



Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: June 4, 2024
RE: **May 2024 Staff SOC Report**

Client Complaints

There were 13 formal complaints were submitted through the SMC in May 2024.

****Note: SMC receives Standard of Care complaints each month that do not end up being submitted in writing, either because they were resolved informally or the client did not provide basic necessary details. Narratives provide an overview of the types of complaints forwarded to each site. Not all sites have had a chance to respond to the complaints. Complaints may have already been investigated to the satisfaction of the site or its contracting agency; however, the Committee must allow each complainant to review the responses and the complainant determines whether s/he is satisfied. If the complainant is not satisfied, the Committee will investigate the allegations listed in the complaint.*

Hamilton Emergency Shelter

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 4/30/24 Sent to shelter: 5/6/2024 SMC received response: 5/13/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The clients say insults and threats by a violent guest were not properly addressed by the shelter.
- *The shelter expressed a great deal of empathy, but states staff did not witness the threats. Once violence took place (outside the shelter), the aggressor was exited.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainants claim the client in Allegation 1 also threatened their children while violating the rules and photographing the children, even in the presence of shelter staff.
- *Shelter staff did not witness the alleged behavior. There are no cameras in the living space.*

Hamilton Emergency Shelter

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 4/26/24 Sent to shelter: 5/10/2024 SMC received response: 4/9/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #8 (ADA)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainants reported that another guest in the room engages audibly in sex or masturbation. This is sometimes even threatening, i.e., when he does so while looking at them while doing so. When he learned they had reported this, he retaliated by damaging or soiling—even urinating on—their property, including the clothing of their children. Also, their documented need for an accommodation for a private bathroom has not been met.
- *The shelter states the alleged behavior has not been witnessed by staff. The shelter does not have any rooms with private restrooms.*

Cova Hotel

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 4/25/24 Sent to shelter: 5/16/2024 SMC received response: 5/23/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #8 (ADA)
- SPC #15 (...pest-free storage...)

Allegation #1 (SOC 1):

- The client says he was DOS'd for flooding his room, which he asserts he did not in fact do.
- *The shelter says that their operations team determined that a leak originated in the client's room, and issued an immediate denial of service. [No further explanation was given, but SMC staff assume the shelter saw this as intentional, or that other violations played into the decision, insofar as an immediate DOS requires that the rule violation be serious. The client allegedly missed his hearing; therefore, the matter was left unadjudicated.]*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 2, 15):

- The complainant alleges that the shelter did not respond to his complaints about problems with the facility, including pest infestation.
- *The shelter asserts that they did have an extensive rodent infestation—which required several weeks to address—but that the client declined an offer to transfer to another site, as other guests did. He was moved to another room, where he caused plumbing issues and improperly stored food (exacerbating the pest problem).*

Allegation #3 (SOCs 1, 2, 8):

- The client alleges he was retaliated against for winning an earlier DOS appeal. He says that at that time he had been accused of causing (pre-existing) problems in a room he had just moved to. He suffered greatly during the appeals process. Other guests were tricked into leaving.
- *Shelter management states they have gone to great lengths to ensure fair treatment for this client, but that he “managed to cause floods in every room he was assigned.” [They did not address the other elements of this allegation, but since they are alleged to have occurred more than 90 days ago, they do not fall within the ambit of the SMC.]*

Ansonia Hotel

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/2/24 Sent to shelter: 5/7/2024 SMC received response: 5/13/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #8 (Provide...information on shelter rules and how to access case management services...)
- SOC #9 (Food handling.)
- SOC #20 (Provide all printed materials produced by the City...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant reports that staffing is inadequate. Often there is only one monitor covering three floors of the building. Staff are often under the influence of substances while on duty and some deal drugs and have sex with clients.
- *The shelter states they have increased staff. Even on breaks, there is at least one for every two floors. Staff misconduct is not tolerated. The concerns expressed by the complainant were addressed with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 1):

