HUD System Performance Measures: Guidance to Check SPM Data and Have Confidence in Numbers Transcript, 7/7/16

OPERATOR: The broadcast is now starting. All attendees are in listen-only mode.

NATALIE MATTHEWS: Good afternoon, everyone. This is Natalie Matthews from Abt Associates. I want to do a quick welcome to everyone to today's webinar on Guidance to Check your System Performance Measurement Data and get more confidence in those performance measurement numbers. So this is for many of you probably the third time in recent weeks that you've attended a webinar from HUD on the system performance measures.

There was a webinar during the first week in June that gave some guidance on how to prepare for the measures; then there was a webinar a couple weeks after that that went into some more detail on the mechanics of actually submitting that data on the HUD HDX website; and again, today's focus is not necessarily a deep dive in to describing the mechanics of the technical nature behind each one of the measures, but it's instead really focused on giving continuum of care in HMIS Leads, some more detailed guidance on really how best to review the data that you're looking at locally, so how to really understand and interpret those local numbers.

So today we have two presenters, both Julia Brown and Tom Albanese from Abt. Myself and Abby Miller will be taking a look at the questions as we get those, so if you have a question during the webinar, please don't hesitate to submit that through the question cab, and then you will be able to hear hopefully from one of us rather soon about an answer to that question. We will be recording the session today, so you'll be able to access a recording of today's content, a transcript, as well as a slide deck in case you have to cut out early or you want to share the information with someone else from your team.

Everyone is going to be muted today for the duration of the webinar, and you will, again, have an opportunity to ask those questions through the chat or through the questions function on your GoToWebinar menu on the right-hand part of your screen. We're going to have about 60 minutes to get through the presentation content, and of course to have some Q&A at the end to either go over some frequently-asked questions that were submitted during the webinar or to reinforce some points that the presenters want to make sure that you leave the webinar with today.

I also want to reference you all to two handouts that are available to you right now as part of, again, that GoToWebinar menu on the right-hand side of your screen. You should see a handouts tab, and under that handouts tab you'll see two very recently released guidance documents from HUD that are relevant for today's discussion, and will hopefully be very helpful to you as you work on reviewing and preparing your local data.

So that first handout that you should see is the instructions document on how to actually submit the data in HUD HDX on that website. So this is, again, intended for that person who will be submitting the data for your continuum of care, and again, giving more step-by-step and detailed guidance on how to go into the HDX system and submit that data. So that's the research for you for after today's questions.

And then also there is a very recently released set of frequently asked questions that you will also see attached to the handouts. Both of these documents are already available on the HUD Exchange website, and during the session today we will share the direct links for you to access all of the content related to the system performance measures. And those FAQs are, again, very recently released, I want to say within the last couple of days, and their intention is to give standard guidance from HUD on a series of questions that have been asked both during the previous two webinars and things that have come up during Ask-A-Questions that have been submitted by you all.

So make sure you take a look at those, and again, we'll be sure to do our best to answer your questions throughout the session today. So with that, I am going to turn things over to our first presenter, Tom Albanese, who is going to walk us through the learning objectives and the first set of content today. Tom?

TOM ALBANESE: Great. Thanks, Natalie, and I just want to note at the top of the webinar here, I've been having some technical difficulties. If I happen to drop off, Julia Brown will take up, and I'll come back on as soon as I'm able. So as Natalie mentioned, there's been a series of webinars already around this topic. We don't want to rehash all that content, but today we really want to focus on what the core roles and responsibilities of the CoC Lead and Board are, as well as the HMIS Lead and individual projects with regard to System Performance Measures, and we'll talk about some of those roles.

Really, the focus today is on CoC Leads, and folks who are not so steeped in the technical aspects of the measures but rather are looking at this data and trying to make use of it, both before and after submitting it to HUD. We want to talk a little bit about strategies for examining the data around each of the individual measures, some of the key questions that CoC Leads an others might ask as you are looking at the data, and then we'll try to touch on some of the latest guidance, and as Natalie mentioned the FAQs that were just published, we'll touch on some of those FAQs in the course of the webinar. Next slide, please.

So as folks know, the System Performance Measures are based off of the HEARTH Act, which is an amendment to the McKinney-Vento Act, and the HEARTH Act includes a number of selection criteria, many of which are performance-based selection criteria that looked at the performance of the entire system. So what you see on the screen are those core measures that HUD has now incorporated into the CoC Program Competition, and it's really meant to help HUD and partners understand how well your system is functioning as a whole to prevent homelessness, and not just the performance of individual projects. So when system data is looked at and you consider the length of time people are homeless, and the average and median length of time, that's for the entire period somebody was engaged in and staying in the homeless assistance project. So somebody who stays in shelter and then moves to transitional housing will have that entire time counted towards this metric because it's a system-wide view, not a project-specific view.

