

Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Agency of Human Services, Department of Health, Division of Mental Health
108 Cherry Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

TO: Vermont Mental Health Performance Indicator Project
Advisory Group and Interested Parties

FROM: John Pandiani, Barbara Carroll, and Brian Smith

DATE: May 11, 2007

RE: Two Measures of Homelessness

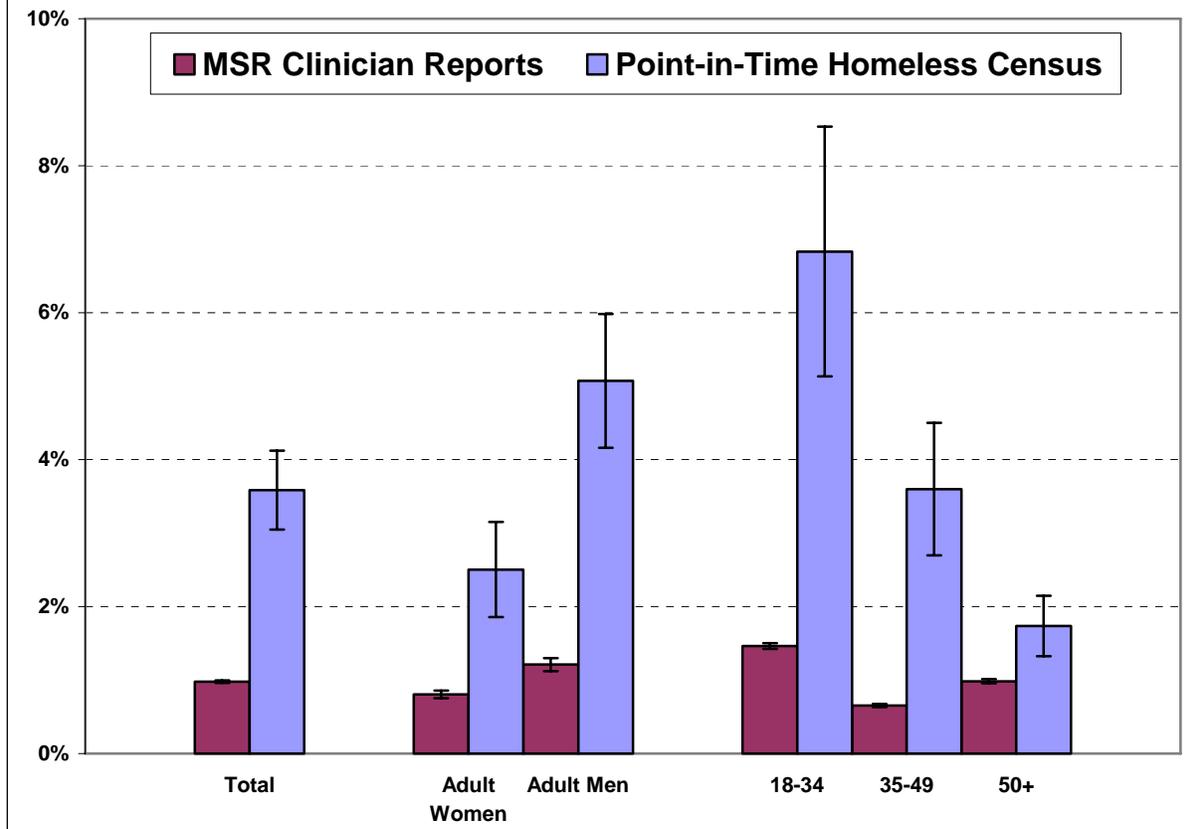
Two sets of federal reporting requirements for state mental health agencies, the CMHS Uniform Reporting System (URS) and the SAMHSA National outcome Measures (NOMs), require states to report on rates of homelessness for community mental health service recipients. In the past, DMH has used data from monthly MSR data reports submitted by designated community agencies. Earlier this year, the Vermont Homeless Coalition completed a point-in-time census of homelessness in Vermont that provides a second source of information used in this analysis. This week's brief performance indicator report compares the homeless rates that are based on the MSR data to homeless rates that are based on the homeless census.

The two data sources rely on very different data collection procedures. The MSR data is based on a clinician report that should be updated annually. Homelessness is indicated by a positive response to "on the street or in a shelter for the homeless" on a list of 16 types of residence as reported for January 2007. The MSR does not include the date on which "residential arrangement" was measured. The homeless census was conducted on January 25, 2007 by staff of Vermont programs that serve homeless families and individuals. This census collected basic demographic information as well as information on homeless services received and homeless service needs for individuals who lack a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and individuals whose primary residence is a shelter that provides temporary or transitional accommodations. Because the homeless census and MSR databases do not share unique person identifiers, Probabilistic Population Estimation was used to determine the number of people identified by the homeless census who were also on the caseload of CMHC Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) programs for adults with serious mental illness or Adult Outpatient Programs (AOP) for adults with less serious emotional or behavioral problems that warrant professional attention.

As you will see, the homeless census included substantially more CMHC clients than were identified as homeless in the MSR database. Overall, the point-in-time census identified 3.6% of all AOP and CRT clients as being homeless, compared to the MSR which identified only 1% as homeless. The difference between the two data sources was greatest for the 18-34 age group, with 6.8% identified by the point-in-time census and only 0.7% identified in the MSR database.

We look forward to your regarding the relative value of the two different measures of homelessness and your suggestions for future analyses regarding homelessness among mental health and substance abuse service recipients in Vermont. Please send your interpretations of these findings and your suggestions for further analysis of these data to pip@vdh.state.vt.us or 802.863.7249.

Two Measures of Homelessness Among Adult CMHC Service Recipients



	January 2007 Adult CMHC Service Recipients	Homeless			
		MSR Clinician Reports		Point-in-Time Homeless Census	
Total	4,722 ± 35	46 ± 1	1.0% ± 0.02%	169 ± 25	3.6% ± 0.5%
Adult Women	2,733 ± 17	22 ± 1	0.8% ± 0.05%	68 ± 18	2.5% ± 0.6%
Adult Men	1,989 ± 17	24 ± 2	1.2% ± 0.09%	101 ± 18	5.1% ± 0.9%
18-34	1,096 ± 15	16 ± 0	1.5% ± 0.04%	75 ± 19	6.8% ± 1.7%
35-49	1,689 ± 24	11 ± 0	0.7% ± 0.02%	61 ± 15	3.6% ± 0.9%
50+	1,937 ± 21	19 ± 0	1.0% ± 0.03%	34 ± 8	1.7% ± 0.4%

Analysis is based on extracts from the January 2007 Monthly Service Reports (MSR) submitted to DMH by designated community agencies and data collected as part of the Vermont point-in-time homeless census conducted on January 25, 2007 by the Vermont State Housing Authority, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, and the Chittenden Homeless Alliance. The extract from the MSR database includes basic information about adults served by the Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) or the Adult Outpatient (AOP) mental health programs. The extract from the homeless data includes basic information about adults who were homeless in the state of Vermont on January 25, 2007. Because data sets used in this analysis do not share unique person identifiers, Probabilistic Population Estimation (PPE) was used to determine caseload size and overlap (with 95% confidence intervals). Because PPE relies on date of birth and gender, records that do not include these data (12% of all records) were excluded from the analyses.