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Hundreds Rally to Call on Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio to Create More Supportive Housing for Homeless

New Analysis Shows Lack of Supportive Housing Will Add up to 7,600 to Homeless Rolls, Cost Taxpayers up to $1.35 billion over 10 Years

NEW YORK – Hundreds rallied in front of Governor Cuomo’s Executive Office in midtown today to call for fully funding supportive housing. Supportive housing—permanent housing which is combined with mental health and other support services—is proven to be cost-effective and successful in reducing homelessness for vulnerable New Yorkers. Every unit of supportive housing built saves more than $10,000 per year in taxpayer dollars through the reduced use of costly shelters, hospitals, psych centers and incarceration.

“Supportive housing is the proven solution to ending chronic homelessness. It is significantly less expensive than the institutional alternatives that homeless people often cycle through—including shelters, psychiatric centers and hospitals. With the state facing record homelessness and the current NY NY III Agreement coming to an end, now is the time for a new statewide agreement for 35,000 units of supportive housing over the next 10 years,” said Laura D. Mascuch, Executive Director, Supportive Housing Network of New York.

More than 20,000 households are found eligible for supportive housing in New York City each year, but currently there’s only one housing unit available for every five certified applicants—leaving thousands homeless. In 2014, Last year (2014), there was a record 24,766 applications for NY/NY housing—a 10% increase in demand over the prior year.

“Reducing record homelessness in New York City will be impossible if Albany cuts cost-effective tools like supportive housing,” said Mary Brosnahan, President and CEO of the Coalition for the Homeless. “Governor Cuomo and Albany leaders need to step up and reverse these cuts, or thousands of New Yorkers will remain in homeless for years to come.”

Hundreds of mental-health and housing providers, alongside clergy and activists formed the Campaign 4 New York/New York Housing, have called for the creation of 35,000 units of supportive housing over the next ten years. But Governor Cuomo proposed agreement would create just 5,000 new units of supportive housing—leading to years of increased homelessness in New York City and across the state.
A new analysis from the Coalition for the Homeless estimated that failure to create 35,000 units of supportive housing statewide could add up to 7,600 to New York City's homeless rolls by 2020, while costing taxpayers up to $1.35 billion over the next ten years.

“The Governor made a bold commitment to ending AIDS in NYS. Part of his plan requires providing supportive housing to all those living with and at risk for HIV. Supportive housing solves homelessness, but it also does so much more. It is actually one of the most effective HIV prevention tools that we have. We need NY/NY IV housing now,” said Jennifer Flynn, Executive Director of VOCAL-NY.

“Supportive housing is key not just to ending homelessness, but also to fulfilling New York’s historic goal of ending the AIDS epidemic. Studies show that supportive housing works and saves taxpayer money, because it pairs permanent affordable housing with the care that vulnerable New Yorkers need. Albany and New York City must come together to fully fund this proven resource,” said Kelsey Louie, CEO of GMHC.

“A strong permanent supportive housing agreement will send a powerful signal to members of our congregations and the general public, advocates and stakeholders and the entire country that New York is serious in its determination to end homelessness – and will help to affirm the public's faith that Government is committed to helping all citizens to live full and decent lives,” said Marc Greenberg Executive Director, Interfaith Assembly.

“Supportive housing has proven to be the most cost-effective solution to alleviating homelessness.” Tony Hannigan, Executive Director, Center for Urban Community Services.

“We can only get to an AIDS-Free New York when all New Yorkers are stably housed. We’ve long known that housing status is among the strongest predictors of access to HIV care, health outcomes, and transmission risk. Strengthening supportive housing is a key component of New York State’s Ending the Epidemic Blueprint, and we strongly urge the creation of 35,000 units of supportive housing across the State,” said Charles King, Housing Works President & CEO, and community co-chair of the Ending the Epidemic Task Force.

“Homelessness is on the rise across New York and we have providers eager to develop more supportive housing to address it, but they're stuck in a holding pattern because they lack the necessary commitment from the State and City. This isn’t a debate about supportive housing; we already know it works to end homelessness. What we need is for the Governor and Mayor to fully embrace NY/NY IV Housing by signing the agreement so we can move forward to get people off our streets and housed for good,” said Kristin Miller, Director of the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

“The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies is pleased to join its advocacy partners in calling for a robust supportive housing plan that will meet the needs of disadvantaged...
residents of New York City and State. Housing is a the key element for promoting recovery for people with behavioral health issues (both mental illness and/or addiction). We urge the Mayor and Governor to craft a NY/NY 4 agreement that will substantially address the need and provide the shelter and services so desperately required for people to resume productive lives in the community,” said Phillip Saperia, CEO, The Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc.

“New York has been a leader in homelessness and affordable housing policies, and we have an opportunity to reinforce that leadership if the Governor and the Mayor sign a robust NY/NY IV agreement now. In addition to ending homelessness for people and families with significant barriers to housing, like mental illness and addiction, supportive housing is cost effective and financed through a highly successful model of public-private partnerships. However, without the guarantee of these funds, we will lose the chance not only to help get people off the street and into permanent housing, but also to leverage millions of dollars in private equity,” said Judi Kende, Vice President and New York Market Leader, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.

**The Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing includes more than 200 organizations.** Participants in today’s rally include the Coalition for the Homeless, Services for the Underserved, Community Access, CUCS, VOCAL-NY, Enterprise Community Partners, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Good Shepherd Services, Housing Works, Homeless Services United, Association for Community Living, Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, Supportive Housing Network of New York, Goddard Riverside Community Center, Henry Street Settlement, Project Renewal, and Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies.

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