As I mentioned, though, we're not going to get into much of the mechanics of each of these measures. There's a lot of resources out there that you can refer to that will provide you that detail, but we want to make sure everyone's on the same page here thinking about these 7, really 8 measures that HUD will be asking communities to report on. Next slide, please.

So there are some basics that we want to just touch on before we turn to the actual measures and some of the questions you might ask yourself. Again, just emphasizing that – and this has come through the Help Desk somewhat – questions about what is expected to be submitted to HUD by

August 1st. It is not project-level performance. It's meant to be system-level performance based on data you obtain through your vendor's canned System Performance Measure report, which aggregates data across all your HMIS participating projects relative to each measure. So I just want to stress that again. This is not an APR type of exercise. This is, for the first time, potentially looking at a system performance report for your continuum.

The data has to be submitted through the Homeless Data Exchange, the HDX, by August 1st. As Natalie pointed out, the guidance and instructions for submitting data are appended to this webinar for ready access. You can also find it at the link on your screen.

We want to be clear, though, HUD wants to be clear that this is still an evolutionary process. We know that there are some vendors who are still working out some of the issues with their canned reports. There may be issues up to the submission deadline that you're trying to work through. HUD wants to be aware of any issues that you may be encountering with your vendor programmed reports that might impact your ability to submit data by August 1st. If you're having such an issue that's significant and might impede your ability to submit data, please alert HUD by submitting that issue through the Ask A Question section on HUD Exchange, and you would want to select HMIS in the second step of the HUD Ask A Question process.

It's also important to remember that while you're submitting your data through HDX, this is part of the CoC, the FY16 CoC Program Competition, so that data that you submit through HDX needs to be done by the deadline in order to be considered timely. You will be asked to generate a report of your submission from HDX and append that to your CoC Program Application as well. So be mindful of that. It does tie into the competition and considered a part of it, and your timely submission will be looked at.

It's important to also remember, though, that this is the first year that CoCs will be reporting System Performance Measure data, and so the focus is on whether or not you can generate and submit the reports to HUD, and not necessarily your specific performance. There's nothing really to compare that to. The point here is your ability to actually start generating and using this data, and submitting it to HUD. Next slide, please.

So let me just walk through a couple of the larger kind of cross-cutting ways to think about System Performance Measures that relate to each measure. The first is just the applicability of the measure. As I stated already, and as I know folks are just starting to understand, is that the report itself, what you're reporting through HDX, represents the performance of your entire system, and that is all projects participating in your HMIS that are applicable to a given measure, and I'll talk a bit more about that in a moment. So when you think about what you're submitting to HUD, again, remember you're submitting data for your entire system, and you're looking at the length of time people are homeless, and you're looking at successful placements into permanent housing or the retention of permanent housing or returns to homelessness. You're looking at your entire system's performance.

I should point out as well that this is not just about HUD-funded projects. This is any homeless assistance project that is part of your system and for which you have data, and that data obviously would have to be in HMIS to be part of your System Performance Measure submission. The point here is that every community – and we all know this but I'll say it again –

every community should be working towards comprehensive coverage and participation in HMIS as your community's information system for homeless assistance. It's the way we know whether or not our communities are meeting individual needs for homeless assistance effectively and efficiently, and so it may seem like an administrative hassle or burden to some folks but in fact we all know now that it is the lynchpin for homeless assistance. It's the way in which we have visibility. It's the way we know whether or not we're effective and efficient. Frankly, it's the way we've been able to garner more resources for homeless assistance than most other federal programs, so it is critical. Next slide, please.

Another thing to just bear in mind is project type applicability. For each measure, there is a certain universe of projects that are included, and so you'll want to pay attention to that. Julia will walk us through that in a moment in greater detail, but every measure looks at a cross-section of projects, and you will want to pay attention to that because whatever projects are included for a given measure constitute essentially the system for that measure that's being examined and that you're reporting on. So it's important to remember that not every measure includes every project, or every type of project I should say, but every measure does include a certain one or more types of projects, and every project within your system that is that type is meant to be included in that measure.

Of course, all measures, as I mentioned, are limited to those participating in the HMIS. The only exception to that, of course, is Measure 3.1, which includes point-in-time count data from your recent point-in-time count submitted to HUD; and then Measure 4, as I mentioned, is only – I didn't mention this but it's limited to projects that are CoC Program funded, just recognizing that income and employment data is a program-specific data element so it's only obtainable for certain federally-funded projects. Next slide, please.