- Shelter staff blatantly cherry pick valuable donations (e.g., antiperspirant, detergent, etc.) intended for the benefit of shelter residents. They do this routinely, with no effort to hide the misappropriation.
- *Shelter staff hand out hygiene items on request. Donations are screened for dangerous items and the shelter has a system in place to ensure fair distribution, as well as to dissuade those who grab all they can in order to resell or trade it.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1):

- The complainant alleges staff have become increasingly blatant in their disrespect for clients. They constantly use profanity. They invent/change rules to suit their whims, i.e., to manipulate and control residents.
- *Any rule changes have to go through HSH. Rules are provided to guests and are posted and readily available for review.*

Allegation #4 (SOC 8):

- The Case managers at this site do not act proactively. The client states he has had virtually no help from his assigned case manager.
- *Since the complaint was made anonymously, it is not possible to confirm whether the client's Care Coordinator has fulfilled their responsibilities. Some residents miss appointments or even refuse to speak with their assigned Care Coordinator, then blame the Coordinator. They are working to improve accountability for both Care Coordinators and residents alike.*

Allegation #5 (SOC 9):

- The Food is not always properly heated. Furthermore, it is sometimes allowed to sit for hours after it has been heated. Fish is commonly spoiled. The client has become ill after eating food at this site.
- *The shelter RD reviewed SOC Proper Food Handling training and initiated technical support to the site. They will continue to provide professional support needed to ensure proper food handling of all meals. All food trays from Meals-On- Wheels containing fish were discontinued in August 2022. Food removed from the refrigerator has to be heated to a specified temperature before being consumed. It is placed in a warmer to maintain a consistent and healthy temperature. There have been no reports of food poisoning or other food-related illnesses from staff at the onsite DPH clinic.*

Allegation #6 (SOC 20):

- The client reports SMC flyers are posted in an area that is not readily accessible to clients. There is no locked complaint box—clients must hand any complaints in, which makes them vulnerable to retaliation.
- *According to the shelter, information regarding the SMC is clearly posted in all gathering places—the lobby, the dining area, and on each floor. There has been a locked complaint/suggestion box (near the front desk) since July 2022.*

MSC-South

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 4/25/24 Sent to shelter: 5/7/2024 SMC received response: 4/9/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #31 (Training)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant alleged that a supervisor touched them in a way that caused them to feel uncomfortable. Client asserts that reports were made to management, but no action was taken. It was “pushed under the rug.” Female staffers have also experienced the unwelcomed touching but are afraid to say anything out of fear of retribution.
- *The shelter responded that they “always treat everyone equally with dignity and with respect,” that “safety is always a the top of their list,” and they “undergo extensive trainings.” The supervisor had no idea why anyone would make such an accusation. They “strive to give [their] guests the best service and treatment [they] possibly can, and will continue to do so though [they] hardly get the credit [they] deserve.”*

MSC-South

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 5/22/24 Sent to shelter: 5/23/24 SMC received response:

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #9 (Engage a nutritionist, who shall develop all meal plans...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant reports he was sickened by the food he received at the shelter and cannot trust the meals they provide. Based on his food industry experience, the kitchen is not thoroughly cleaned. Other guests told him they were not surprised to hear he got sick because they themselves think they have become sick.
- *The RD met with the site's kitchen supervisor to review the complaint, food service operations, and cleaning procedures with supporting documents. She did an onsite observation. The site described and provided documentation of proper sanitation and food safety practices. They had not received complaints of other guests becoming ill from meals. The RD reviewed the site's food safety training record.*

Central Waterfront Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/15/24 Sent to shelter: 5/21/2024 SMC received response: 5/21/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC # 3 (Provide soap...)
- SOC #10 (Make dietary modifications ... based...on health or disability reasons.)
- SOC #12 (Provide shelter clients with one clean blanket; two clean sheets...)
- SOC #13 (Make the shelter facility available ... for sleeping at least 8 hours per night)
- SOC #17 (post...status of the repairs)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 3, 13, 17):

