going on, how often it's going to happen, what's going to be considered a finding, and then what's going to happen after that; so what steps are taken to address those findings.

It should also mean something for all parties involved. So it can actually be a significant use of time and not just lip service to say, yes. I did my HMIS project monitoring. Because you can just say that all day long. But if you actually use it as a tool to improve your systems data quality, it improves not just the outcomes for the clients but also how your overall system appears to be

performing in your system performance measures and your LSA, which will fuel Stella, which I'm sure you all know and love and have logged into and checked your system performance against.

So an improved data quality plan, improved data quality, it just does better down the line. Everything to be reviewed should have a reason for why it's being reviewed and should point back to something that's already laid out. So whether that is an HMIS policy or procedure or something in your data quality management plan or your privacy notice, it should have intent as to why you're reviewing it.

And annually, you should check and make sure that your project monitoring makes sense. Just because it made sense five years ago doesn't mean that it makes sense today. Coordinated entry wasn't a thing 10 years ago. You're going to want to be monitoring against those things today which you would not have done before. And any steps taken to address the findings that, as a result of the project monitoring, should be actionable, measurable, and timebound.

I will use an example from my previous state of one of our shelters who was not required to participate in HMIS but did so for grant purposes. And we would work with them and we would get them up to speed and we would clean up their data and then they would go in and they would never exit anybody from the system.

So a 40-bed shelter would balloon to a client list of 300 clients over the course of a couple months, and that process would repeat itself and repeat itself and repeat itself until we put some very hard timebound measurable outcomes into their findings where they were going to be removed from the system if they didn't improve their data quality and start exiting their clients. And ultimately they finally did it, but it took a lot of handholding, for lack of a better term, and consistent enforcement from the CoC and the city of which they were participating in.

And oh. Where should project monitoring take place? Is it on-site or remote? Does it have to be either/or? How often does this stuff take place? So it really -- it depends. Depending on the size of the CoC and the capacity of the HMIS lead, on-site monitoring might not be feasible once a quarter; right? I used Connecticut as the example but the ti- -- third-smallest state. Take that, Rhode Island and Delaware.

But I couldn't even imagine trying to do an HMIS project monitoring across something like eastern Pennsylvania or the Texas Balance of State or one of those just insanely large geographic areas. It's tough. So there's a lot of different things that you could do remotely and there are ways -- I'll give you some examples in a bit, from my state, how you can delegate that authority to make sure that the actual boots on the ground part is happening as well.

There are pieces that can only be done on-site; right? So ensuring that the names aren't on a sticky note, that the passwords aren't publicly posted, that people aren't just -- have a list of social security numbers up on the wall; whatever that might be. I don't think anyone's actually doing that. But you want to physically inspect the areas, make sure that the screensaver kicks on and it's password-protected after a certain amount of time.

But there's a lot of stuff that can be done remotely using a project's data completeness or data timeline and their data accuracy, how often the users are logging into the system, how often -- or what's that time lag between their time when they entered the client when that client was actually in the project. You can monitor all that stuff remotely.

So I'll give you another example. We had a bunch of projects not that long ago who were still using Windows 95. Now, you say, Brian, Windows 95 -- that was 25 years ago. I'm sure there's people who are -- as we talk right now, who are younger than Windows 95 is. So Microsoft stopped updating Windows 95 the better part of six years ago at this point and part of our security notice says you have to have an operating system that's up to date.

So we politely asked them to get off of Windows 95. They said they couldn't because they weren't able to get any new computers, so we had our sys admin program our system to no longer allow people to access HMIS from Windows 95. And surprisingly, they were able to quickly find new operating systems for all of their computers.

All right. Let's jump here. How often do you conduct project monitoring? So our options are six months annually. I know we had monthly options going in there before. Sporadically. My favorite option. During specific periods of time [inaudible] grant started or grant closed. We just don't monitor or other. And let's see here.

