

April 2020 HMIS Webinar



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00:04 Mary: So it looks like numbers are kind of tapering off, there's not a vast up-tick every two

seconds. So, numbers of participants joining our call, so let's go ahead and get started with a few housekeeping items first. So you... Welcome to the HMIS call. We're happy to have you here. All participants are on mute. We are going to record this call and post it to the Sys Admin Hub. It takes about a week to do that, to get the recording and the transcript and everything posted, so give us some time there, but it will be posted soon.

00:47 Mary: We're going to use the Q and A feature in this Adobe Connect call for you to interact with us, and that's the way to get your questions answered while we're on the call. If for any reason you can't get a question answered from us today, we've been asked... Either we say we can't answer that, please submit an AAQ or there just isn't enough time to get it answered. The way to elevate that question to our attention after the call is to enter a HUD Exchange AAQ and in the slide desk are steps to do that. Make sure you highlight HMIS as the topic on the AAQ deck, and in both instances, whether you're asking us a question on the call or entering an AAQ after the call, please try and note the slide number or topic that you are asking about so we can have reference for that.

01:51 S1: So I want to welcome and say hi to my fellow participants or presenters on this call. Fran Ledger from the SNAPS office at HUD. Thanks, Fran, for being here. Meredith Alspaugh, you'll see next to me as well from the Partnership Center, and Brian Roccapriore, from Cloudburst, is on the call as well. He can't be on video today but he is here with us and will be helping us triage questions.

02:26 S1: And then our tech support is Melissa Witham, from C4 Innovations. And so, if you're having audio issues, or technical issues with our meeting today, Melissa is your go-to person. Go ahead and send her a question and she'll help you out there. Let's get started, our of course entire agenda today is Coronavirus related. We're going to go over HMIS and COVID-19 updates that we have for you, where our worlds are overlapping with the crisis response that you guys have going on on the ground. We'll spend a lot of time in Q and A. So we'll get started now. Fran, why don't you to take it away.

03:11 Fran: Sure. I want to thank everybody for joining today. I appreciate your time. I know that we are all stretched thin, and your time is important. I'm going to start off with NHSDC stuff. There are two things I think that are pretty important here to describe to you. One is that... And with the Spring Conference being cancelled because of COVID-19, what we've done is we've moved some spring content onto an online format, so we are going to present several of the sessions, in total around 20 of them to an online format. It will happen over May 4th through the 6th. It will be 60-minute sessions and they will be both HUD and NHSDC sessions, and you'll be able to join online and attend those sessions and participate. We're excited to be able to present them.

04:08 Fran: Also there's the Fall Conference coming up. Registration will be delayed a bit, as things are ever-changing around COVID-19 and so in being cautious about these things, registration will open a little later than usual. But as always, your HMIS funds have been approved as this being an eligible activity. Therefore, if you receive any CoC or ESG program funds that have this as a line item that you can use this for registration. If you don't, and you have a project that does not have HMIS funds, you can use admin funds for that. So those are two things that are coming up, the online and then also the Fall Conference that's coming up. The Fall Conference is a three-day event. It's their normal two day, the 14th and 15th is kind of the full conference and then a pre-conference on the 13th.

05:15 Fran: So I'll talk a little bit about the CARES Act. So you're probably all familiar with the CARES Act now. We have been having, HUD's been having office hours where we've been talking about what that means for HUD and the funding that's coming down through HUD that's being made available to communities. And this is going to impact system administrators, vendors, and how we use HMIS. So the CARES Act includes \$4 billion in Emergency Shelter Grant program funds.

05:50 Fran: And so if you're wanting to better understand how those funds are going to be used, you should join office hours and hear what's going on and what communities, the questions communities are having about those funds. I think that the office hours are very helpful and there'll be a link later on to some office hours that already occurred. So you can jump on and one's specific about HMIS, but you could also go to the HUD exchange to the disaster page that we have up and you'll be able to join future ones if you haven't already. And with the CARES Act, HUD has also released some waivers and you'll learn more about those waivers later on in this call. There's also a waiver that's very specific to HMIS that also impacts funding for HMIS. But there are other waivers around the CoC ESG programs, that I think that are important for us to understand. So you'll get a little bit of detail around that.