And then just a few other basics – client applicability. Every measure is limited to either all persons or just adults. The simplest way to think about this is the income and employment measures are limited to CoC Program-funded projects, and are further limited just to adults. All other measures looked at all people within your system.

And then the other concept to just be aware of is the difference between System Leavers and System Stayers, or in some cases just active clients, and again Julia will point out those features. System Leavers are people who have left all forms of homeless assistance that are identified for any given measure. System Stayers are folks who are still engaged in assistance.

And then lastly, reporting periods – it's important to remember that for this year's submission, what's been reported to HUD is data for federal fiscal year 2015, which is October 1, 2014, through September 30th, 2015. And there will be some measures that look earlier than that to examine say Rates of Return to Homelessness over time or Newly Homeless and so forth, but in no instance will HUD ask for data that looks back any further than October 1st, 2012, just recognizing that many communities may not have data that goes back earlier than that, and at the same time there's a desire not to penalize communities that might have robust and more historical data available. Next slide, please.

I just want to highlight – we're not going to talk through all this – but there are, as Natalie mentioned and I touched on, there's a wealth of resources out there. We really want to encourage folks to take some time to review these materials. In particular the Introductory Guide and the Performance Measure Videos are good tools for CoC Leads and other folks who are not as technical as our HMIS Leads and administrators but need to understand the basic mechanics of the measures.

As mentioned, we're not going to go into all the detail and the business rules of each measure today, so you'll want to review these so you'll know what the measure is actually examining and how best to understand it. There are some more technical specifications available as well, and some table shells that give you an idea of what your vendor should be programming in HMIS, what you want to make sure they're accountable to and are doing correctly. Next slide, please.

So very briefly, I just want to touch on some basic roles and responsibilities relative to preparing System Performance Measure data. Really, there's three key groups here. Of course the CoC Governing Body is paramount, the Projects that participate in your system, and then your HMIS Lead and System Administrators all have a role. It's a partnership, really, between the CoC, HMIS Lead, and project sponsors. It requires a lot of time, that's certainly something HUD is aware of, but it's important work, and it may take time certainly beyond just the submission deadline to really be able to fully understand the data and have confidence that it's an accurate reflection of the system performance.

And so as you're looking at your data, you'll want to understand whether or not there are quality or coverage issues that might be impacting the data, whether or not additional clean-up or retraining or even investment in HMIS capacity is necessary. This is the first time that HUD has defined system level measures for CoC, so it's expected that the initial years, certainly this first year, will be a time of focusing on data quality and ways to improve performance versus looking at whether or not performance has changed markedly, which we don't have any historical comparison.

It's important right now to be working collaboratively with your HMIS Leads to identify correct data quality issues and to improve coverage. That may also require some conversation with your CoC Boards. HUD does not expect CoCs to be doing or have accomplished deep dives on your data before the submission. HUD does not expect that data will be perfect and wholly representative as it might be over time. HUD knows that this is a process, and that communities have to work together to ensure the data you're submitting is as accurate as possible for this first year, and that you've either identified corrections or process improvements that need to be made, data quality improvements, or plans to incorporate projects not participating in HMIS, or all of the above. HUD expects that those are activities that you're working on now, and will have some ability to speak to in the competition just to indicate that this is something that's a priority for your system as well.

Over time, of course, it's expected that these measures will help inform your system, inform HUD and federal partners around how best to end homelessness, and whether improvements are being made, so they are critical. So at this point, I'm going to hand it over to Julia, who is going to take us into the Measures and provide some guidance and pointers. Julia?

JULIA BROWN: Thanks, Tom. Yeah, so I'm going to be talking a little bit about some actions you can take to check the Performance Measurement data that you're getting out of your system.

Some of the things, some of the ideas I'm going to talk about are things you can do even if you're still working with your vendor to finalize your System Performance Measure report. Some of these are steps you might want to take immediately after getting your first run of the report, and then some of these are kind of longer-term strategies that you'll want to look at, and it will just depend on where your continuum is. Okay, so we can go to the next slide.

The first things to note, and I just want to call everyone's attention to this, is that there aren't that many data elements that are involved in calculating the System Performance Measures. Of course, the volume of work is still large for your HMIS Lead when you multiply it across all the different types of projects in your system, but just to give you a sense, there are really just these handful of data elements to focus in on, and this can help you work with your HMIS Leads, and help your HMIS Leads start to develop a process and protocol for really focusing in on the most relevant data elements for the relevant project type.

