

**Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA)
and the
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

**Making Prevention Tangible
Preventing Homelessness:
*Policy, Protocols, and Practices for Discharge and Aftercare Planning***

April 15-16, 1999

John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Boston



**HEALTH CARE:
DATA FROM THE LIVES OF HOMELESS PEOPLE
MORBIDITY REVIEW OF 13 HOMELESS PEOPLE
WHO DIED IN BOSTON**

July 1998 - January 1999

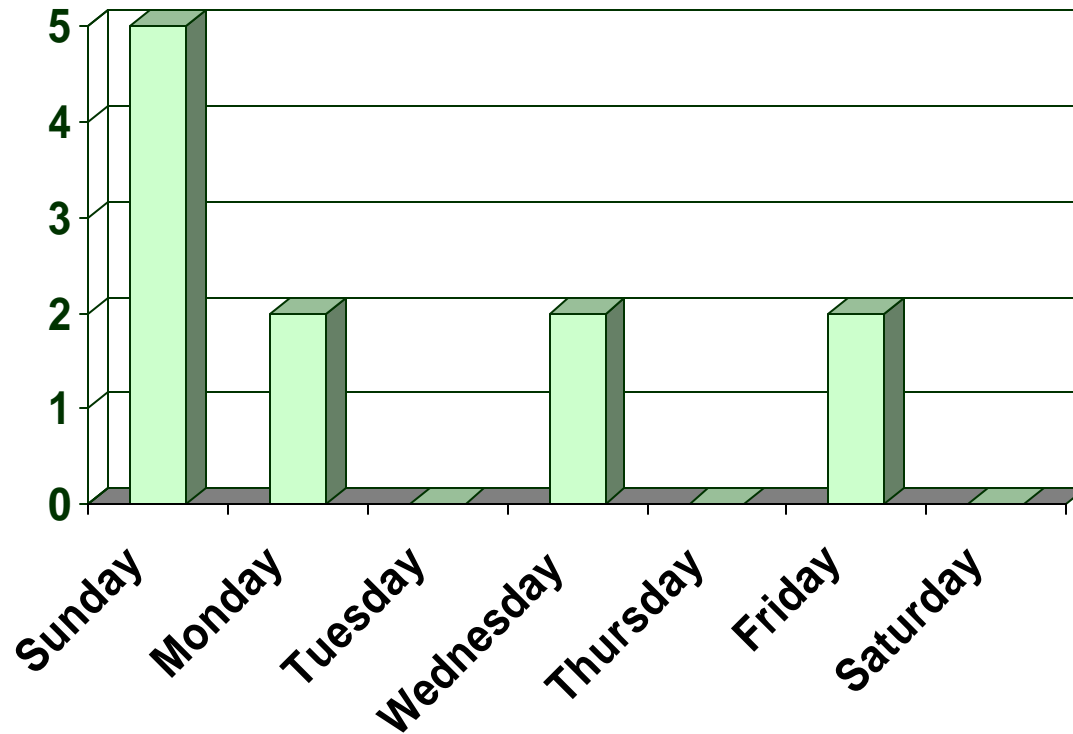
Research and Presentation

by Dr. James O'Connell

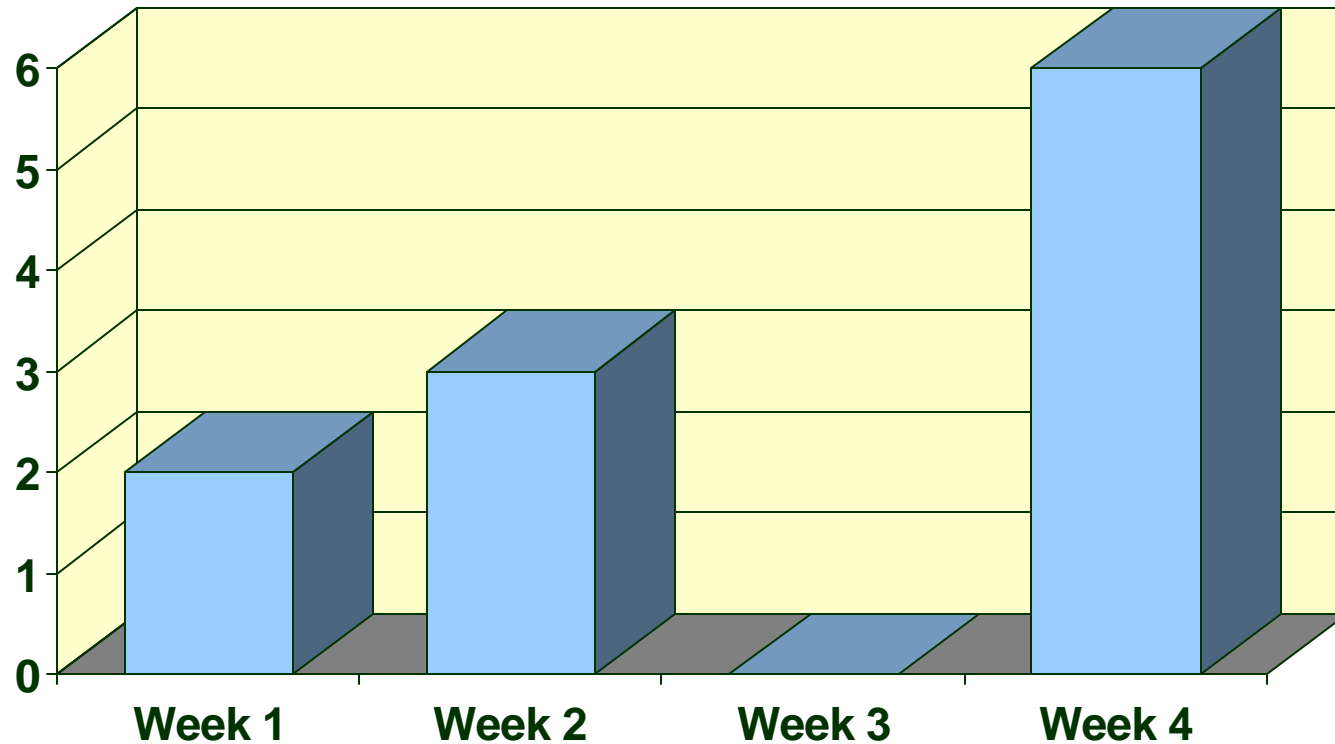
Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program



DAY OF DEATH

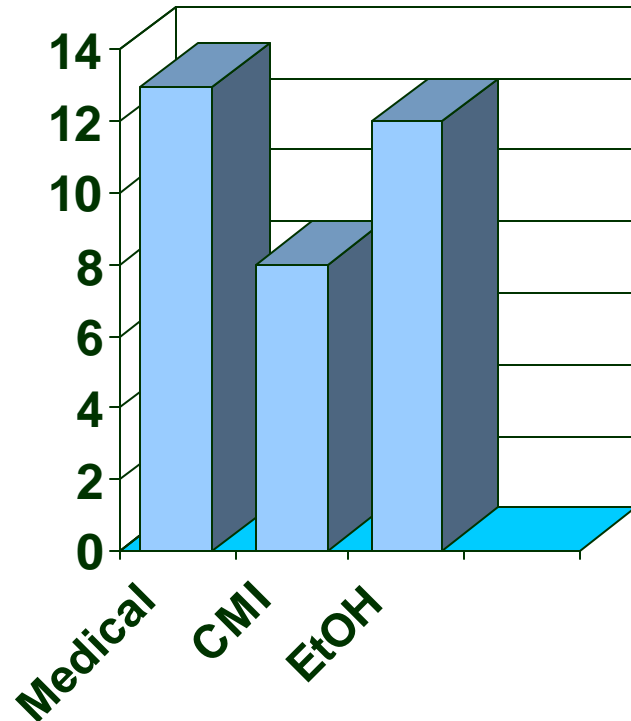


WEEK OF DEATH



CO-MORBID CONDITIONS

- **Multiple Major Medical Illnesses**
- **Chronic Mental Illness**
- **Alcohol Abuse**



