

**Public Health Committee
Legislative Office Building.
Hartford, 03/12/2010.**

Good morning/afternoon Honorable members of the Public Health Committee, professionals of governmental and non governmental organizations ladies and gentlemen of the general public. My name is John Sarno and I am a member of the LEAD group of the Middlesex County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The LEAD which stands for **Leadership Empowerment Advocacy and Development** is a voluntary group of formerly and currently homeless individuals who have come together to use our personal experiences to talk about the problem of homelessness and to drive home the point that the issue of homelessness can be completely eradicated by smart programs like Supportive Housing. I am one voice among many who have experience homelessness. Being homeless can happen to anybody, especially in these current economic down times.

My story is simple and many of you here today probably know someone just like me, I got cancer, and between not being able to work and no money coming in I became homeless. What is even scarier is that this can happen to anyone. Luckily through the services in Middlesex County I was able to go to a shelter then with the help of a case worker I got into transitional housing and now once again I have a roof over my head and hence I feel the need to let people know just how easy it is to become homeless. Being in the LEAD group has shown me people who would still be homeless , if not for the good programs and policies such the Proposed House Bill # 405 **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COST EFFECTIVE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FREQUENT USERS OF COSTLY STATE SERVICES.**

Many of the members of my group who could not be here today have benefited, and continue to benefit from Supportive Housing which has given them housing and all the needed services to keep them stable and productive members of society at a comparatively cheaper cost than using emergency services.

I was never a numbers person until I saw the numbers of the success's of some 10 year plans including the plan in Middlesex County that has provided about 50 additional

units of supportive housing within 3year for the chronically homeless individuals. Numerous research studies and pilot projects have shown the cost effectiveness of Supportive Housing model. These are all documented in black and white to show that stopping continual repeating user's of emergency medical services, law enforcement resources and other public services save money in every case and so in conclusion I would plead with you to support **proposed house bill # 405** to increase the stock of supportive housing as one of the efficient intervention to end homelessness in our beloved state of Connecticut.

I am very grateful for this opportunity given to me and sincerely thank you for listening to me. I will be glad to take any questions.

Thank you.