You'll see in terms of the project set up, what's most relevant here is the project type that's originally applicable across all the measures, and then you can see that what's applicable across all the measures in terms of the client-level data quality, so the client-level data is the project entry and exit date. There are other elements that are relevant for other measures, which you can see in the columns going across, but those entry and exit data pieces are really, really under control. Okay, so we can go to the next slide.

So now that you kind of have a sense of the types of data elements that we're talking about, I want to talk through a few kind of general troubleshooting ideas. I'm really going to focus in on project set up, on client de-duplication across the system, and on the entry/exit, the project enrollment data, and a few other pieces that are collected at entry or at exit for clients. One thing you can do prior to working through each of these steps is to run project-level reports – the APR, the CAPER. If you have a data quality report built into your system, that's something that can help you.

Your vendor may also have programmed the ability to run your System Performance Measure report at the project level or at groups of project level. That's sort of an optional place for vendors to go, but if that is available to you, that's something else you can run. And you can start to look at the individual project performance, and just think about whether the length of time, length of participation in those projects is something that might be impacting your Performance Measure report, and we'll talk about that as we go through measure-by-measure. So now I'm going to talk through those three core points – project set up, de-duplication, and enrollment data, one-by-one.

So in terms of project set up, it's really important to make sure that your HMIS Leads are reviewing the project set up, and making sure that each project is set up correctly in the HMIS, and that's something that the HMIS Lead will want to review with a project representative just to make sure that it's set up correctly.

You'll also want to make sure that the correct federal funding source is selected for that particular project. This is most relevant for Measure 4, which limits the universe to CoC Program-funded projects, but you'll want to make sure that that option is selected if it is a CoC

Program-funded project, and that there's a grant start date that is open for the reporting period that's being run.

This is a little more technical but your HMIS Leads will also want to make sure that the emergency shelter projects are selected either entry/exit or night-by-night, and that that selection has been made correctly. It's a very technical and kind of nuanced difference but the way client participation is calculated for each of those is very, very different, so if a project is selected incorrectly, it's going to really mess up all of those measures that rely on emergency shelter data, so that's something you'll want to work with your HMIS Lead to make sure there's a protocol for verifying that.

If your HMIS Lead or you need help understanding that project set up, there's a project set up tool on the HUD Exchange that HUD has released. It's a very simple Excel document where you can kind of select the funding source and the component type, and it will spit out a list of possible project – it will narrow your list of project types down to what you're allowed to select, and it also provides the data collection requirements for that particular project type, so it's a helpful tool that you can use.

Okay, we can move on to the Duplication. So another piece that's really important to get to before you run your System Performance Measure report is making sure that your clients are de-duplicated across the whole system. This is something that your HMIS Lead and projects should be doing on a regular basis. There should already be a process in place for running de-duplication reports, and plotting and then merging or however you handle de-duplicating client records in your system.

This is something that generally-speaking HUD has articulated that should not be an automated process and it's not built into any of the reporting specifications. It's something that needs to be handled properly, and we need to really take a look at the records individually, and there needs to be a human intervention to deciding which is the master record and so forth. But that's definitely a process you'll want to make sure is undertaken, and again, following that process regularly throughout the year is really going to help you out when you come to run your System Performance Measures. Next slide.

So the project enrollment data, this is where we get into the client-level data that you want to be checking data quality on. Entry/exit, as I said, is very critical for every single measure. Every measure depends on the correct enrollment information for each client. Then there are other data elements that are relevant. Destination at exit is very crucial, and then for rapid rehousing projects, the residential move-in date, that element is very important as well.

You may want to do some checking to look at the number of clients in each project on the last day of the reporting period in particular, then compare that to units and the beds in the project so that it makes sense logically, that the right number of people are in that project. If there are a lot more people showing in the project than there are beds or units, that's a signal that there are probably clients in that project that haven't been exited properly.

You also want to make sure that there aren't closed projects that are still sitting in your HMIS with client enrollment open in them. Sometimes a project disappears and you forget to do the close-out project in HMIS to make sure those records are closed. The System Performance Measures report is picking up all of the projects in your system that meet a particular project type, so if you haven't told the system that project is closed, those clients are going to get captured in there.

So those are some basic things you can do across the board. Now I'm going to go ahead and talk measure-by-measure about some steps you can take, and just kind of give you a flavor for what data are included in each of these measures. And we're not going to go in numerical order. We're going to kind of talk in the order that makes sense in terms of a progression of thinking about these measures.

