

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

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.

We recognize that Connecticut faces a difficult budget climate and that hard choices must be made. Ending homelessness is the right thing to do for Connecticut residents in urgent need, and the smart thing to do for our state, particularly in these tight fiscal times.

We are working hard to end all forms of homelessness, with a particular focus this year now on ending the long-term homelessness of those living with severe disabilities, which we refer to as the "chronically homeless," through the *Zero: 2016* campaign, co-led by my organization and the Partnership for Strong Communities, with strong support from the Governor.

When chronic homelessness persists, our public systems – including emergency services, hospitals, jails, and schools – incur heavy costs, without resolving the homelessness of those cycling in and out of these public systems. National studies show that communities can save up to 70% of the costs they will otherwise incur when they act to end chronic homelessness.

Working with providers across the state, our partners in the Reaching Home Campaign, we have worked hard to develop comprehensive data regarding what we need to end chronic homelessness in Connecticut – to the benefit of those who have lived too long on our streets, and to the benefit of our budget's bottom line. We ask for your support for the additional 150 units of permanent supportive housing (housing with supportive services) proven to end chronic homelessness, that we need 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 create 150 additional units of permanent supportive housing to reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness in Connecticut.**

We are making significant progress towards our goal of ending homelessness in Connecticut, through the unprecedented support of Governor Malloy, the legislature, and the Departments of Housing and 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. The decrease of 30% in this population from 2014 to 2015, alone, serves as important proof that this campaign is working.

We are making great strides toward ending all forms of homelessness in Connecticut, improving the lives of those who have experienced homelessness, and improving our communities that have struggled with this issue.

With the support of the Governor and the legislature, we are building a comprehensive and coordinated response system to end homelessness.

We also 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.

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.

**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. Reducing these critically important services could mean increases in unsheltered, high-need homelessness – taking us the wrong direction, and imposing new costs on our communities.**

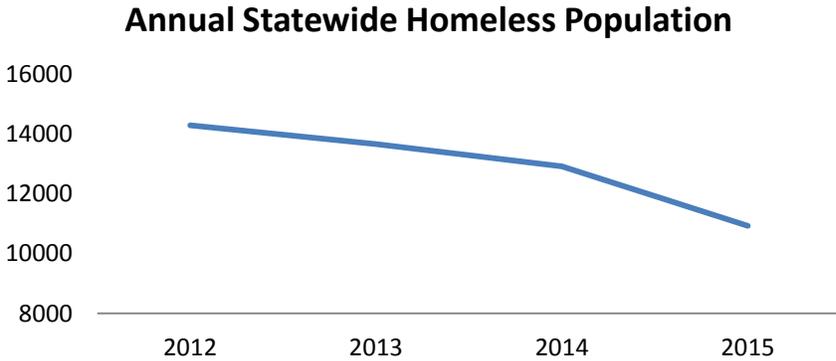
Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Lisa Tepper Bates, Executive Director  
Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

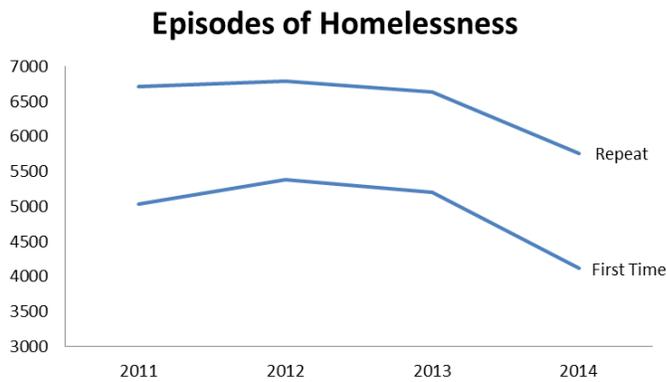
## Achievements on the Way to Ending Homelessness – Let’s Keep Up the Momentum by Maintaining Critical Investments in Homeless Services!

Lower total numbers of people homeless every year in recent years...



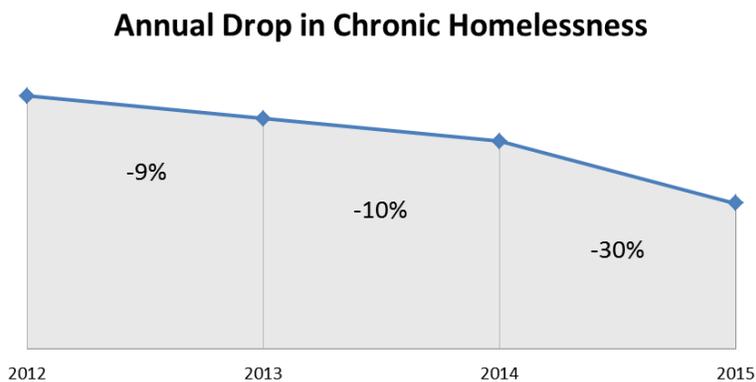
Source: CT Homeless Management and Information System (HMIS) FY2015-2015

Lower numbers of people becoming homeless for the first time, and lower numbers of people becoming homeless again...



Source: CT HMIS FY2011-FY2014

And a significant decrease in chronic homelessness...



Source: CT HMIS FY2012-FY2015