Summary
DHS Mental Health Division staff Gary Travis conducted a Housing with Supports for Adults with Mental Illness (HSASMI) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Evidence Based Practice (EBP) site visit with Touchstone Mental Health on February 2, 2018. DHS Mental Health Division staff met with Touchstone staff for 45 to 60 minute interviews, one person participated in a HSASMI for 30 minute tenant interview, reviewed charts, and reviewed additional documentation relevant to determining a baseline for the PSH EBP fidelity standards.

The following Touchstone staff participated in the site visit interviews:
- Michelle Wincell-O'Leary, Vice President, Community Housing Services
- Deb Hesli, Director of Housing Innovation Program, Project Manager, Clinical Supervisor
- Tanya Lawson, Program Lead
- Brittany Gries, Team Lead
- Muna Adan, Housing Specialist
- One program participant

Based on the February 2, 2018 visit, Touchstone currently meets fidelity, scoring 24.98 for the HSASMI program.

Project Description and Status
Touchstone received $437,744 in grant funds for the Housing with Supports for Adults with Serious Mental Illness (HSASMI) grant through the Minnesota Department of Human Services Mental Health Division. The contract began late January 2017 and continues through June 30, 2018. The Touchstone project is focusing on providing housing transition and tenancy sustaining services to support persons in obtaining and retaining housing. The community based housing opportunities obtained thus far are located in 41 scattered site and 5 single-site locations. Touchstone proposed to serve 125 people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness upon leaving an institution: Zero in outreach services; 25 in housing transition services; and 100 in tenancy sustaining services. Some people may receive multiple services.

The persons served ending December 2017 included 77 persons receiving housing transition services, and 42 receiving tenancy sustaining services. 40 persons were living in permanent housing in the community in scattered-site (9), single-site (4), and mixed housing (27) units. The tenant rental assistance resources included both federal, state, and county housing assistance options.
**PSH Dimensions**

Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidenced-based practice. HSASMI grantees are required to work towards a fidelity score of 21-28, based on the SAMHSA PSH EBP KIT evaluation. Based on the February 2, 2018 visit, Touchstone currently meets fidelity, scoring 24.98 for the HSASMI program. See the Fidelity Score Sheet below.

The Touchstone site visit provided the opportunity to determine a baseline for Touchstone’s progress toward fidelity.

A “4” indicates a measure fully meets fidelity. A “1” indicates a measure does not meet fidelity. For more information on scoring, see the SAMHSA PSH Evidence Based Practices Kit module “Evaluating Your Program” pages 17-21.

**Strengths**

- Touchstone has worked to engage and house a significant number of persons in services and housing, by drawing on both agency and external partnerships.
- There is an established team structure to support and direct the work, which includes clinical supervision.
- The agency and staff have a commitment to person centered and Housing First approaches.
- The HSASMI grant program is helping to expand the Touchstone housing capacity and to increase the range of integrated housing options that can be offered for the persons served.
- Touchstone has engaged with landlords and property managers in order to support and maintain housing opportunities.

**Recommendations**

- Strengthen goal planning and documentation by establishing a six month review of housing support plans and housing support crisis plans with tenants.
- Participate in the discussion with the HSASMI Learning Community to develop common assessment, housing support plans, and housing support crisis plans.
- Strengthen partnership with the HUD Continuum of Care and Coordinated Entry to increase housing resource opportunities.
- Identify and implement steps to balance and decrease the tenant to staff ratio. Including a process for HSASMI service exits that support tenant independence and stability.
- Consider opportunities for service sustainability beyond the grant period, including housing supports as a Medicaid service as this service develops.
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**PSH Fidelity Score Total** (minimum score to meet fidelity is 21): **24.98**
Fidelity Review Summary

Dimension 1: Choice of Housing

1.1.a: Tenants have choice of housing type  Score: 4
Touchstone works to assure that the persons served have opportunity to consider choices in housing including multiple models of housing and rental assistance.

1.1.b: Real choice of housing unit  Score: 4
While a poor rental market constrains available options, Touchstone works to engage landlords and a variety of rental resources to help persons to be aware of and access the choices available.

1.1.c: Tenant can wait without losing place in line  Score: 4
The tenant is not obligated to accept an available unit and they do not lose access to HSASMI services if they do not accept a unit.

