

**Testimony for Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly
February 11, 2014 Hearing on Conservation and Development**

By. Matthew Collin Morgan, Executive Director

Journey Home

Thank you Mr./Madam chairman, members of the committee, for letting me speak. My name is Matthew Morgan and I am the Executive Director of Journey Home, a nonprofit organization working in the Greater Hartford region on homelessness. I am speaking in support of Governor Malloy's proposed budget.

Journey Home's mission is to accelerate progress towards ending chronic homelessness in the Greater Hartford region. Partnering with the region's shelter, housing, and social service providers, Journey Home focuses on *solving* the problem of chronic homelessness with housing, employment, and support services, rather than *managing* it with emergency shelter. As a catalyst for systemic change, Journey Home develops and implements innovative ways to improve the housing and service system in order to offer those experiencing homelessness paths toward independent, fulfilling, and productive lives.

While our challenges are huge, the exciting part of this work is how we keep learning more about what works and what does not work as a solution to homelessness. Data collection keeps improving, research is conducted, and we get closer at optimizing budgets without sacrificing quality of our work. For example, for the first time, we have two full years of data on chronic homelessness, and can see that the trend in Greater Hartford had an 8% decline between 2012 and 2013. We directly attribute this success to the supportive housing programs and better targeting of these programs to serve this vulnerable population. Using an evidence-based vulnerability index tool that identifies those who are homeless and at most risk of premature

death, and using a data match to identify high cost users of Medicaid and emergency shelter, Journey Home and our partners have been able to target supportive housing programs to vulnerable and chronically homeless participants.

Journey Home was the regional lead for the Capitol Region Homelessness Prevention and Rapid ReHousing program which stably housed more than 1350 participants from 2009-2011. Abt Associates, an independent, nationally recognized firm conducted a rigorous evaluation of the program, and that evaluation was completed last year and can be found on Journey Home's website at http://www.journeyhomect.org/pdf/hprp_final_evaluation2013.pdf . The evaluation documents that only 17 of the 1350 participants returned to shelter after being housed through the program. The evaluation also documented the cost effectiveness of rapid rehousing, as a permanent solution to homelessness.

With Governor Malloy's proposed budget and with continued leadership from the State of Connecticut legislators this year and in future years, and by continuing to apply the new research and innovative technologies that appear, I hope and I pray we will continue to see a decline in chronic homelessness in Greater Hartford, and that we will continue to see declines among homeless families and veterans across the entire state of Connecticut.

Thank you.