

Emergency Housing

Transitional Housing

Permanent Housing

Deeply Affordable
Housing

Rapid Rehousing

Vocational Training

Education &
Employment

Children's Services

Early Childhood &
Parenting Services

Employment & Housing
Retention

**Governor's Proposed Budget FY16-FY17
Appropriations Hearing
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Wednesday, February 18th, 2016**

Talking Points

Senator Bye, Senator Kane, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron, and Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on the important investments through the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support efforts to end homelessness in CT.

The Story of Jack

Jack grew up in Stamford and was the youngest of a large family. Despite being a member of a large family, Jack's parents always provided for them and made sure they went to school. Jack graduated high school but then became addicted to drugs. As Jack would put it, 'I made my choices and drugs messed me up, but I learned my lesson and now I'm much better'.

Jack became homeless because of his drug addiction. In the late 70's he began to use Marijuana at age 16 and later heroin and crack cocaine became his drugs of choice.

While living at the local men's shelter, Jack applied for the ShelterPlus Care (permanent supportive housing) program as he became tired of living the life of an addict. In 2008, he had the best Christmas gift in a long time. Jack moved into an apartment at Colony Apartments and never returned to his habits of old. In 2010, he was offered a job at a company in Stamford and has been there ever since.

Recently, Jack decided that his job and his life are stable enough for him to move on. Jack is now seeking an independent apartment and hopes to move by the spring, so that another homeless individual can benefit from the opportunity he has had living at the Colony Apartments.

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- We are making significant progress towards our goal of ending homelessness in Connecticut, through the unprecedented support of Governor Malloy, the legislature, the Department of Housing, and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.
 - Connecticut became the first state in the nation recognized by the federal government for ending chronic homelessness among Veterans in 2014.
 - Connecticut is on track in the *Zero: 2016* Campaign to end chronic homelessness (the long-term homelessness of people with severe disabilities) by the end of this year. Through terrific work across the state, we reduced by 30% from 2014 to 2015 the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Working with our partners in the Reaching Home Campaign and at the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, we have worked hard to develop comprehensive data regarding what we need to end chronic homelessness. **We ask for your support for the additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing required this year to make our goal.**
 - We support the Reaching Home Campaigns proposal for **\$1.5 million for rental subsidies and \$1.125 million for services in FY 17 to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Connecticut.**
- We know what works to end chronic homelessness: permanent supportive housing, which combines housing subsidy with case management services. Permanent supportive housing is highly effective at ending once and for all the homelessness of those who need this assistance. And it is proven to save communities up to 70% of the costs they will otherwise incur when chronic homelessness persists.
- Supportive services for those who enter permanent supportive housing are provided under the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. These services are a critical component of keeping these high-need individuals housed and stable.

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- While we understand that substantial cuts to DMHAS programming are under consideration, we ask that you maintain the critical support services for permanent supportive housing.
- Cuts to these services would risk reversing the substantial progress we have made to end chronic homelessness. Cuts to these critically important services could mean increases in unsheltered, high-need homelessness – taking us the wrong direction, and imposing new costs on our communities.
- Those experiencing chronic homelessness are the most vulnerable, highest need – and *highest cost* – of the populations experiencing homelessness in CT.
- We know that those who suffer in chronic homelessness have a strong tendency to cycle in and out of our public systems – emergency services, hospitals, and jails – incurring steep costs to those systems without resolving the underlying homelessness.
- Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, and an expensive public policy problem. Investments in permanent supportive housing save public resources, and help those most need transition to housing, stability, and hope.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Noel Kammermann
Chief Officer of Program Effectiveness and
Performance Measurement
Inspirica, Inc.