



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF HOMELESS, HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES

John A. Stephen  
Commissioner

105 PLEASANT STREET, CONCORD, NH 03301  
603-271-5059 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 5059  
Fax: 603-271-5139 TDD Access: 1-800-735-2964

Patrick C. Herlihy  
Director

October 19, 2006

Michael Cryans, Executive Director  
Headrest, Inc.  
PO Box 247  
Lebanon, NH 03766

RE: August 8<sup>th</sup> Site Visit

Dear Mr. Cryans:

Enclosed is a copy of the site visit report for John Morris' visit to your agency on August 8<sup>th</sup>. I apologize for the delay in getting this document to you. I appreciate you and your staff taking the time to meet with John. It gave him a better understanding of what your agency deals with on a daily basis. The dedication and commitment of your staff in dealing effectively and compassionately with one of our state's most needy populations is evident in this report.

Please review the findings, and if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call John Morris at 271-5099.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

  
Patrick C. Herlihy, Director  
Office of Homeless, Housing and  
Transportation Services

ph:mry

Enclosures

**Site Review Report  
For  
Headrest, Inc.  
Specialty Shelter Program**

**Overview**

The Office of Homeless, Housing and Transportation Services (OHHTS) conducted a Specialty Shelter Site Review at Headrest, Inc. on August 8, 2006. John Morris, Program Specialist from the OHHTS, conducted the review, which consisted of an interview with the Executive Director, Financial Manager, examination of financial records, a tour of the physical plant, and assessment of Headrest's policies and procedures. Shelter guests had the opportunity to meet confidentially with the reviewer either on site or by phone, but no guests chose to do so. This process examined the following programmatic elements: eligibility of cost reimbursed, documentation of homelessness of individuals served, participation of homeless person(s) in policy-making and operations, confidentiality policies, and building and habitability standards.

The Team reviewed the Provider Data Response Packet and interviewed the Executive Director and Residential Manager. It should be noted that this review concentrated on the shelter/residential aspects of this program and was not intended to be a clinical review.

**Shelter Description**

Located in Lebanon, New Hampshire, Headrest, Inc. provides specialized services to single adults 17 or older with substance abuse and mental health issues. From its Church Street setting Headrest imparts residential substance abuse treatment for up to eight individuals, group and individual counseling for both residents and the community at large, and outreach assistance to the Claremont Emergency Shelter and the local house of correction. Headrest provides residents with adequate bedding, food staples, first aid, and all items necessary for basic hygiene. Headrest is a member of the local continuum of care and operates its own help line which incorporates substance abuse information and referral and suicide prevention.

**Admission Policy**

The shelter operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has the capability to admit those in need of their services any time day or night. There are no times during the day or night when residents are asked to leave the shelter. There is no charge to residents of Headrest for shelter or services.

Headrest has a waiting list for admission and has had to deny individual admissions due to capacity reasons. Individuals denied admission for capacity reasons are allowed to

stay at the shelter until alternative arrangements are found. Headrest arranges for a Salvation Army Taxi Voucher if transportation to alternative shelter is required. The only individuals that are denied admission are those who are in need of medical detoxification. Denial or termination of services is documented within 72 hours.

### **Health and Safety**

- ✓ Headrest is wheelchair accessible throughout the shelter. The shelter has received no request for services from persons with physical or cognitive disability during the past year.
- ✓ Evacuation plans are posted in public areas and reviewed with shelter guests during intake.
- ✓ Currently no fire drills are conducted.
- ✓ The building has not been tested for lead paint hazards.
- ✓ Should a resident exhibit violent behavior the program has a plan to cope with the behavior in a safe and appropriate manner.
- ✓ In order to insure cleanliness and sanitation, linens and bedding are cleaned through a laundry service and each guest is assigned a weekly chore.
- ✓ Guests do not receive health screenings at admission but are sent for a physical and T.B. test once admitted.

### **Guests' Rights**

Among the rights Headrest, Inc. insures their guests are the following:

- "Be treated by emergency shelter staff with dignity and respect;
- Courtesies such as knocking on closed doors before entering;
- Freedom from religion and religious preface, including the right to be free from engaging in any religious activity or practice;
- Is not discriminated against in any manner because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, or physical or mental disability;
- Send and receive unopened and uncensored correspondence;
- Reasonable access to a phone with such privacy as the shelter arrangements allow, including the ability to make free local calls to support their job search, make medical appointments, search for permanent housing and similar "business" reasons; and
- Be free from unconstitutional and illegal searches of their persons and possessions."

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Headrest requires guests to sign a release of information form that states what third party is eligible to receive a guest's personal information. The form also notes that a court order may override the release form.

## **House Rules**

The shelter has established house rules in order to create a positive environment. The Residential Staff Team reviews the rules and revises them as necessary. The rules are re-visited at weekly house meetings at which time residents have the opportunity for input.