06:54 Fran: With the CARES Act, there's funding not only coming into HUD but there's funding coming into our other federal partners. Most of this funding is coming through regular programs that already exist, so there's not a lot of changes in how the funds will be used, but in some cases, there will be some changes. It could impact some of the ways that we collect data, but we're not clear on what all of that looks like at this point. So there's a little bit of uncertainty in this. And as this information becomes more clear, we'll make sure that we're giving you that information as soon as you can get it, that we can give it to you. One of the new pots of money that's coming through us, is called...

07:38 Fran: We call it ESGCV you'll start seeing that. It's Emergency Solutions Grant COVID money. And that money will have some broader uses than you would normally get with the SGA funds. So we'll be giving more information about how to document that information. But we're not going back and doing a lot of changes to the data standards. That's not what we're trying to do. We're trying to make as minimal adjustments, to what you're already doing. This is, as I mentioned when we first started the call, your time is precious to us. We want to make sure that you're using it in the way that best supports your community.

08:22 Fran: So we're trying to be very careful about the changes that are getting made and how they're impacting your community. With that I want to talk about FEMA disaster declarations. I think this is really important. It's going to drive a lot of money that comes into communities. You may or may not have experience with FEMA disaster money. Usually we see FEMA money come into a community because they had experienced a natural disaster like hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, that's typically, and occasionally fires, if the fires are large enough. And what happens is state, tribal, local governments, there's a disaster, a request is made to FEMA for funding, and then the state matches some of that funding, if it's approved. That money, typically that's, they can choose one from the variety of funding you see here. Individual assistance, public assistance, hazard mitigation that's up there. They're used for different types of focus on what they do. So individual assistance, individuals in the community are impacted and they're going to get money directly. They have, there's certain qualifications to be able to get that money. Public assistance is going to be for all sorts of types of things. Like debris removal, emergency protective measures, permanent

restoration.

10:08 Fran: Hazard mitigation, for mitigation efforts for future to mitigate against future losses. So what's unusual? Just like everything that's unusual with COVID. Every state has submitted a request and has been approved for major disaster declaration but each state may have requested some or all of this type of assistance. So not everybody asked for the same thing. I give two examples here. California and North Carolina, they both requested public assistance, they may have also requested individual assistance and hazard mitigation. But for sure both of the them asked for public assistance and in both of those states, this public assistance is funding non-congregate sheltering response. In which they're using FEMA money to pay for 75% of the project and state money to pay for 25% of the project. And why this is important to you as an HMIS systems administrator is they are actually using their HMIS in these communities to support those projects. That may or may not be true in other states. So you want to make sure that you are understanding in your state how FEMA is being used and if it can be leveraged, try to leverage HMIS as a data collection tool.

11:43 Fran: If you're having these types of projects being developed in which this assistance is going to help individuals that are experiencing homelessness in your community. HMIS is a perfect use for this type of data collection need. The Project Room Key, the California initiative, Brian has been working along with Mary and Meredith on that and we've been working with several vendors that actually have implementations in California to get that going. And that workflow is going to be posted on the HUD Exchange, and you'll have access to that. You can see what that workflow looks like for the State of California.

12:27 Fran: I think that that's... I think that that can be really helpful to see how communities are using the HMIS in their response. So this is... California is a big one. The current resources that we're putting out for HMIS are on the page that you're seeing. So what's being developed right now is we have privacy guidance posted on that page, we have project data collection guidance, there's some information about making inventory changes. All this is being posted on the link that you see. So please go and visit that page from time to time, you'll see new information. Also we're sending out updates through the hub, so you know what else is getting published.

13:19 Fran: And then before I turn it over to Mary I want to talk about data sharing, privacy guidance and just data collection, in general. And the big thing, and I talked about this previously, it's about balance and as time goes on in a disaster response, especially in a disaster that impacts both the people that we're serving, but it also impacts us personally, it gets more and more difficult as time goes on. So we want to make sure that we have balance in all the things that we're doing. That we make sure that we're doing what we need to, to best serve the people that we're serving, that everything that has a purpose, and that we're careful that we're putting the efforts in the right place. Around data collection balance, make sure that you're thinking about what is necessary to collect to do what I need to do, what is not necessary, be also asking that question, "What do I not need to be collecting in this moment? What would be nice but what do I not need to collect and what could I set aside?" And in data sharing also you're going to listen in a few minutes to Mary talking about data sharing. Also think about balance around that.

14:48 Fran: You want to make sure that you are being careful about your privacy and confidentiality laws. What is appropriate to share, what's not appropriate to share. Just because we're in a moment of crisis, you still need to be careful about these things and be thoughtful about the individuals that you're serving. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Mary and I thank you all

for joining us today.