- The complainant reported that the shelter's regular maintenance efforts, especially vis-à-vis doors, are inadequate. Slamming doors frequently wake people at night.
- *The shelter reported that the dining room door "is off because HSHS is going to replace it." The door kept locking from the outside. No one could get in. The bathroom doors stay open all day and night for safety purposes. It is "a high drug use area" and people smoke in the restroom.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 3, 12):

- The client struggles to get hygiene material. Other guests are given the go-ahead to shower when it's his turn. The complainant reports the shelter doesn't provide new intakes with proper bedding.
- *Case Managers provide supplies for guests to shower. All staff are able to retrieve these items if asked. They are trying to find sturdy soap dispensers because the last were broken within a week. They put soap bars out, but they quickly disappear. All clients are given a fitted sheet and a regular sheet with at least one blanket upon intake.*

Allegation #3 (SOCs 1, 10):

- The client reports that those with vegetarian accommodations are only inconsistently served. The shelter run out of vegetarian choices and "harass" the complainant about his accommodations. They ignore other people's accommodations, too.
- *The shelter admits that Meals on Wheels does not deliver enough to avoid there running out of some meals every week. They try to fill the gap with donations.*

Allegation #4

- The client also says the shelter appears to be at “50% capacity even though there are people on the street who would like to be admitted.” [HSH reports that the shelter is over 90% full.]
- *The facility may look a little empty because clients are in the hospital or their bed is for some other reason on hold. Belongings are stored so the beds may appear to be available.*

Central Waterfront Navigation Center

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 5/29/24 Sent to shelter: 5/30/2024 SMC received response: 6/2/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #15 (Provide shelter clients with pest-free, secure property storage...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 15):

- The client says her property was lost when she was (unfairly) DOS'd. When she asked to retrieve it shortly afterwards, staff told her they did not have it. It has to this date not been returned.
- *The shelter reports she did get her property. A subsequent search turned up no remaining items.*

Baldwin Hotel

Client 1

Submitted to the SMC: 5/8/24 To the shelter: 5/17/24 Response received: 5/20/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)

Allegation #1 (SOC 1):

- The client reported after leaving his room, he realized he had forgotten something and asked the 4th floor ambassador to unlock his door. The complainant asserts that the staff insulted him and made him wait as a form of retaliation. In the lobby and was insulted by three people there and when he went to the security booth the working there was “joking” with another staff saying that “he should go to the Hilton” and that he was a “punk ass bitch.”
- *The shelter expressed their commitment to treating guests with respect, and to working with this client in particular, who has made numerous grievances. Management have met with him to address his grievances. The Care Coordinator has been intervening as much as possible, along with the DPH Behavioral Health Clinician. Finally, they have asked their Director of Guest Services to come onsite to meet with the guest.*

Harbor House

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/18/24 To the shelter: 5/23/24 Response received: 6/4/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #28 (Provide clients with access to free laundry services)

- SOC #31 (Training... safe and appropriate interaction with shelter clients...)

Allegation #1 (SOC 1):

- The complainant reports she went to the laundry room wearing casual clothes and a long robe. Once there, she took off her robe and loaded her dirty clothing into the washing machines. At that point, a female staffer brought a new male employee into the small room. The complainant asked if they would step out for a moment so that, because she was not wearing a bra, she could put her robe back on. Staff told her she should not have left her room dressed that way. The complainant explained that she had had on a robe. The staffer refused to have the new male employee step out and told the complainant that if she had a problem with it to tell her supervisor. Subsequently, she was given a write up stating he was dressed inappropriately. This was unreasonable—she had on black sweats, a white tank top, black and white slides and, while not alone in the laundry room, a long black robe.
- *The shelter reported that the staffer in question is a good and caring employee.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 28):