So the first measure we're going to talk about is the number of homeless persons. This is really kind of an umbrella measure. It takes a look at a big picture of folks in your system, and then essentially is really just a count of those people. So we have a little graphic here, and just to orient you to the graphic, there is one of these for each measure in the next few slides. Essentially, what we're showing here are the 3 years that are relevant to this particular reporting period that you're going to bed submitting now in the summer of 2016.

So the orange line shows you the reporting period that – sorry, it shows you the universe of the clients for this particular measure. So the universe we're looking at is defined by the active clients between 10/1/2014 and 9/30/2015. In this particular measure, what we're looking at is the data for those clients during that period of time, and that's the green line. So during that period of time, all we're looking to do is count the number of active clients during that period, so active means that they either entered or they stayed or they exited during this particular reporting period. Any client that falls in that category is included in this measure.

Now, the graphic also further limits the particular measure by showing you which project types are relevant. So when we talk about the number of homeless persons, what we're really telling you is the number of sheltered homeless persons in your system, so we all have project types that are relevant. In this measure are emergency shelter, safe havens, and transitional housing, because those are the folks who are actually homeless at the time of participation in the system. This measure further breaks out by emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing, but for purposes of looking at data quality, you should look across all of these project types. And the important data elements for this measure are entry date and exit data.

This was just to kind of orient you to this graphic. Again, as I said, there's one for each measure. I'm not necessarily going to talk through each one in full detail like that, but for this particular measure, what you're going to want to look at is the change in the annual count of sheltered persons in HMIS. If you can run this report for this year, you might want to look at prior years to see those changes. You might want to check this against your AHAR report, any lists you keep in your community or counts that you do locally, and review whether the sheltered numbers are consistent.

There might be differences in the way that you're calculating those numbers, but you're going to want to look for overall consistency between individual measures as opposed to necessarily coming to the exact same number for each of those calculation. But if one is double what you reported on AHAR, that's going to give you pause and give you an opportunity to ask some questions there of your vendor or of your HMIS Lead about why those differences might be in place. And again, you're going to want to make sure that you close out clients that are still open. That's really critical. Okay, next slide, please.

Okay, the next measure that we want to look at is the length of time people remain homeless, so essentially what this is look at, again, is that list of emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing, those projects in which people are homeless. The universe is defined by the period 10/1/2014 to 9/30/2015, same as the prior measure, but in this measure what we're doing is looking back for 2 years from the end of the reporting period, and we're counting up all of the time that people have spent in those project types. So you can see that data quality here is not just something you want to look at for this particular reporting period. You also want to look back all the way to that look-back stop date of 10/1/2012. HUD has vowed not to look at any data beyond that point, so you're safe only looking back to 10/1/2012, but that is the point that you want to go ahead and check project entry date, exit date, for clients all the way back to that point.

In this particular measure, you'll also note that residential move-in date is relevant, and that's because this particular calculation cross-checks enrollment in emergency shelter, safe haven, and transitional housing with any potential competing enrollment in PSH, housed rapid re-housing situations, or other permanent housing situations. So we know that sometimes data quality for emergency shelters isn't that strong, so if there's a competing enrollment in a housed situation, that housed situation takes precedence and cuts out those emergency shelter, safe haven, or transitional housing enrollment dates.

That's how the measure is calculated according to the specifications that have been provided to the vendor, so it's important for this particular measure not only to look at those entry/exits for the project types that are included in the measure. It's also important to look at those entry/exit dates for these other types of projects as well. This is the place where you want to make sure that your emergency shelters are set up correctly for the entry/exit or night-by-night method. Again, very important.

So this measure is split into two pieces, one that looks at emergency shelters and safe havens only, and then one that looks at emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing all together. So you'll want to make sure that your average and median Length of Time Homeless should be longer for the one that includes transitional housing than the measure that excludes transitional housing. That's a logic piece that you can check and make sure that there is internal consistency in the report, and if not, again, it provides you an opportunity to have a conversation with your Lead or with your vendor to try and figure out what's going on there. Okay, next measure.

So this measure looks at successful placement from street outreach, the movement off the street, and then successful placement in or retention of permanent housing. So pretty much all of the project types are relevant here, and the data that's relevant are entry, exit, and destination information. It's just looking at the reporting period, so it's just folks that exited during the reporting period and looking at their destination. This is a similar measure to what's reported in the APR at the project level but it looks at this information across the whole system.

There is also some information to try to help folks understand better the exit destinations which are included in this measure as a positive destination. It's different depending on whether you're moving from street outreach to something else, whether you're moving from an emergency shelter or transitional housing to something else, or whether you're in a permanent housing and retaining it, so every destination is classified as sort of a positive or not positive destination in the charts that's provided at this link. Okay, next slide, please.