15:18 Mary: Come off mute. And there we go. Thanks, Fran. So continuing on just a reminder, so I get the easy part of this webinar because I'm just mostly going to repeat stuff we said in our March 25th webinar, but we know that there's new audience members on this one and some people haven't heard this directly from us. So just as a reminder, your existing privacy notices have provisions to support data-disclosure, those required by law or those disclosures required to avert a serious threat to health or safety. In order to do a disclosure to avert a serious threat to health or safety you need to examine who is going to have access to that data, who you're disclosing to and the reason for the disclosure, if it really is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat. So there's a couple of tests you can do, under the existing privacy notices that you all should have already in place in your CoC, that may allow you to disclose PII in cases of required by law or serious threat to health or safety.

16:44 Mary: But that authority to disclose is not unlimited. So this is one of the documents Fran talked about that's posted on our HMIS COVID-19 resource page. And it walks you through some of those tests you can do. And HUD has helped you out kind of answering some of the questions, like is it a public health agency, is it a public health agency? Kind of do they pass the test of being able to help, what are the right words, prevent or lessen the serious imminent threat? HUD has said yes, in general a public health agency could fit that definition, but if they're not asking for PII, in the job that they're trying to do, you don't need to give it to them. You shouldn't give it to them. So that's where the authority to disclose is not unlimited. And just thinking through what's the minimal amount of information that I may... I'm being asked to share that I am able to share in order to help reduce serious public threats.

17:57 Mary: So another example was like don't give everything out. If there's one person at your shelter, who is... Who has tested positive, that doesn't mean the whole list of everybody staying at the shelter and all their PII goes to the authority requesting that information. So you have to be judicious, your authority to disclose is not unlimited. A lot of this is covered in your existing privacy notices. If you find that your privacy notice, isn't up to date, and these are up to date to the 2004 data standards or security standards, they haven't changed since 2004. So really, we think everybody's privacy notices are in place and should cover this, but you also can examine those and make changes retroactively as needed.

18:45 Mary: You could be more restrictive in your privacy notice. So we know that there are some states, for example, that have state laws around consent being more required under certain circumstances. We of course, always need to follow local and state laws. You can't be less restrictive than the HUD privacy standards, you are allowed to be more restrictive and your practices locally need to follow what you've written down as far as how you're going to treat client data.

19:21 Mary: Okay. So we also put on the website that Fran pointed you to, the most recent documentation, and this wasn't available on, it wasn't posted on HUD exchange when we talked on March 25th, but it is posted up there now so you can download it and follow along. And I... What we want to get across, the message we want to get across with that is you may want to do some tracking of your COVID-19 response locally in HMIS. And that may require or cause a need for you to modify your inventory.

20:03 Mary: Some pretty clear examples are: Adding shelter capacity to separate people in

congregate shelter settings, to create more distance between them, or just adding more capacity using different locations in the community, hotel-motels, etcetera, to house more people to keep the spread of infection down. So, we have put out some ways that you can approach inventory changes under the existing HMIS data standards to account for some of these additions and changes in your inventory and still, kind of, be accurate down the road when reporting on what work has gone on in your community. Not only during this pandemic response, but, overall, in your homeless system, and stay true to those guidelines.

21:00 Mary: So, most of what we want you to hear from us in terms of inventory is, do what's feasible right now. You have a couple of different options. Think through... If the beds that you're creating in your community are, specifically, devoted to folks experiencing homelessness, or if it's more like a community quarantine facility, and homelessness aren't criteria to be given access to a bed. Those are the kinds of things you want to think through as you put this inventory information in HMIS.

21:38 Mary: You can also... One of the things that has come up as we've been thinking through this, is housing type is a project level data element, or it is in 2.02 in the data standards, and it tells you what type of facility, if you're talking about an emergency shelter, we instruct you to make sure you have a separate project for your hotel/motel voucher emergency project versus your facility-based emergency project.

22:06 Mary: And, in this case, where you're just adding capacity in an emergency response to this short-term crisis, we don't think you need to be as detailed as a separate project in HMIS to account for some of these units, or beds, people are going to be housed in are actually physically at a hotel-motel. It's not in the same vein as a tenant-based voucher or Hotel-Motel emergency voucher type situation. It's really more, and thinking about it more as, if an emergency shelter in your community is taking on the role of operating and overseeing an expansion of their facility, and, kind of, utilizing whatever space in the community, be it a hotel-motel, or another congregate facility, or whatever the case may be, to expand that ability for a short amount of time.