Nastacia' Moore: So the polls are up. Please insert your answers and I'm sure there will be an announcement that we have 20 seconds or less at this point.

Brian Roccapiore: All right. So the majority appear on the annual basis. We're getting some folks in the chat saying again that the poll isn't working, so I will just assume that everyone is diligently paying attention to me while I'm talking. Thank you, Marie and Jody. I appreciate you paying attention.

So again, this is a thing that it depends what you're monitoring for; right? So monthly it might make sense from a data quality perspective, because you can pull that right out of your system, put a dashboard together, write in some form of online -- I can't get vender-specific here at NHSDC so I'm trying to avoid specific software, but you can put it in an online dashboard and make that available to everybody.

So you could celebrate the good and the bad; right? Or don't celebrate the bad. You could celebrate the good and acknowledge the bad. Everyone doesn't like to be publicly shamed. I can tell you that much. Because when they see their data quality scores up against their -- not their competitors, but their other fellow organizations -- nobody likes to be last place, especially if you start color-coding things in terms of red is bad. Nobody likes to be that one organization in red.

And it also -- I was going to say this a couple times in the upcoming slides, but celebrating the good, even if it's just an acknowledgment at a CoC meeting or through your -- if you have an HMIS [inaudible] committee or a data quality committee. Saying Organization X really took a leap and bound in improving their data quality, that goes a long way in buying good faith with your projects who are going to -- I've had a number of projects put it in their agency newsletter

that went out that they had 100 percent data completeness in their newsletter that I didn't think anybody cared about, until I started saying it in front of other people and saw that message get repeated out there.

And we know nobody listens to the HMIS lead. All of our e-mails fall on deaf ears. It was the bane of my existence as an HMIS lead. So having the CoC at your back to repeat those messages for you is always a great way to go. Consistency, consistency, consistency, and redundancy in making sure those messages get out. Because we all get 10 billion e-mails a day and the one that ends in your HMIS e-mail is the one that is probably going to get ignored before the CoC, who is going to be the one who is rating and ranking folks down the line; right?

Nastacia' Moore: Mm-hmm. There's a lot of good conversation in the chat. Emily, you mentioned that you're interested in reviewing more folks that monitor more often than annually. I think that's a really good thing for you all to talk about and for us to talk about behind the scenes of what data quality looks like, doing it on a more consistent basis versus an annual basis. And those of you who have been in the work for a long time will know that monitoring more frequently improves your data quality outcomes. But I think that is something good that you bring up. Brian?

Brian Roccapriore: Thank you. And one piece of advice in the chat that I really love is that food is always helpful with compliance. In life, as in all things, it's amazing what you can buy for a slice of pizza in this world. So if you have the means to provide some snacks, people truly love that kind of stuff. So how? Using your HMIS policies and procedures as a -- especially chocolate. That's right, Tammy.

So using your policies and procedures as a backbone, your privacy policy and your security policy, that is what all of your monitoring should be based around. This is timely with the privacy policy. There is a lot of data sharing going on right now. There is -- I'll put the link in the chat in a little while. There are some HMIS COVID-specific resources -- one that goes over the privacy policy specifically. So it's probably a good time to take a look at your privacy policy and make sure that all of the required language is in there.

And again, just as clear and as transparent as you can possibly be with all of the organizations and projects that are monitored. We're all in this together. The HMIS lead isn't out there to take away an organization's funding. When people hear monitoring, they hear findings, they hear bad things, they hear some kind of negative consequence with the CoC. And that's really not what this is about. This is ensuring that we have the best possible system in place.

Again, making sure that you can do what you can do online versus in person with somebody. Ensure that any plan created to address the findings is actionable, measurable, and timebound. I'm going to say that probably three or four more times throughout the course of my day here, but that is the most important thing at the end of this. Whether it is the stick you carry or the carrot you have, making sure that everybody knows exactly what those are and how that's going to work when the monitoring is over. And that everybody knows what happened at the end of it.