So once folk have existed homeless to permanent housing destinations, we want to understand whether they return to homelessness, and this particular measure looks at several periods of time, so 6 months, 12 months, 24 months after their exit. So in order to look ahead into the future, we need to move the cohort that we're looking at back into the past, so in this case the group that we're analyzing are the folks who exited projects to permanent housing destinations during the period 10/1/2012 to 9/30/2013, and then looking ahead to all the way up through the current reporting period to see whether they returned to the homeless system, which means returning to a project like a street outreach project, an emergency shelter or safe haven.

Also folks who have returned to permeant sort of housing projects are included in a separate iteration of this measure because there are, of course, some cases where folks go directly into a PSH project after having spent time on the street but not necessarily encountering a particular homeless service project along the way. So here you want to do data quality checks all the way back to that look-back date, and again, project entry, exit, and destination are the critical data elements here.

One thing you'll want to look at for internal consistency, you'll see that this measure is reported out over a 6-month period, sort of a 6 to 12-month period, and then 13 to 24-month period. So you'll want to make sure that the overall number of returns is increasing logically as it should because folks are going to be added as you go. Okay, next slide, please.

So this measure looks at the number of people who have become homeless for the first time, as indicated by appearing in an HMIS participating project. So here the cohort is once again defined by the reporting period, and you're looking back again all the way to that look-back stop date of 10/1/2012. The critical data elements here are entry and exit date, and again, almost all of those HMIS project types are included here.

So one thing you might want to look at here is one of the measures includes folks who appear to be entering permanent supportive housing without a prior contact with the homeless service system, and so that can of course be legitimate. As I said in the previous measure, there are of course instances where folks do come into permanent supportive housing directly off the street, after long periods of time on the street without necessarily having an encounter with another homeless service system; but that can also be something where if you see a pattern of folks coming into permanent supportive housing without any contact in the homeless service system, that can give you pause, and it might make you consider having a conversation with those projects to see if there's a possibility that they're serving folks who might not have passed through a coordinated entry process or who might not be otherwise prioritized for service in an appropriate way. Next slide, please.

So for all intents and purposes, this is the last measure that you'll need to be reporting on for the 2016 reporting period, and again, this measure, Employment and Income Growth, is limited to CoC Program-funded project and it's limited to adult clients. So this one has a few more data elements that are relevant. The income and sources data element, that's something you'll want to check data quality on, but again you're checking it for a much smaller pool of projects. It's only those CoC Program-funded projects that are included in this measure, and it's only for the reporting period.

This one also looks at "leavers" and "stayers" in two different measures, and it breaks out employment income from other income types. This is something where if you want to pull a particular APR, there's an APR question listed here on the slide, that you can see if there are projects that are having a really big impact on this measure, if there were folks who are or are not causing – seeing big increases in folks' income. You can flag those particular projects by looking at the APR level. Next slide, please.

So this last measure, Measure 6, is one that you do not need to provide data on in 2016. It's limited not only to CoC Program-funded projects but also to those particular CoCs that have exercised the flexibility to serve people who are homeless under Category 3, and no CoCs have been approved to exercise that particular flexibility. So if and when that happens in the future, the baseline year will be set whenever that comes about. So those are all the measures, and I'm going to go ahead and turn it back to Tom to talk through the rest.

TOM ALBANESE: Great, thanks, Julia. And just before we turn to questions, a few additional points we wanted to highlight. It's really critical, as we've noted in a number of different ways, to pay attention to and try to improve HMIS coverage issues generally, and then of course for each project type. It's especially important for shelter and outreach projects. We know that in many communities, there are shelters that are not federally funded that are for one reason or another choosing not to participate in HMIS, and we know this is a difficult conversation. These conversations have often already been had.

We would encourage you to continue to have these conversations, to think about ways to approach providers differently. Consider whether or not non-participating providers receive other public money, and if it's a state or local source of funding, do those state or government or local government partners have a similar interest in that project participating in HMIS, and if so can they condition their funding on that, or are there other ways to encourage or cajole folks to participate in HMIS. There certainly is a strong argument to make that absent participating in HMIS, it is nearly impossible for a provider to do their job as well as they can do their job if they don't know whether or not the people they're assisting are not only resolving their homelessness but not returning to homelessness, and you can't do that if you're operating in a vacuum. So in the interest of clients at the very least, there is an argument to make for participating in HMIS, and HUD strongly encourages CoCs to continue to have those conversations, and to elevate those conversations to a public conversation where need be because this is all about people who are experiencing homelessness and not necessarily an inconvenience for a particular provider.

