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Field Operations Memo 2006-12
February 13, 2006

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff
From:  Cescia Derderian, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations
Re: Substance Abuse: EA Shelters and Project RISE II

Background

DTA offers two shelter options for EA AUs who have a member with a current or past substance abuse problem: residential treatment programs and sober living programs. Both alternatives allow the applicant and his or her child(ren) to reside together during the program.

- Residential treatment programs offer intensive treatment services to a person with a substance abuse problem.
- Sober living programs offer a less intensive environment, appropriate for someone with a substance abuse history who is in a successful program of recovery.

In addition to shelter services, the EA AU member may also be eligible for referral to Project RISE II (Recovery through Information, Support and Engagement), a collaboration of the Institute of Health and Recovery (IHR) and DTA. IHR is an organization committed to developing family-centered, culturally competent models of prevention and treatment. Project RISE II strengthens and expands access to treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders for homeless families in DTA shelters in the Boston (Boston, Cambridge and Somerville), Worcester (Worcester, Framingham, Medway, Milford and Orange) and Holyoke (Holyoke, Amherst, Greenfield, Pittsfield and Springfield) areas. TAO Staff and Shelter Providers responsible for EA AUs in shelters in those areas should take full advantage of this resource when dealing with the client's current or previous substance abuse.

Purpose of Memo

This memo provides updated information to AU Managers, Homeless Coordinators, Intensive Case Managers (ICM) and Shelter Providers about substance abuse services available to EA AUs through:

- Residential treatment programs;
- Sober living programs; and
- Project RISE II.

Residential Treatment Programs

Residential treatment programs, also known as Family Substance Abuse Shelters, provide a safe, supportive and highly structured treatment environment for homeless families where a caretaking parent has a chronic substance abuse problem. They provide shelter, coordination and case management of substance abuse treatment and other services for homeless families to support and sustain sobriety.

The Residential Treatment Programs are:

- Angel House, in Hyannis;
- Entre Familia, in Mattapan;
- Genesis II, in Newton;
- Grace House, in Northampton;
- Griffin House, in Dorchester;
- HART House, in Tewksbury;
- Orchard Street Program, in Leominster; and
- Sage House, in Framingham.

An EA AU member with a substance abuse problem must be willing to seek treatment for the problem and enter into a residential treatment program, if accepted. It is DTA's position that the most appropriate and safe placement for substance abusing adults and their children is a shelter that specializes in substance abuse treatment.

**Residential
Treatment
Programs
(continued)**

An EA AU member who has a substance abuse problem and who:

- **Refuses to accept an available Family Substance Abuse Shelter placement; or**
- **Refuses treatment, resulting in the member being denied placement,**

Will be considered to have rejected available, feasible alternative housing, and their temporary emergency shelter benefits will be terminated.

Assessment of the EA AU member for the residential treatment programs is done by the DPH substance abuse intake coordinator. See the “Referrals” section later in this memo for more detail.

**Sober Living
Programs**

Sober living programs are for those EA AU members who are or have been in recovery and have been sober for at least 4-6 months. Sober living programs help EA AU members in recovery achieve self-sufficiency. This goal is achieved through case management services within an alcohol and drug-free environment. Sober living programs encourage EA AU residents to provide each other with a culture of recovery, support, sharing and positive role modeling. Recovery is reinforced by establishing community-based supports to maintain ongoing goals in the recovery process. Residents are expected to be involved in the external community through activities such as work, education, and housing search.

The Sober Living Programs are:

- Portis Family House, in Jamaica Plain;
- Inn Transition, in Peabody; and
- Taking Care of Business, in Gloucester.

An EA AU member may be referred to a sober living program during the initial application process, as a transfer from another EA shelter, or as a transition from a residential treatment program because permanent housing has not yet been found and the EA AU member needs more structure than what would be offered in a shelter.

Sober Living Programs (continued)

An EA AU member referred to a sober living program must be in recovery. A successful candidate for a sober living program must meet two criteria:

- The EA AU member must have been sober for at least 4-6 months. This may be demonstrated by a history of negative urine screens, validation from a substance abuse treatment program, counselor, therapist or case manager who has been working with the EA AU member on their recovery; and
- The EA AU member must be actively doing something to maintain the recovery, such as attending regular AA, NA or therapy sessions.

Assessment of the EA AU member for the sober living programs is done by the DPH substance abuse intake coordinator. See the “Referrals” section later in this memo for more detail.

Project RISE II When an EA AU applicant or recipient appears to be at-risk of relapsing back into substance abuse, and the EA AU is in a shelter located in the Boston, Worcester and Holyoke areas, the TAO Staff or Shelter Provider should consider a referral to Project RISE II.

Project RISE II provides voluntary case management services to interested families who have substance use issues but do not require a residential level of care or are not yet ready to enter a sober living program. Each year services will be provided to approximately 300 families, while they are sheltered and up to three months past their shelter stay.

Project RISE II utilizes professionally trained master’s level clinicians and master and bachelor level Outreach and Engagement Workers (OEW). There are ten culturally and linguistically diverse OEWs, each of whom is the main contact for about five shelters in the Boston, Worcester, and Holyoke areas. Participation in Project RISE II is voluntary. The OEW will provide outreach to families while screening for substance use and co-occurring disorders, which may also include trauma and interpersonal violence issues. The OEW will engage families to understand the role of substance use, co-occurring disorders and trauma/violence histories in undermining work stability and family preservation.

In addition to case management, the OEW will provide technical assistance and consultation to local shelter staff and DTA workers on substance abuse and trauma/violence issues.

Assessment of the EA AU member for Project RISE II is done by the DPH substance abuse intake coordinator. See the “Referrals” section later in this memo for more detail.

Referrals

The DPH Substance Abuse Intake Coordinator must be contacted for referrals to the sober living programs, the residential treatment programs, and Project RISE II. The telephone number is 617-661-3991.

TAO Staff and Shelter Providers are encouraged to refer an EA AU member with substance abuse issues to the DPH Substance Abuse Intake Coordinator so the EA AU member can receive the help they need in a timely manner. TAO staff and Shelter Providers may refer any AU located in the Boston, Worcester, and Holyoke areas to Project RISE II if they anticipate that the AU may benefit from OEW services.

A record of the referral should be noted on the Narratives tab in BEACON.

The DPH Substance Abuse Intake Coordinator determines which substance abuse service is available and appropriate for the family's needs.

**BEACON
Information**

A complete listing of the DTA residential treatment programs and the sober living programs is included in the Resource files in BEACON. When the AU member is entering either type of program, the AU Manager, Homeless Coordinator or ICM must update the shelter placement information. To update the information:

- Go to the Residential Facility window;
- Click on the Facility Name to enable the Resource Search window;
- Click on the drop-down box in General Service and select Substance Abuse Shelter;
- Click the Find button, and the list of the appropriate shelters will appear;
- Click on the name of the residential treatment facility or sober living facility where the AU has been placed;
- Click the Select button;
- Make sure the information on the Address window is accurate and shows "homeless";
- Go to the Verifications Tab to verify the address change; and
- Go to the Interview Wrap-up workflow, click Selection, check off the appropriate selections, run EBC Results, and authorize to pending release.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.