Because you don't want to just take that form back, file it away, and say yeah. You got it. You want to complete that kind of circle of making sure that the CoC knows, making sure that any other funders who are involved know.

In my state, we were CoC-funded, we were ESG-funded. We were heavily funded by the state, which is a very important partner to have. So you want to make sure that everybody is in the loop. And again, making sure that all of those acknowledgements go out. Everybody involved in the process, they just truly need to trust each other as part of what goes on here.

So what happens after the project monitoring takes place? Follow-up with the action steps in the timeline, make sure that everybody is CC'ed on that e-mail. I don't like getting my boss CC'ed on e-mails, but make sure that the boss is CC'ed on the e-mails, just so everybody's on the same page and you can't say that you didn't get the e-mail. Specifically, call out who is responsible for those next steps.

I know if I don't see my name in a three-paragraph e-mail, I'm assuming somebody else is on it and I don't have to do anything. You want to be very clear that Organization X with HMIS lead Y as the one who is going to be doing the stuff. If the need for an improvement plan is there, put that together and make sure it's communicated nice and clear. Make sure that all of the entities that need to be involved are involved and that everyone's, again, informed of the -- what the results of the monitoring are.

So I'm going to just jump to some examples here. We're going to start off with our friends from Florida. Florida 518, which is like a four or five-county CoC in Florida, generally a geographically small CoC. The CoC's also the HMIS lead there, so when they do their monitoring, they coordinate. Well, it's pretty easy to coordinate when you're the CoC and the HMIS lead, but the CoC monitoring is also the HMIS monitoring.

And they use a tool that's given to communities in advance of the monitoring, which in the remote sessions, take place quarterly. They started out being very informal about the process until the -- they themselves got monitored by the state, and then they got a lot more serious about it because they got their own findings against them.

So they took the tool that we used to monitor them and modified it to fit their own purposes, which I have a screenshot of right here. So this is what they're looking at when they go to the organizations and they literally pull client records to make sure that all of the data that is in HMIS is where they are supposed to be in terms of their own policies and procedures and their own sets of standards; right?

So making sure that all of the clients' initials are there, that the client has an HMIS number on their actual record, and all of the stuff that's in there. This is available on their website, so I'm not going to barrel down and read the list of everything, but it is an actual physical spreadsheet of 10 files that they will physically pull from their organizations.

Now, in light of a global pandemic, there is a -- I'm not quite sure what they're doing now in terms of actually going and pulling physical files. But this is also something that could be -- mostly be done remote for the most part.

Now, best practices. Many CoCs check their CoC and ESG monitoring with the HMIS monitoring on an annual basis as a collaboration with state and local funders; right? So making sure that all of it's happening at the same time. Because in theory, your ESG and CoC policies should be aligned. That's what that drum beat from HUD has been doing for the last however long I've been involved in this work. And in theory, HMIS is supporting all of that work.

Clear and transparent expectations prior to the monitoring, schedules visits well in advance. You should never show up for an HMIS monitoring and surprise somebody. Nobody likes surprises like that. Make it as convenient as possible for the organizations that are involved. I understand we're all really busy, especially right now. But trying to be as respectful as possible with everyone's time. And concerns resulting from the [inaudible] should be addressed as timely as possible.

That's not the kind of thing -- data quality specifically is not a problem that gets better on its own. It is one that should be addressed quickly and any kind of data entry or data monitoring finding needs to be addressed quickly and have that to kind of timebound thing at the end of it.

So as a specific example, the community I worked with had an independently-funded shelter. That was consistent [inaudible] poor data. And through monitoring them over and over, we figured out that they were actually required to enter their data from the city, so they were talking a tougher game than they were actually -- they were talking tougher than they were because they didn't think we would ever go talk to their funders.