23:09 Mary: So, we have said, in that document, that's posted on HUD Exchange, you can just add a new inventory record, call it 'overflow shelter beds', give it a number, and put an end date on it when this is all done, and those short-term inventory overflow beds are now gone. You can go to the... You can decide to put in a new project, and assign it the right housing type, and call it a hotel-motel voucher program if that's what you choose to do, but HUD's not forcing that.

23:49 Mary: HUD's not saying you have to do any of this data collection in HMIS. We know, of course, HMIS is a great place to capture this, kind of, response, and you may have funding sources like the California FEMA, or the North Carolina FEMA sources are saying, "Hey. Do use HMIS for our funding." But what we're saying with this document is, "Add inventory in feasible and..." Not easy, none of this is easy. But make it as un-confusing, and don't make it hard for yourself to do what you need to do, locally, during this short-term crisis response. Meredith, Fran, anything to add there?

24:37 Fran: No. No. I think, that was perfect.

24:40 Mary: Okay.

24:41 Meradith: Yeah. Agreed.

24:42 Mary: So, yeah. Just, deep breaths. And, we know, it may not be what we're used to in our normal traditional business as usual way. Be flexible with yourself, we'll be flexible with you, and we will try and also help you understand where, if there's confusion, let us know. Enter an HMIS AAQ and we will definitely tackle whatever is confusing in any of the guidance that we're trying to put out. We're going through these things really fast and trying to get resources out the door for you based on the questions you're asking. So, thanks for your help.

25:22 Fran: Yeah. And I would echo just what Mary said. You know usually, how long things take for HUD to develop policy, to set up a new program, to push out this kind of money, this is \$4 billion, and it's happening very quickly. So, we are trying to make decisions, and make the right decisions, but this is evolving fast, and we don't have all the answers yet. So, we are giving you the information as we have it, and we definitely want to hear your questions.

26:00 Fran: So, we understand the things that you are working with, and the things that are challenging to you, and how that you're implementing these things, ideas that you have, but also know as we look at this, six months, a year, two years down the road, we understand the situation that we're all in. So, we'll be looking at this knowing that this was an unusual situation, and that things were in flux, and that they happened quickly. So, just to say that there's going to be a lot of flexibility offered around what happens during this time, when we're looking back. So.

26:43 Mary: Thank you. Oh, Meredith. Meredith, do you... Meredith.

26:48 Meradith: Yeah. Do you want me to go or do you want to... Are there any questions, mainly Brian I'm asking you, that we should call out now on what Mary and Fran have already covered so far.

27:00 Brian: Sure. One question, how will adding beds for a potentially short time period affect the HIC versus our LSA?

27:08 Mary: Yeah. That's why we kind of like the idea of doing the overflow because there's a row, a specific clear place for that in the HIC, and that's just an existing data element that fits in nicely with all existing reporting. Same with a new project, really. If you had a new project and call it COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Project and type COVID everything, follow all the data standards, you're just right in line with what flows already naturally into our existing reporting. So it should all... That was kind of the hard work that we tried to do was not create these kinds of crazy situations where you had to follow new and different data collection rules or add data elements to HMIS and have to change all the reporting structures to account for it. It's like, we're going to know that in 2020 there was this blip of time where overflow beds were added or new projects were added to account for infectious disease response. And at some point those beds and projects will come offline and have end-dates in the data, because those are existing data standards that we can track.

28:24 Mary: And remember too, with a lot of the inventory reporting, LSA, APR and HIC reports, like you can go back in time. A PVDE, a date setting, and stuff like that in the HMIS data standards allow you to do some of this work after the fact, as needed, to account for your data quality appropriately.

28:53 Meradith: Can I...

28:53 Mary: Does that answer it, Brian?

28:55 Meradith: Yeah, I think that answered it. I want to touch on something that I don't know that we've fully articulated but the question that came in from Keisha that says they have reduced their shelter capacity because they're moving people out for social distancing purposes. Right, they're putting them in a hotel, they're doing whatever. It sounds like, they're not changing the inventory. They're just moving people around a little bit.

29:22 Meradith: And I think that's an important part of the document that Mary's referencing. If you're not changing your inventory, you're just relocating people to adhere to social distancing guidelines, you don't have to change anything. When we're talking about overflow beds or new projects or whatever this might be, we're talking about additional capacity. Not the re-arranging of beds so to speak, to better accommodate social distancing efforts. We're talking about new inventory, not existing inventory. So I just wanted to make sure we were clear on that point too.