DUAL DIAGNOSES

□ 100% Substance Abuse

- EtOH only (7/13)
- Heroin only (1/13)
- EtOH\Cocaine (3/13)
- EtOH\BZ (2/13)
- Heroin\BZ (1/13)

- EtOH primary substance of choice in 12/13

□ 62% Mental Illness

- Bipolar Illness (3/13)
- Schizophrenia (2/13)
- Major Depression (2/13)



Demographics

13 Deaths

- 12 M; 1 F
- 8 (62%) White
- 3 (23%) African-American
- 2 (15%) Hispanic:
 - 1 Costa Rica
 - 1 Nicaragua

- Age range: 30-57
- Average age: 44 years
- 3 (23%) Veterans





MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE
 FIVE PARK STREET
 BOSTON, MA 02108
 PHONE: 617/367- 6447
 FAX: 617/367-5709
 EMAIL: info@mhsa.net



Case Study ES, 42 WM

intermittently homeless, veteran, separated, 2 children, works
EW Visits

10/24/97	0200	"pounding on MGH doors" EtOH 3645	APS: not commitable D/C shelter
10/24/97	2200	cough/CP	D/C: street
01/09/98	0100	EtOH/+SI T 95	D/C: avoid EtOH/CI/APS
PRN			
01/11/98	0200	"I'm an alcoholic"	D/C:"Do not drink in excess"
01/12/98	2330	found shivering T 94 EtOH 3682 (Listerine) "to stop feeling"	APS: family counseling
01/30/98	0800	unresponsive T 96 EtOH 4029	D/C: "consider detox"
02/02/98	2300	"I'm suicidal" EtOH 3042	APS: "I'm sad" Left AMA at 1000
02/21/98	1630	obtunded/+SI T 95 EtOH 4124	APS: F/U West End
02/25/98	2230	fell/intoxicated EtOH 2702	Addictions: detox at WEH
03/16/98	1900	detox request/SI+ EtOH 3629	"I can't guarantee my safety" "I'm my worst enemy" D/C street



WHO IS DYING?

- **Chronically homeless men**
- **Live on streets, avoid shelters**
- **Vulnerable to injury, trauma, hypothermia**
- **High utilization of EW and Detox**
- **EtOH use, with levels commonly >3500**
- **Chronic mental illness with multiple SI/SA**
- **Several major medical illnesses**



LAST KNOWN DETOX

Name	DOD	Detox Unit	D/C Date	#Days to Death
ES	7/4/98	River Street	6/30/98	4
BM	7/26/98	Andrew House	7/6/98	20
KF	7/26/98	Andrew House	7/18/98	8
JB	10/12/98	Andrew House	10/9/98	3
RL	11/30/98	River Street	11/21/98	9
RG	12/12/98	Andrew House	11/9/98	33
JH	1/6/99	Dimock	12/14/98	22
WM	1/22/99	Andrew House	12/12/98	40



LAST KNOWN CONTACT WITH HOSPITAL

Name	DOD	Hospital	Visit Date	#Days to death
ES	7/4/98	MGH EW	6/28/98	6
BM	7/26/98	MGH EW	7/18/98	8
KF	7/26/98	BMC EW	7/24/98	2
JB	10/12/98	MGH EW	10/3/98	9
RL	11/30/98	MGH EW	11/21/98	9
RG	12/12/98	MGH IN	11/30/98	12
JB	12/23/98	BMC EW	12/16/98	7
JH	1/6/99	BMC EW	12/12/98	24
*WM	1/29/99	MGH EW	1/19/99	3
JB	1/29/99	MGH EW	1/6/99	23