## **Grievances**

Headrest has established a grievance procedure for shelter guests. The procedure differentiates between formal and informal complaints, establishes an investigation process for allegations that shelter staff or volunteers have violated a guest's rights, and allows for a third party to assist the guest in filing a grievance. Grievance decisions are given in writing to the guest. Over the past twelve-month period there have been no formal grievances filed. Informal complaints by residents include: not enough room in the building, the need for more staff, and restrictions on certain grocery items.

The Office of Homeless, Housing and Transportation Services approved the grievance procedure before it was implemented.

## **Relations With Community Mental Health Center**

Headrest, Inc. typically has six of their eight guests receiving services from the local community mental health system at any given point in time. Headrest expects their guests to receive proper evaluations, counseling, and medication based upon the findings of their community mental health worker. Headrest has not requested on-site services; however, guests have been seen at the shelter for ongoing treatment needs on occasion. Headrest has not needed to use the mental health systems 24-hour emergency services in the last 12 months.

Overall, the shelter rates their relationship with the mental health center as "could be better." There is an identified liaison or contact person at the mental health center for the shelter. In addition, Headrest staff have not requested or participated in any trainings offered at by the community mental health system.

## **Other Community Resources**

Tri-County Community Action, WISE, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Listen were among the community resources identified by Headrest as important in assisting

them in their mission. Headrest communicated that they enjoy a positive relationship with their neighbors, the community at large, as well as the local police and fire department. These relationships were also identified as critical in assisting the agency in their mission.

### **Physical Plant**

Located on a residential side street close to the fire department, Headrest's three-leveled building presents as a well-maintained, appealing home. The bottom floor houses the residential office and a large room for groups and meeting. The second level contains the hotline office, kitchen facilities, and bedrooms. All bathroom facilities appeared clean and sanitary and were well stocked with all the necessities for good hygiene. Sporting new cabinets and appliances, the kitchen was neat and clean and contained all the pots, pans, and utensils needed to cook and serve meals. Overall the living spaces--both public and private--were clean and amenable, and made the most efficient use of available space.

### **Guest Interviews**

Though the notice announcing the arrival of the state evaluation team was clearly posted in multiple public areas, no resident requested to talk with the Site Review Team.

### **Executive Director Interview**

Michael Cryans, Executive Director, presented as a capable manager possessing a passionate commitment to accomplish the mission of this agency. Mike explained his role as concentrating on fund raising, community relations, and overall organization management while the rest of the management team concentrates on the business, residential, and clinical aspects of the agency.

Mr. Cryans was well versed in all aspects of the agency's operations and procedures and demonstrated good lines of communication with his staff. He reported that he and his staff work as a team, each with their own expertise, which results in a systems approach in programming to maximize the services to those in their care. He included the community at large, public and service organizations and businesses that support their agency's efforts as members of their overall team.

### **Conclusion**

Under the direction of Mr. Cyrans and his team, the Headrest, Inc. substance abuse program has constructed a firm stable organizational foundation on which is built a clinically sound approach to treatment with a first-rate residential component. The community support element of the organizational foundation is evidenced by the community members who are willing to serve on the agency's Board of Directors, and

the response to fundraising efforts by businesses and individuals. The dynamic exhibited between Mike and his staff was indicative of a sound professional working relationship and reflective of Mr. Cyrans synergistic role as Executive Director. Interactions observed between staff members and between staff and residents verified mutual respect linking all members of the organizational community as one unit.

Clinical Director Catherine Iacuzzi's service delivery system is well documented in the Headrest, Inc. Clinical Manual. Included in Ms. Iacuzzi's comprehensive program document are topics such as Physiological Stabilization, Admissions, and Diagnostic and Assessment Procedures. Catherine presented as a proficient skilled professional with a genuine sense of caring and compassion for individuals served by the Headrest program. She communicated a strong commitment to the field of substance abuse, the organization, as well as insuring the best possible service to those in the Headrest program.

Residential Manager Al Carbonneau aptly administers the well-organized residential aspect of the agency. The cleanliness of the residents was reflected in the chore chart, foodstuffs were properly stored, and medications for those in the program were under lock and key with specific procedures to be followed as to how and who had access to them. Steven Iacuzzi, Business Manager, verified appropriate accounting procedures, including a double step-down method for the allocation of costs to appropriate funding streams. Steven also manages the personnel policies for Headrest, Inc. Both gentlemen conveyed the committed, compassionate, and professional demeanor of the other members of the management team.

Headrest, Inc. has developed a well functioning program using a base of committed, compassionate, professional staff that understand and value the need for systems thinking in order to best serve those in need of their services. As demonstration of the success of their efforts, Headrest now provides assistance beyond their doors offering substance abuse counseling at the local county house of correction and the Claremont emergency shelter. In a helping discipline that is in high demand with too few practitioners, Headrest, Inc. provides valuable services too all it has the resources to help. The State of New Hampshire commends Headrest, Inc. for their service to some of our state's most vulnerable citizens.