29:57 Mary: And we've had the question come in too in that regard, like if we're reducing our... If we're moving people out of our shelter and into other beds that aren't in our inventory and we're not filling the beds that are now vacant with new bodies, you know, do I need to... Am I going to have bed utilization data quality issues later, that kind of thing.

30:29 Mary: This is local decisions, locally determined. We do try and put some guidance in that document to help you walk through situations. There are ways to temporarily reduce your bed inventory for some period of time according to the data standards, if you want to go that route and that seems feasible to you and... You know, and that's part of the hardness here with this crisis, is we don't know how long it's going to actually last. Right? So, it could be that you want to use that kind of reduction in your inventory and the ways you can do that in the existing standard to better account.

31:03 Mary: Or you're going to make a note on your HIC and your LSA, note like, when it's like, "Oh your bed utilization was only 50%." Well that was during the five months or six months of the coronavirus response and it's saying clearly like, all things are on the table, all possibilities are on the table. Take note of what you're doing now, be able to explain it in data quality later. Use the data standards as they exist to document what you want to at this point in time. And, you know, clean it up down... Or clean it up down the road and come back and make it work for you. It's just... It's hard and everybody's going to make different choices locally and a lot of this has to go through, like, local COC leadership and what your crisis response is going to be, and whether you even use HMIS for some of this or not.

31:55 Brian: Right, so we've got a couple more questions. In the past, we've been told to not have overflow beds and normal beds in the same project. Is reporting changing to allow for this to be a way to do it?

32:09 Mary: You can have them in the same project, you can't have them in the same inventory record. But the data standards allow you to create a separate inventory record within a single project to account for overflow beds in a different inventory. You shouldn't co-mingle over... You shouldn't co-mingle two different bed types. So the bed types are year-round beds, seasonal beds and

overflow beds. We're calling this period of time, any new beds that come online for this overflow beds, and you could put them in the same ES projects if that makes sense for you.

32:47 Brian: Alright. Another question; in our HMIS we have set up a non-congregate shelter project separately for hotel/motel vouchers, do we still include this project on the 2020 HIC?

33:04 Mary: It's a... It's an NCS project in California?

33:11 Brian: I don't know. It's an NCS project. That's in the question.

33:15 Meradith: What... Oh, I see the question now.

33:21 Mary: Oh, I don't... Take it Meredith.

33:29 Meradith: I mean I think...

33:32 Brian: Yeah it's from California.

33:32 Meradith: Is it the project... Right. So if it's a project designed to serve people experiencing homelessness, then it would go into your HIC, right? If it's a project... And I know, like with the NCS projects, that's kind of a unique animal in California because of the way those projects are operating in sort of coordination, I guess, with other ESG funded projects that are actually providing the services.

34:01 Meradith: Can we...

34:02 Mary: I mean we call the NCS... Continuing project, no. The NCS projects in California. So that's part of the project setup instructions, and that pretty much takes it out of the HIC.

34:17 Meradith: Yes, but those people may still be getting counted in the other project.

34:21 Mary: Oh totally. Yeah.

34:21 Meradith: I'm saying this is kind of a specific California question, that maybe we should take offline.

34:29 Mary: We can. Yeah.

34:39 Mary: Okay. Anything else Brian?

34:41 Meradith: Sorry, I just want to address... I feel like we need to maybe say this again. So if you go to the HUD exchange, and read the document that we've been talking about here, hopefully that will offer a little more clarification here, but I think it's important to think of these in different pieces. We're talking about what to do when shelter inventory is being temporarily moved, versus adding new inventory. And the current guidance from HUD, the overarching theme is "do whatever is best for your community". But, for the temporary move of inventory, it is not required to set up new projects, it is not required to make significant changes in your HMIS data collection.

35:36 Meradith: If you have a shelter facility that has 100 beds, and you've decided that 50 of those need to go somewhere else, whether that's a hotel or some other buildings or RVs, whatever that might be in your community, you don't have to set up a new project for them, you can continue to enroll those clients, or serve those clients that are staying in these other locations in the existing project in HMIS. The workflow stays the same, the data collection stays the same, there's no need to create more work in creating new projects and doing new workflows and doing new things. Unless, that's something your community wants to do and that's what makes sense to your community and it's feasible to you, do what you need to do, but it's not required to do that.