So that's critical. It's also important to consider whether or not you don't have to wait for next year's submission to start looking at your performance over time. If you have the ability to run

System Performance data for prior years, that might give you some sense as to whether or not – if you have confidence in your data anyway – if your performance has actually improved, and you could start having those conversations with your governing board.

And certainly at a minimum you would want to look at this year's data – to the extent, again, you have some degree of confidence in it – and set a goal for next year. Where do you expect to be? Where do you want to be? Where will you drive toward next year? What do you want your performance to look like with each of these measures come next year? So looking at any kind of historical data will help you make those decisions and set those targets. Next slide, please.

So just some quick reminders about next steps. Certainly for this year's submission, it's important to spend some time, review your data, using your HMIS vendor's canned report. As best you can and within your capacity, work on cleaning that data and preparing it for submission, examining in ways that Julia walked us through, and working closely with your HMIS Leads to ensure that as best you can, that data is comprehensive and accurate. And then, of course, every CoC has the responsibility for submitting this data to HUD by the deadline on October 1st, and as need be, please do to refer to that HDX Submission Guidance for the details on how to do that.

And then just a reminder that, again, I just can't stress this enough. This is the first year for everyone, HUD included, to have System Performance Measures submitted. The primary focus is whether you have the ability to generate the reports from your HMIS system, and submit them to HUD on time. There will be issues with the data, that's certainly understood and expected by HUD, but over time there's also an expectation that data quality and coverage will improve, but this is year 1 in this new age so there is certainly an understanding of that. Next slide, please.

And beyond this year, there is obviously ongoing work around System Performance Measure data. It's important to start using that data in your system evaluation and planning processes. There is no reason to wait to look at this data until when it's time to submit it to HUD. You should be looking at System Performance data routinely. Ideally, you should consider looking at data quarterly to understand if your performance is headed in the direction you expect it to, and just to know and start to see some of the seasonal changes you might expect with some of the measures as well to understand the basic dynamics of your system relative to these measures over time.

Of course, you'll want to look at project-level performance against each measure. We know, I'm confident that HMIS vendors will continue to make those canned reports even more robust and user-friendly, CoC-friendly to be able to drill down and look at project-level performance. It's duly noted that many of the vendors have set up these reports so you can run them just at a project level or against a cohort of projects, so that might be worthwhile as well.

It's really critical, however, to ensure that starting now and going forward, you have a robust and accountable system for monitoring and ensuring data quality. Having a complete program which is more than just a plan, it's actually a set of procedures that you can operate against that allow you or your charge or HMIS Lead with generating routine data quality reports, assessing data quality, engaging in remediation with projects as need be, with specified timeframes, and a compliance process to ensure that your data month-to-month, quarter-to-quarter is complete and accurate, and you're not just waiting until the end of a fiscal year to look at it because by then, typically data quality issues are very difficult to resolve when you have that much time lapse. Next slide, please.

At this point, I'm going to turn it back to Natalie, and we're going to open it up for some of the questions that have come in. Natalie?

NATALIE MATTHEWS: Great. Thanks so much, Tom. So I do want to apologize. I think that there were some folks that were having some sound issues throughout the presentation, and then some other folks expressed some difficulty in seeing the screen. So again, the slides and transcript and recording of today will be sent around. So several folks were able to ask some questions throughout the webinar today, and I just want to share a couple of those for Tom, Julia, and William and Abbi to weigh in on.

We've got several questions related to the grants operating year and certain end date, so even though, as we all know hopefully by now, the System Performance Measure reports are CoC-level reports, and just one report is ranked for the CoCs. It sounds, based on the questions, as though there are several vendors who have programmed the reports in a way that requires information on the grants operating in your certain end date to be included in that. So I'm not sure if anyone on our team was able to think about that a little further or if there's anything that folks want to share more broadly about how to think about the grant operating end date for this report.

WILLIAM: So one comment, this is William, as Natalie noted, the grant period is not relevant for the System Performance Measures. We recognize you're going to have an overlap of grants in most cases. That is okay. The only time the grant date is relevant is when it corresponds to a closing, so if a project is closing at the end of the grant period and it will no longer be providing services, clearly that's going to impact the measures because you will have one less project that you'll be reporting on after that. So we just want to be clear, for the purpose of the measures, that is not relevant to us, so don't get hung up on that.

For the Annual Performance Report, the APR, you will continue to report based on your actual reporting period, or your grant's reporting period. So this is where the confusion I think lies, the difference between the System Performance Measures and the Project Annual Performance Report. So please, don't, don't mess around with those dates. Don't change them all to October. You need to have them consistent with the actual operating period for your projects because that impacts your APR, your project report. But again, for System Performance, it is irrelevant except when a project closes.

