Public Will Committee 2016-2017 Policy Advocacy Agenda

- Medicaid Issues
  - Establish a KICH Medicaid & Supportive Housing Committee to build and expand on the work of the Department of Medicaid Services’ Kentucky Medicaid Innovator Accelerator Program (IAP) Medicaid Housing-Related Services and Partnerships (HRSP) Technical Assistance Grant team.
    - The HRSP goal is to bring to scale supportive housing by coordinating housing resources with Medicaid-covered housing-related services eligible under the CMCS Informational Bulletin Coverage of Housing-Related Activities and Services for Individuals with Disabilities.
    - Under the HRSP grant, Kentucky has chosen to focus planning under this grant on “persons with serious mental illness and/or co-occurring substance use disorder with an emphasis on Medicaid high-utilizers of the health system.”
  - Ask KHC to provide HMIS licenses to Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) so that data can be shared between sectors.
    - Will enable identification high health care utilizers served by homeless service providers and help measure impact of permanent supportive housing on health care costs/use.
    - This data sharing is essential to successfully pairing Medicaid-eligible tenancy supports with supportive housing for the HRSP target population.
  - Partner with Kentucky Youth Advocates to ensure that youth aging out of foster care are enrolled in Medicaid and maintain their eligibility through age 26.
  - Support extension of CHIP funding.

- Funding to support expansion of the Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)
  - The Homelessness Prevention Pilot Project has demonstrated efficacy in Louisville and Adanta service areas for over 10 years by offering institutional discharge planning on a voluntary basis to persons exiting state operated prisons, mental health facilities, and foster care.
  - 2016 Legislative Session SB 225 amended KRS 194A.735 to allow expansion of HPP beyond the pilot program sites, but did not allocate funding needed for expansion.
  - Service providers are ready to expand the program if funding permits.
    - Lexington- Office on Homelessness Prevention & Intervention and its partner agencies, BBluegrass.org
    - Bowling Green- LifeSkills, Inc.
    - Northern Kentucky- NorthKey
    - Hazard- Hazard- Perry County Community Ministries
    - Approximately $50,000 is needed per expansion area

- Increase the availability of shelter beds and permanent supportive units for those experiencing homelessness throughout the Commonwealth, including exploring further incentives for developers to include supportive housing units in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments.
  - There is a great need for shelter beds and permanent housing options available to women with children, especially in smaller cities and rural areas.

- Monitor implementation of “benefind,” a single point of access for to ensure it provides fair and easy access to state-funded social services benefits ices to low-income Kentuckians, especially those experiencing homelessness.
• Support the Balance of State Continuum of Care in its implementation of its Coordinated Entry system to ensure:
  o coordination program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals for housing in a fair manner to ensure that individuals and families experiencing homelessness who need housing the most are prioritized for available supportive housing units;
  o program accountability to individuals and families experiencing homelessness; specifically those who are experiencing chronic homelessness or are high-need/high-acuity;
  o program compliance with current HUD rules and regulations;
  o system access, prioritization, and housing placement uniformity; and
  o adequate program staff competence and training to create an environment, locally and CoC-wide, of coordination, uniformity, and speed in housing placement.

• Encourage the Department for Workforce Investment/Office for Vocational Rehabilitation to expand supportive employment services programs targeted to persons who are homeless and/or formerly homeless residing in permanent supportive housing.
  o Programs launched in 2016 with Family & Children’s Place and Wellspring in Louisville.

• Support the Lease Termination for Victims of Assault, Domestic Violence and Stalking Act (filed as HB 41 for the 2016 Legislative Session).
  o The bill would enable victims to terminate a lease upon 30 days’ written notice to the landlord if the victim has any kind of order of protection — an Emergency Protective Order (EPO), Domestic Violence Order, a pre-trial release no-contact order, or a stalking restraining order.

• Support “Tim’s Law” (filed as HB 94 in the 2016 Legislative Session) to allow a court to order person with a severe and persistent mental illness (SMI) to undergo Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) while living in the community instead of a residential treatment facility.
  o Under the law, AOT can be ordered if the person with SMI will, if untreated: 1) present a threat of danger to herself or others; 2) cause severe mental, emotional, or physical harm; 3) have significantly impaired judgment, reasoning, functioning, or capacity to recognize reality; AND 4) have a substantially diminished ability to make informed decisions regarding his or her need for sustained medical treatment. AOT must be the least restrictive method of treatment available.
  o If the person with SMI meets all four of those criteria, he or she must also be unlikely to adhere to outpatient treatment on a voluntary basis based on a qualified mental health professional's (QMHP) 1) clinical observation; 2) review of treatment history, AND 3) suffer from anosognosia (a lack of insight into one's own illness).

• Support legislation to allow persons experiencing homelessness to obtain driver’s licenses, possibly as part of a “REAL ID” law. Homeless service providers have indicated that clients have been unable to use shelter addresses to obtain driver’s licenses because they are flagged as “non-residential addresses” and because Kentucky law does not permit a person without a “principal residence” to obtain a driver’s license. Lack of access to a driver’s license can prove a huge barrier to transportation and employment, especially for those in areas where public transit is not available. Many persons using shelters and/or who live on the streets are employed and need driver’s licenses for work and access services.
  o Legislation to allow persons experiencing homelessness to obtain driver’s licenses should mirror the “Homeless ID” law found at KRS 186.412 (7)(a) which says that the a “if a person does not have a fixed, permanent address, the person may use as proof of residency a signed letter from a homeless shelter, health care facility, or social service agency currently providing the person treatment or services and attesting that the person is a resident of Kentucky.”
• Increase Housing Choice by Prohibiting Source of Income Discrimination.  

30,011 Kentucky households used Housing Choice Vouchers (a.k.a. Section 8) to rent affordable housing in December 2015, but that only represented 84.3% of the vouchers available.¹ Refusal of landlords to rent to households using Housing Choice Vouchers (a.k.a. Section 8) and other forms of tenant-based rental assistance severely limits housing choice for those households and can lead to concentrations of assisted households in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Unfortunately, this “Source of Income” discrimination is common in Kentucky. “Source of Income” discrimination is when a landlord refuses to rent to a household based on the type (the source) of income it will use to pay the rent. Examples of sources of income discriminated against include Housing Choice Vouchers, SSI (Supplemental Security Income received by people with disabilities), Social Security, veterans benefits, alimony or child support payments from a missing spouse, and KTAP. Expanding Kentucky’s fair housing protections to include prohibitions on Source of Income discrimination will greatly increase housing choice for voucher holders and voucher utilization. Twelve states and the District of Columbia, as well as many municipalities, have passed Source of Income protections. (See a summary of State, Local, and Federal Laws barring Source of Income discrimination in the US at http://www.prrac.org/pdf/AppendixB.pdf.)

¹ Center for Budget & Policy Priorities National and State Housing Fact Sheets & Data http://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/national-and-state-housing-fact-sheets-data