So when we did, they fell in line pretty quick. It's an amazing thing when you're able to align all of the funding along with the HMIS to everybody be there at the same time. Again, on the expectations, every project information -- or every project should be monitored independently. You don't want to go in and monitor a large organization that has HUD, PSH, ESG rapid rehousing, a PATH program and an SSD program at the same time in the same way. All those are going to be independent of one another and deserve to be looked at independently of each other.

Make sure that the monitoring is actually documented somewhere and why it's happening. Again, in those policies and procedures, whether that's the lead agency agreement or the agreement that you have with each of the HMIS participating organizations. Make sure that the HMIS -- excuse me. HMIS monitoring security and privacy checklist is there so you have something to go off of and a list of what documents are going to be required for those agencies to have wire monitoring.

All right. We've got -- I can't seem to advance. There we go. We've got some examples for you here that are linked to the online HMIS monitoring of the folks who were brave enough to put their HMIS monitoring plans online. So I'm not sure if you can click on them here but if not they

are going to be available in the PowerPoint that's going to go up on both the HUD exchange and NHSDC.org after this.

But to use the New York Cares regional, we can't click on them. So you could, A, Google them right now or B, wait until the PowerPoints are available and then you'll be able to click on them. I got the links myself. I assure you they work.

So just to quickly go over how the regional implementation in New York works, the New York Cares system. Step one, the monitoring forms are completed and reviewed after the monitoring takes place by the HMIS lead. If there are already instances of noncompliance, they are addressed per a noncompliance policy that exists in their HMIS policies and procedures.

And step three, a monitoring report submitted by the HMIS lead to the CoC board for improved oversight and transparency and is also shared or could also be shared with HMIS and CoC governing bodies like the collaborative applicant, the CoC lead, the HMIS advisory committee or data -- or whatever data committees exist for that region because it's a regional implementation and it's going to be different depending on what region it is.

So there are steps upon steps upon steps referencing different policies and documents, which is exactly how it should be going and then it is open to all parties to review after which is great for transparency. And people usually fear transparency, but it does everybody a world of good. So other things to consider. When monitoring for compliance with the privacy policy, make sure you're looking at ROIs or the customer notice or both. It's going to depend on the CoC's privacy policy and could also depend on the organization's internal requirements.

One of the many hats I wear is answering questions from the HMIS AAQ desk and we get questions about releases of information all the time. And here's the answer you're going to get if you ask me if your release of information is good enough. The answer is going to be that I can't comment on your state or local laws and you should always get legal counsel to review your privacy documents.

There are a couple of things that are required by HUD to be in your privacy policy, but there is no official standard for what has to go in there because state and local laws are different all over the place. So just make sure that you get somebody to review all of your local privacy documents. When monitoring for data quality, know what the organization collects and enters into HMIS and how they do it.

Do they use paper files? Do they -- are they all over the phone? Are they doing it directly into HMIS? Using the data quality management plan's framework as the baseline requirements for the guiding principles when you're monitoring your data quality because you should have a data completeness standard for emergency shelter, you should have a data completeness standard for PHS projects and all of that should be outlined in your DQMP.

The CoCs really need to be invested in the project monitoring and encourage the enforcements to take place as outlined in the data quality plan. If your CoC isn't engaged, there -- that stick goes away and you really kind of lose that edge in terms of who is able to -- or who will respond to

your project findings, and making sure that organizations are aware of what entities are going to be informed after the fact.

Because you don't want to go there and catch somebody off guard when all of a sudden their funder realizes that their data quality is poor and they didn't know that the funder was going to find out. So laying all of that out up front and making sure that we're all on the same page, we're all playing for the same team here. So transparency, transparency, transparency.

And with that, there is an extra period in front of the word conclusion there. I said we would leave 10 minutes for questions and answers, and we have 12. So Nastacia', was there anything that popped up in the chat box while I was rambling on for the last 20 minutes or so?

Nastacia' Moore: Well, I have been chatting away in the chat box. A lot of folks -- so as Brian mentioned, the slides will be uploaded to the NHSDC website. I was trying to type in the examples from the communities here. Other questions -- and you guys can start to popcorn these out if you'd like as we scroll through the chat box. What does data quality improvement plan look like?