36:24 Meradith: HUD recognizes that might be a little different than what is in the data standards in its most strict terms, but that's okay for right now. There's grace, and there's flexibility happening right now, to make sure, that you're able to do what's best in your community. So, I just want to reiterate that again, I want to make sure that you do read that document, if you have more specific questions about how it impacts your community. Feel free to submit an AAQ, so we can address those community-specific issues. Okay.

37:00 Meradith: 100%.

37:02 Meradith: I just felt like I kept seeing that same theme pop up in the questions so I wanted to say it one more time.

[laughter]

37:08 Mary: It's hard. You guys it's hard, it makes us uncomfortable too, we're HMIS people, we're like the HMIS cheerleaders. Like, use HMIS and do it exactly right, like that's all we usually beat the drum on but it's... I love the terms, Meredith, grace and flexibility. That's what we need right now for each other and certainly in our data collection processes.

37:33 Meredith: So let's talk about waivers.

[laughter]

37:36 Meradith: All about flexibility.

37:42 Meredith: So hopefully you've seen the waivers that HUD has issued, the Mega-Waiver, my new favorite term. It reminds me of a SuperNOFA, for those of you that have been around for a while, when they used to say SuperNOFA. Nerds.

37:56 Meredith: So this waiver is available on the website. Here's the link. If you haven't gone to look at it, please, take some time to do that. There's nothing in the waiver that necessarily explicitly impact data collection or reporting. So there's nothing specifically called out in those ways, in these waivers but as we've been having different conversations, we know that different HMIS leads use HMIS differently. And so we just wanted to flag a few of these, as places where you might need to make sure that if you have some customizations built into your HMIS, for case management purposes, or tracking rental, financial assistance payments, anything like that, we can sort of flag those, for you here and talk through them. We also strongly encourage you to work with your CoC to determine if there's anything that is coming out in these mega waivers that would impact your projects. Just having that ongoing communication is going to be really important.

38:56 Meredith: So this is the waiver that Fran referenced earlier, when she was talking about HMIS lead activities. So in the ESG Program, I think, we probably all know this, that only the HMIS... I'm sorry, only where the ESG recipient is the HMIS lead, can they use ESG funds for certain management and operating HMIS costs. So, hosting and maintaining software, upgrading, customizing, enhancing the HMIS. Historically, those have been restricted to just the HMIS lead. However, with the mega waiver, that is being replaced. So, any recipient can use the ESG funds, to pay for these costs of upgrading or enhancing HMIS to incorporate the ESG Program... To incorporate the data for a program participant and ESG activities related to COVID-19.

39:51 Meredith: So, again, we want to flag that as, probably the most impactful for folks, that those funds are going to be able to be used by other people besides the HMIS lead. Also want to point out in the ESG Program, they're waiving the requirement for Homelessness Prevention participants to be re-evaluated for eligibility every three months. So they've waived that, and now for the next two years since the date of the memo, the re-evaluations must occur not less than every six months. So I know that some systems have, you know flags or indicators, or reports that run based on when those services are being recorded, and that those re-evaluations are occurring.

40:51 Meredith: So there may be a need to double-check your reports, double-check your automatic flags or reminders on client records, if that's something that's relevant for your system. Similarly really, you might have flags related to case management meetings. So for, again, the ESG Program recipients... Program participants in Prevention or Rapid Rehousing are supposed to have case management not less than once per month, unless certain statutory prohibitions apply, like VOA would be the one that I think of most easily who has a voluntary service model.

41:34 Meredith: But for the next two months, those monthly case management meetings are not required. So again, if you've got something flagging that case management is not happening every month, you can just note that, that doesn't have to be happening for the next two months. Also for the ESG Programs, the restriction of rental assistance units with rent at or below FMR that's been a requirement of the ESG Program. However that FMR restriction is being waived for Prevention and Rapid Rehousing, for anyone who executes a lease during the next six months. So again, we know that folks have payment processing or payment tracking systems where they're evaluating rent amounts and things like that. Just wanted to flag that this is one of the waivers that's included in the mega waiver.

42:34 Meredith: There's a similar one for the CoC program that fair market rent for individual units and leasing costs. Rent payments for those individual units with leasing dollars generally cannot exceed FMR. However, for the next six months that requirement is being waived. So again, that's for leasing dollars, for those rent payments for those individual units. I think that was the last one I wanted to highlight. So, I just also want to stress, if there are these sorts of customizations, we want to encourage you to work with your vendors. If you need to reach out to your CoCs, that communication is just going to be so critical right now to make sure as times are changing, and as we are evolving and rolling through this stimulus process that's coming out. Excuse me, that communication is going to be so important, so we just really encourage you to do that.