- On another recent occasion the complainant reports she had loaded her clothes into the two dryers during her allotted time use, which is only 3 hours, and the same staffer went in after the guest left and shut off one of the dryers. This staffer admitted to turning off one of the dryers because it was, “too hot,” for both to be running at the same time. The complainant noted that the staff member’s office is on an entirely different floor than the laundry room.
- *The site manager spoke with the staffer in question. She is one of their most dedicated workers, passionate about her job and the safety of the facility. The dryer in question overheats, so employees regularly monitor the laundry room to inspect the machines, and occasionally have to ensure that a machine is turned off to allow it to cool down.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1):

- On Mother’s Day she returned to the facility with ballons given to her as a gift for Mother’s Day. Staff member Cassandra approached her and her family and said that ballons were not allowed in the facility. The family was unaware of this rule as it was not stated anywhere within the facility. The family wanted to let the air out so the complainant could keep them as a memory of the day and the staff member once again stated that ballons were against the facility’s rules. After speaking with other facility staff members, the complainant learn that this was not facility rule.
- *Harbor House is currently providing several training courses, e.g., as trauma informed care [to improve their ability to provide good service to guests].*

Allegation #4 (SOC 1, 31):

- The complainant learned that the staff member Cassandra then began complaining about her to her partner even though she was available to speak to. The partner told the complainant that Cassandra said he was easier to, “deal with” than the complainant. The believes that although she may not always agree with staff member Cassandra’s perspective, she is always willing to discuss her concerns with her. The complainant feels dismissed and would prefer to have someone speak to her rather than about her.
- *Harbor House is currently providing several training courses to its employees.*

Oasis Family Shelter

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/22/24 To the shelter: 5/29/24 Response received: None at this time.

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #8 (ADA...)
- SOC #31 (Training...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 8, 31):

- The client states that despite having only recently arrived at the Oasis, and having a RA, his case manager began pushing him aggressively to look for work. His attitude was uncaring. The implication that he is not doing the best he can is discouraging and hurtful. The case manager may benefit from retraining.
- *Awaiting the shelter's response.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 31):

- The complainant states his case manager asked him why his church community doesn't find him housing. This was disrespectful and inappropriate. Shortly after, the same case manager disbelieved the client when he told him they were a family of three—not four, as the shelter's records apparently indicated—and insisted on searching the family's room. The distrust evinced was unwarranted and disrespectful. The clients are concerned they may be victims of religious or place-of-origin discrimination.
- *The shelter has not responded as of 6/4/24.*

Bayview Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/23/24 Sent to shelter: 5/29/2024 SMC received response: 5/ /24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #21 (Communicate...in the client's primary language or provide professional translation services)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 21):

- The client reported they have experienced substandard treatment during the evening shift. They are unable to communicate with the evening staff due to their language limitations. When they go to the wellness desks for support, often the staff are on their phones and seem annoyed at the interruption and say they do not understand. Digital translation options have be to no avail. Staff even tell the client to go away, or even suggest they self-exit the shelter. The same staff do not respond to clients of other ethnic backgrounds or English speakers this way.
- *Awaiting the shelter's response.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 21):

- The complainant alleges that they have gone to various staff during the day shift to request a grievance form in Spanish and have been turned away or brushed off.
- *Awaiting the shelter's response.*

Embarcadero Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 5/22/24 Sent to shelter: 5/30/24 SMC received response: 6/4/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #3 (...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis...)
- SOC #13 (Make the shelter facility available ...for sleeping at least 8 hours per night...)
- SOC #25 (Require all staff to wear a badge ...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 25):

- The client states she is singled out by staff who make rude suggestive comments (e.g., “you in the mood today”) and give her lewd looks or stare at her while she changes her clothes. Additionally, when other guests directed crude insults at the complainant, staff who overheard did not intervene. When she reported these things to management, the response is unhelpful and/or disrespectful. Management is frequently unavailable—in meetings or on break. One called her delusional and another responded, “you signed up for this.” Night staff are particularly unprofessional. Some staff do not have their names readily visible on badges and when asked refuse to tell the client their names. She faces extra negativity from night staff when she gets up to get ready for work early. They behave as if she were a nuisance.
- *The shelter’s manager responded at some length. Though he could not corroborate the allegations, he promised to go over the points raised with staff. They help the guests clean and encourage them to do so as well, offering bags, brooms, etc. they regularly connect guests to or medical services. They have a lot of clients with medical difficulties try to ensure they have their medication, adult pull-up, etc.*

Staff have badges with their names printed out on them. He will remind staff to let clients know their names and ensure staff treat guests with respect and compassion.