1.2.a: Tenants have control over composition of household  Score: 2.5
Overall tenants have the ability to choose the composition of their household within the constraint of the available units. Touchstone draws on a number of housing resources, including a shared housing option. No one is obligated to accept a shared housing option, but because of market based poor housing availability there is strong pressure for a person to accept an available shared unit. Touchstone staff does work with tenants and prospective tenants to match roommates, but struggles at times with roommate relationships and conflicts.

Dimension 2: Separation of Housing and Services

2.1 a: Housing management role in service provision  Score: 4
The Touchstone agency partners with property management agencies in order to assure that HSASMI service recipients have access to units. Property management agencies have no direct role in HSASMI service provision.

2.1 b: Service staff have no housing role  Score: 2.5
Touchstone HSASMI services does not directly manage properties, but there is some overlap in roles for persons accessing shared housing settings as staff work to match and support compatible roommates.

2.1 c: Location of service providers  Score: 4
HSASMI services are located off site from the housing units. Services are provided in the person’s home and in the community.

Dimension 3: Decent, Safe, and Affordable Housing

3.1 a: Reasonable amount of income for housing  Score: 3.875
Five of the 40 persons housed are accessing the MSA Housing Assistance program (4) or GRH (1). These programs require that persons are pay more than 40% of their income toward housing. Strong efforts are made by Touchstone to link persons to affordable units resulting in this score being significantly increased from the base 3 rating.

3.2 a: Housing quality standards  Score: 4
All units meet HQS, and Touchstone staff work with tenants to assure that units meet standards.
Dimension 4: Housing Integration

4.1 a: Integration  
Score: 3

Touchstone has worked to help tenants access scattered site units within the community, but are limited by available subsidy and housing resources. Most of the units accessed by tenants are mixed use housing which contain a variable number of designated supportive housing units depending on the housing project.

Dimension 5: Rights of Tenancy

5.1 a: Legal rights of tenancy  
Score: 4

All units accessed by tenants are lease-based units with full rights of tenancy.

5.1 b: Compliance with program rules  
Score: 4

Tenancy is based on lease expectations. There are no requirements for participation in services in order to retain housing.

Dimension 6: Access to Housing

6.1 a: Housing readiness required?  
Score: 3

Touchstone uses a Housing First approach to helping persons in accessing housing. Some property management agencies have readiness expectations in order to access housing units.

6.1 b: People with housing obstacles are given priority  
Score: 4

Touchstone through internal and external referrals identifies and proactively engages with person who have high barriers to housing.

6.2 a: Extent to which tenants control entry to housing unit  
Score: 4

Units are fully controlled by the tenants. Processes are in place to assure that persons in shared units have control over their unit.

Dimension 7: Flexible, Voluntary, Services

7.1 a: Tenants choose services  
Score: 4

Touchstone provides services using a person centered approach which assures that the person is the primary author of their housing plan.

7.1 b: Opportunity to modify services  
Score: 4

The use of a person centered approach supports the tenant in the modification of their housing support plan when desired. Staff engage the tenants in opportunities to modify the housing support plan.

7.2 a: Service options  
Score: 4

Touchstone is a large agency with multiple service options for persons to select from. Tenants are also free to utilize services from other agencies as determined by their needs and preferences.

7.2 b: Change in services  
Score: 4

The service resources are flexible and can be adapted to meet the tenant’s needs.
7.3 a: Consumer-driven services  
Score: 4
Touchstone provides person centered and directed services as a core focus of all agency services. This approach is reflected in the HSASMI services provided.

7.4 a: Caseload size  
Score: 2
Currently the tenant to staff ratio is about 26-30 to 1. Touchstone is in the process of filling a staff position which will reduce the ratio. Demand for the program and a low exit rate have also contributed to the increased ratio.

7.4 b: Service structure: Services are provided by a team  
Score: 2
HSASMI services are provided independent of behavioral health service teams. Touchstone does regularly coordinate behavioral health services within the agency and with external agencies. Including partnering with ARMHS, MH TCM, and other services as identified by the tenant.

7.4 c: Service availability: Services are available 24/7  
Score: 2
The primary service hours are 8 AM to 5 PM. Touchstone does provide some limited activities and services outside of this schedule.

Additional Notes
Grantees are encouraged to review the EBP General Organizational Index Score (GOI) tool used to measure the capacity of an organization to implement and sustain an evidence based practice. For more information on the tool, see the SAMHSA PSH Evidence Based Practices Kit module “Evaluating Your Program” pages 42-44.