43:44 Mary: Thanks Meredith. Okay, we're to that super fun part of the call, where it's just us staring at your questions while they come in. I think, Fran, Brian, Meredith and I, you know, raise a

question up and let's work through these answers, and whatever we're not answering verbally we'll answer in writing, on the call.

44:29 Meradith: Can we raise Sarah's question here, make sure I'm not on mute, about the HIC and PIT guidance only. So it's to only include inventory that was funded on the night of the PIT, the disaster beds weren't funded on the night of the PIT. I just want to get clarification, if we have to include the disaster beds this year in the HIC or not. So I think that's a good point. If those beds weren't in operation at that point in time, then it is moot for the 2020 HIC and PIT.

45:01 Mary: Yep, and we point out in this slide that the LSA and the APRs have data points at times throughout the year, that inventories and bed counts kind of... It's how they get the utilization rates and stuff from the APRs and the LSAs. So I agree with that Sarah with the HIC, funded on the night of the HIC are the only things you would put on the HIC. On the night of the PIT, sorry.

45:49 Meradith?: Janelle, your question, does ESG-CV funding require a full project enrollment or minimal project enrollment? We're going to have more guidance about that coming out, hopefully very soon. Yes, [chuckle] that's all I can say, I think, about that at this point. But look for guidance.

46:24 Mary: Fran, anything that you want to bring up?

46:27 Meradith: I also want to plug... I'm sorry. Can I also plug for those folks that have questions about the waiver? I don't know that we want to get super deep into the details of the waivers right now. I know there's some questions about what happens after six months, what happens after two months. I believe there's a posting on the HUD exchange from the office hours call about waivers. I can double-check that, unless Fran you know for sure that that's true what I'm saying. I would direct you to those other resources around the mega waiver, because I think those questions have been answered over there by the expert on the waivers.

47:04 Mary: Yeah.

47:05 Meradith: Okay.

47:06 Fran: Yes.

47:06 Meradith: We can dig out that link and post it for you.

47:37 Brian: Mary, there is a specific request for your joke. I don't know if you have one prepared for everyone. [chuckle]

47:45 Mary: Of course I have a joke ready. I like to save it for the very last thing I say, because if I don't, I laugh and my face gets super red and then I get there... [chuckle] The more embarrassed I get, the redder I get, so I'm trying to be able to turn off my camera as soon as I say the punchline.

48:15 Mary: Oh, that's interesting, Jesse and Nahamashari knows their travel is suspended for the year, so Fran in terms of NHSDC conference in the fall, it's expected to be impacted at least for some of the folks. Some folks on the call might already know they're not going to be able to travel even come fall. I don't know if that's information you have already, Fran.

48:44 Fran: Yeah, I think that's part of the reason why the registration is delayed right now, is that they're waiting to see how things are going to shake out, but I anticipate there are a lot of state county governments that may have restrictions and it will still be in place. The federal government may still have travel restrictions in place, who knows? You just don't know what's going to happen at this point, but we, of course, we want to... We want to plan for the future, so we'll do that. But there I'm sure are some board members actually on this call, listening to us right now talking about this. So bear with us. Thank you for that question.

49:53 Mary: So I just want to, I know the inventory stuff is so hard you guys, and definitely if you're not... If it's still feeling really confusing, HMIS AAQ will be the best way to get your really, hopefully, clear answers, but somebody just asked, I think back while we were still talking heavily about the inventory stuff and the nuances there, that they wondered if hotel beds were supposed to be set up in a separate project in HMIS. So I'm going to answer this in two ways. Number one, in the normal world in which we live, if you're operating hotel-motel beds with an emergency shelter voucher, the instructions in the manual are those are a separate project, so you'd have two projects called emergency shelter, one would be dash facility and one would be dash hotel-motel rooms, because they're two different housing types, the instructions do tell you to put those in as two different projects because housing type is at the project level.

50:54 Mary: However, the second part of the answer is, during this COVID-19 response and trying to think about tracking beds in HMIS for this specific response, we are not suggesting that you need two separate projects if part of your response in your existing emergency facility setting is adding beds that look physically like hotel-motel rooms, but are in fact an extension of that emergency facility, right? And can be thought of as just adding to the existing facility. We are suggesting that you don't need to be as detailed in that data collection, that inventory tracking as two separate projects like you would normally need to be in normal times.