Brian Roccapiore: That is a very big question. There are a number of examples out there for you to go and look at what data quality management plans look like for different communities. There's a couple of things that you're going to want to look at in the data quality management plan which all tie back to the SNAPS TA data strategy. So data quality, data completeness, data timeliness and how much of your bed coverage is in your HMIS.

So if we go back to the SNAPS TA strategy, if we can all just think back what that looks like, the ultimate goal is to have 100 percent of your homeless-serving beds in your HMIS, which I understand is a big ask. Gold standard; right? Always working towards it. The gold standard is real-time data entry. Your data quality management plan is going to want to take a look at what your current world looks like in terms of timeliness and then set a benchmark to improve that, unless you're already at real-time data entry, in which case, congratulations. You're one of the very few CoCs that are hitting real-time data entry.

So there's a bunch of different things that you can look at and there are other things that communities will put in in terms of how often you log into the system, what your training looks like in terms of data quality training. Is it an annual refresher that folks have to go through? Things like that.

And also a helpful hint for folks when they are training in HMIS, making sure that that data quality language starts in their first touch to the system. Because it is easy to forget and I understand that HMIS is not the sole hat that a lot of people wear in their work, specifically the folks who were doing the emergency shelter bed check-ins every single night. So really driving home that culture of data quality from the beginning is super important.

Nastacia' Moore: Another question. Should monitoring be held one-on-one with each agency? I would say absolutely. We want to make sure we're focusing on individual agencies' participation in data entry and we also want to make sure that we are getting attention to agencies' needs and

then paying attention to where agencies fall short in data entry -- yeah. With data entry and capacity. So yes. Monitoring should be done one-on-one.

Brian Roccapiore: And monitoring should really be focused on the level of need of the organizations. I guarantee that a lot of you have that rock star organization that has a QA infrastructure in place where there are several checks and balances already in place at that organization and they -- when they utilize your help desk, it is a question that you know is going to be very well thought-out and researched.

That organization probably needs a little less handholding than some of the other ones where there are consistently findings. So you can use your judgment in terms of how often the problem children are in terms of how often they need to be monitored and looked at. And all of that can be outlined in your data quality management plan or your policies and procedures. Everybody needs to be monitored at some point. Don't get me wrong.

Just because someone is a rock star on the outside doesn't mean things aren't crumbling on the inside, so you still want to monitor everybody. But there are some that for sure need more attention than others.

Nastacia' Moore: Nice. James, I really like this question. And Brian, maybe both of us can answer this one. What is your stance on data shaming? Publishing everyone's monitoring results on a scoreboard or dashboard? Something like that. Do you want to go first or [inaudible]

Brian Roccapiore: Yeah. So I am -- so this is Brian speaking; right? This is not me in my -- I'm a fan. I am for it. When I did it in my previous community, I gave everybody several months' worth of notice that it was going to happen, gave everybody the ability to go run their own data quality reports, made it known that it was going to happen for several months of communication both through the CoC, through the HMIS lead.

We had -- the bulletin board in HMIS was -- every other week, there was like, hey. This thing's going to happen. You should really pay attention to it. And then it went up and everyone was like, I've never heard of this before. And it ruffled some feathers, but that was a long time ago when the -- that culture of data-sharing wasn't really there. And it takes a while to cultivate that and make it common.

So when people expect that their data quality scores are going to be shared, people are more cognizant of what is in there. And that's what I was talking about before with not just data shaming but celebrating the good too. Because there are communities or there are projects that are going to hit 100 percent every single time, and you shouldn't just ignore them because they're your rock stars. They're the ones doing what they need to be doing.

So highlighting them as well as the folks who went from a 10 percent exit destination being known to like 60 percent, that's a great improvement. You should highlight those as well. So really just pumping out the good along with the public information so people can see how everybody else is doing.