JULIA BROWN: And I'll also add, if this is specifically about assigning a grant year to the federal partner funding source for the purposes of eliminating Measure 4 for CoC Program-funded projects, yeah again, don't mess with your grant timeline but as long as the grant number is the same, you can leave that grant open until that grant number changes, and when that grant number changes, you would just open a new grant with that new grant number, but as long as the project isn't closed, it shouldn't exclude anything that is CoC Program-funded for Measure 4.

NATALIE MATTHEWS: Okay, great. Thank you both for weighing in on that. Okay, several other folks had some questions regarding Measure 1, the length of time homeless. Let's see if we can pick out one of these. So one of the questions that we got about length of time homeless is whether or not HUD's intention is to eventually use the length of time homeless data element as opposed to entry and exits or night-by-night information to generate that data for Measure 1, the length of time homeless.

WILLIAM: Yes, it will eventually. The first submission, no, the one that's going on right now. We recognize we've made changes however at some point we will definitely require it. It's unclear if we will require it – and when I say "it," I'm really referring to Metric 1b, which would include the 3.17 or 3.9.17 information. It's unclear if we will require it in the next submission process that would be for the 2016 operating year, October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2016. – Or if we will do it in the next one, the '17 period. So look for more information on that over time. We will certainly let you know, especially as we get closer to the HDX submission timeline, but clearly it's not required for this first round of submissions.

NATALIE MATTHEWS: Great.

JULIA BROWN: Can I just add something to that, too, because the language you used, Natalie, was "as opposed to" using 3.917 data, and I think it's important to note that when HUD does choose to add in Measure 1b, it will be in addition to the current calculation of Measure 1a, so you'll always be able to compare over time just the enrollment data. The 3.917 will just be in addition to the information already being collected.

NATALIE MATTHEWS: Okay, that's a great point to add in under there. We've just got a couple of minutes left, so maybe time for one other question, and then we'll go over some wrap-up thoughts on our end. So we've also gotten several questions about system coverage and about some struggles that continuums of care may have in getting non-HUD-funded providers to participate in their HMIS. So I'm not sure if anyone would like to share any thoughts or words of wisdom about just what the potential impact of system coverage being less than 100% is, and any sort of metrics that folks can be measuring themselves against for what they should be working towards in terms of their coverage of their full system, so getting all those projects that serve homeless individuals into each [PH] grant.

TOM ALBANESE: This is Tom. Just to be clear, HUD has established in last year's, and now this year's NOFA, some expectations for minimal coverage rates in HMIS by project type, and I think those are things that folks should aim for as a floor for coverage, but it really goes back to a community conversation. I think the important way to frame this is not as something you have to do to meet a HUD requirement. This is something you have to do to meet the needs of people in your communities, and there's really no more compelling argument than that to best assure access to resources, to understand whether or not people are not only resolving their homelessness but not returning, and are no longer in crisis.

You have to have that kind of visibility, and so it's really about partnership and the willingness of providers to partner with other providers providing like services to the same people to make sure those people have their needs effectively met. It may be worthwhile, if you're having difficulty on this matter with a provider or more within your community, to have a conversation with the regional team representative, and they can help you strategize further.

NATALIE MATTHEWS: That's a great idea. Okay. So with that, we're going to go ahead and start to close out. So I do appreciate everyone's time, and asking the questions. I understand that there were several questions that we were not able to get to, so if you haven't done so already, we greatly encourage you to ask any questions that might be unresolved through the HUD Ask A Question portal, and we'll turn those around for you as soon as possible, understanding the fact that everyone is on a really tight set of deadlines to get this information together.

So in addition to asking any unresolved questions through the HUD Exchange Ask A Question portal, we also want to reinforce that there are several resources out there right now to help you as you all work together to get your first year of data submitted, and as you work in the weeks and months and years afterwards to improve your data. So please make sure that you go to this page on the HUD Exchange. In addition, you can see on this page right now that there is a tab that says Training and Events. For the time being, any materials from a webinar such as our webinar today or the previous two webinars on the System Performance Measures, the materials for those webinars are all posted on the Training and Events page. We're working to get those on this page as well, but in case that takes a few days and you need to get to the information more quickly, please make sure that you go to Training and Events. We will have the recording, the slides, and the transcript up for this webinar just as soon as possible, but please keep in mind that it takes at least 2 to 3 business days, so please be patient and we will get that up as soon as possible. So thanks again, everyone, for your time, and enjoy the rest of your day.