51:51 Mary: It just may be that we need a separate question from each of you on these inventory nuances that you're wanting, and we can process it through the AAQ better than on this call, but if you aren't already tracking hotel-motel vouchers separately in your emergency shelters, you definitely should do, that's a normal data standard thing.

52:21 Mary: Does anybody see anything else?

52:25 Meradith: Can we talk about the question that Jennifer submitted? Does this change in ESG HMIS funding availability only apply to current ESG sub-recipients of the grantee or can the grantee offer this assistance to other service providers? The language of the waiver, it says that this requirement is waived to the extent necessary to allow any recipient to use ESG funds to pay for the cost of operating, enhancing, so on and so forth. So there's nothing there specifically that says it has to be an existing and can't be a new sub-recipient. But Fran, I don't know if you know anything more, or if you think there should be an AAQ submitted to follow-up on that.

53:12 Fran: I think that if you have a specific scenario that you want more information on to be absolutely clear about how the money is getting spent, absolutely, submit an AAQ, but no, I think that's the perfect response to my question.

53:34 Fran: It's just allowing, it's just allowing for, this money is going to come down and it's going to end up with organizations that may not typically be the HMIS lead, but you're going to be using these systems in ways... The HMIS's will need to have changes made for them to help respond

to this crisis. So we want to make sure that funding can be available to allow for those changes to support whatever that is for your local community, whatever that needs to be. So that's kind of the reasoning behind that waiver.

54:29 Mary: Oh, Norman, so the city of Austin purchased hotels for homeless individuals to come in from the streets to be quarantined. However, this is all city-funded, and we're not using HUD funding for this. We created a custom assessment and used the 'Standard' entry for HMIS. Is this okay? Yep. Great. Do what works for you locally. Do what makes sense for you, if it's manageable, yep. That sounds great.

55:20 Mary: Khalia, so you're saying my answer is helpful because that means you have flexibility except you're in California. And FEMA is funding your state specifically and establishing criteria that is being communicated through the state folks and the HMIS vendors have the information they need to help with this project setup, and there's a weekly call or email instructing HMIS leads on how to do the data collection and tracking specifically for FEMA dollars in the state of California.

56:02 Mary: So the answers that we're providing are under the assumption that people aren't getting other specific funding sources and data collection instructions handed to them from that funding source. However, California isn't in that boat, California is getting specific data collection and tracking instructions from FEMA and State Housing folks for the FEMA response in California, so I'm glad you appreciate it. At least there's validation that my answer made sense and people got that it's flexible in most cases, but if you're being directed to something specific by a vendor you don't get that. Yeah, you have follow-up on those rules.

56:51 Meradith: HUD can only be flexible with their own rules unfortunately. [laughter] They can't waive other people's rules. We're working on that.

57:03 Mary: Next month.

57:06 Meradith: Right. There's your joke for the day.

57:21 Mary: So, Jennifer... So you say most of our ES shelters do not receive ESG. However, ESG has increased the tech and data collection costs at these locations that do not have HMIS infrastructure. Fran, correct if I'm wrong, but that's part of what the mega waiver says is that they understand that HMIS is increasing maybe in its complexity and applicability, and part of the Coronavirus response then in terms of money is to relax, waive some of the rules around ESG money being spent for HMIS leads to do what they need to do.

58:05 Fran: That's correct.

58:07 Mary: So that's the mega waiver, just to answer, Jennifer is to look in more closely to the mega waiver type HMIS lead so that you can figure out with your community how to get access to some of those resources to help with this increased technology load.

58:31 Mary: Okay, well, it's 2 o'clock eastern, 11 o'clock my time. I am going to close out. It looks like questions have slowed down. We have a few more so whatever we don't answer that is in here, we try and get back to you via email before the week is out. So we'll look at that. If you feel like

you didn't get something answered correctly or quickly enough or, in any case, you know, you want more information, please enter an HMIS AAQ and we will address it that way. Here it is: What was Peter Cottontail's nickname in the '70s?

59:09 Meradith: In what?

59:10 Mary: Peter polyester tail! In the '70s. [chuckle]

59:13 Meradith: Oh in the '70s.

59:16 Mary: Peter polyester tail. I'm all good. Gotta go. Talk to you guys later. Good luck with your hard work.

59:27 Fran: Thank you everyone. Thank you Mary. [chuckle]

59:30 Brian: Thank you.

59:34 Fran: Thanks. Bye everyone.

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