Nastacia' Moore: Absolutely. I think that I totally agree. There is a level of, uh. Should we post people's outcomes on a public platform? But there is a level of accountability that we want to take seriously in our continuums. So one of the things that I like to do or that I did in my previous role is just what you said, Brian. You let agencies know up front about good data quality and what the measures are. You work with them to improve data quality and then we post.

And so it's just not, oh. We ran your data quality. This is what it looks like. Let's post it. And so it is about giving some notice and giving some guidance on how to improve on some of those outcome before posting. And it's [inaudible].

Brian Roccapiore: I just saw -- Debbie just posted in the chat, how do you get agencies to run their own reports? I get requests to run reports all the time that are very simple to run. It's like because I'm the HMIS lead I'm the only one that could run reports. You -- story of my life. So just because they're in the system doesn't mean people are going to run them. And just because they're easy to run doesn't mean people are going to run them.

I found it beneficial to put together a very simple one or two-page document with clearly-noted one, two, three, four steps on how people can run their reports. So they have the ability to go do that themselves. It's like a very simple PDF. We put it up on our project's website how to run your data quality report, how to run your APR, how to analyze your APR.

There was two pages, very colorful, like little sticky notes on the pages with little arrows pointing to things so there's no ambiguity about what button to press in the system. But using that so people -- the organizations can run their reports so they know what they're going to see when they come to that next CoC meeting.

So it's not like HMIS is this black box of data entry where the data goes and only the HMIS lead has it. That's not really the -- in most systems, that's not the case. And people do have access to that. They just need to know how to be able to run them. And Glen commentated that they have occasional webinars on how to run reports.

Nastacia' Moore: Absolutely.

Brian Roccapiore: We had an open office hours once a month for report running so anybody could log in, come in, ask questions about any report in the system. It wasn't the most utilized webinar in the world but the people who came in got really one-on-one attention and we helped them figure out not just how to run their reports but how to actually analyze them.

So if you ran a report that said you had two chronically homeless people in your emergency shelter when you expected 200, we taught you how to go in and analyze all that stuff. So giving people the tools to go in and do things themselves. [Inaudible] data --

Nastacia' Moore: Two minutes.

Brian Roccapiore: Yeah. Two minutes. Get them in, folks. And sorry if I didn't get to it. There's a lot of stuff in the chat box. Rachel commented that their data quality plan keeps track of [inaudible] have to submit monthly. So that's good too. Having the agencies submit them themselves means that the agency is running that report themselves and that they actually know how to do it. So you're putting the onus back on the organization to be part of that monitoring.

Where will the slides be posted? They will be posted to the HUD exchange along with a recording if you guys want to watch this again. And ultimately, they will be on NHSDC.org under their spring 2020 conference section. It looks like there's some good peer-to-peer stuff going on in the chat, so I think we did it. We got people to talk to each other. I'm proud of us.

Nastacia' Moore: What else do folks need to know before logging off, Brian?

Brian Roccapiore: Oh. We have contact information on here for us if you want to reach out. The HMIS AAQ desk is your best friend so please utilize it when you need it. Lots of comments about snacks in that chat today. People really seem to like chocolate and cake, so if that's the way to go to smooth over the fear of an HMIS project monitoring, by all means, use it. It doesn't have to be a scary thing, but it does have to be a thing.

So making sure everybody's involved, it's clear and transparent as possible. Everything's outlined in your P&P documents; your privacy notice is up to date. You should be good to go. If you need examples of any of that, the HUD exchange is a great place for privacy notice templates, policies and procedures, examples you could find on those links I had a couple slides ago.

We are at time now, so I just want to say thank you all for hanging out with me today. If you came to my workshop yesterday, thank you for hanging out with me for two days in a row. And hopefully we all get to see each other in the Fall when we can all be in a room again socially distant and safe.

Nastacia' Moore: Yes. Take care. Thank you all.

Brian Roccapiore: Thank you.

(END)