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 2, 3):

- The client is in practice forced to use her bunk to change her clothes (under a blanket or sheet) because the restrooms are extremely dirty, often with smeared feces on toilet seats and floors. And drugs are used there day and night. Users linger in various states of semi-consciousness and staff apparently have little inclination to intervene.
- *The restrooms are cleaned daily, and staff do what they can to assist anyone who appears to be suffering from the negative consequences of drug use; however, some guests present challenges that cannot be completely mitigated.*

Allegation #3 (SOCs 2, 13):

- The complainant has neighbors with dogs that are not kept under control. They are disruptive and the noise makes it hard to sleep.
- *The shelter does enforce rules related to animals. They will do what they can about noises made by pets during lights out time.*

May 2024 Client Complaints by Standard

Standard of Care	Number of allegations of violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	23
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	11
Standard 3: Supply and clean restrooms...	3
Standard 8: Provide shelter services in compliance with the ADA...	3
Standard 9: Engage a nutritionist...	2
Standard 10: Make dietary modifications...	1
Standard 12: Clean bedding...	1
Standard 13: Make sleep possible...	2
Standard 15: Storage...	2
Standard 17: Maintenance problems...	1
Standard 20: Provide materials in English, Spanish, other languages...	1
Standard 21: Communicate in the client's primary language ...	2
Standard 25: Require all staff to wear a badge...	1
Standard 28: Laundry services ...	1
Standard 31: Training...	3

Please note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one SOC.

Total Client Complaints FY 2023-2024*

Site	Site Capacity	7/23	8/23	9/23	10/23	11/23	12/23	1/24	2/24	3/24	4/24	5/24	6/24	Total (FY23-24) Red indicates late response
711 Post/Ansonia	250 beds							1				1		2
Baldwin	179 beds						2					1		3
Bayshore Nav	128 beds			1						1	2			4
Bayview Nav	203 beds			1							1	1		3
Buena Vista Horace Mann	69 mats													0
Central Waterfront Nav	60 beds		1		2/3	1						2		7 2
Cova Hotel	90 beds											1		1
Division Circle Nav	186 beds		1	3					1					5
Ellis Semi-Congregate	130 beds	1					1			1				3
Embarcadero Nav Cntr	200 beds						1		1			1		3
Hamilton Family	27 fams						1			2		2		5
Harbor House Family	30 fams											1		1
Hospitality House	22 beds				1									1
Lark Inn	36 beds													0
MSC South Shelter	327 beds					1	1	1	3		1/5	2		13 3
Monarch	93 beds			2	1		1	1		1				6 3
Next Door	334 beds	1				1				1				3
Oasis Family	54 beds							1	2		1	1		5
Sanctuary	200 beds													0
A Woman's Place	25 beds	1			1				1					3
Total		3	2	7	6	3	7	3	9	6	9	13		67 8

*Late responses are in red

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Membership (Admin. Code Sec. 30.305)

There is currently **one unfilled seat** on the Shelter Monitoring Committee:

Seat 1 - Must be homeless or formerly homeless who is living or has lived with their homeless child under the age of 18. (These requirements are being revised in accord with the changes proposed by the SMC in 2022.)

If you or anyone you would be willing to recommend is interested in applying for a Seat on the Committee, please contact staff at 628-652-8080 or email shelter.monitoring@sfgov.org for more information.

FY2023-2024 Upcoming Meeting Calendar: Jun 21

FY2024-2025 Upcoming Meeting Calendar: Jul 17, Aug 21, Sep 18, Oct 16, Nov 20