

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

John G. Rowland
Governor

A Healthcare Service Agency

Thomas A. Kirk Jr., Ph.D.
Commissioner

Building on What Works

What is a basic desire that each of us has? *To have a safe and decent place to live.* For someone with a serious mental illness or substance use disorder, living in decent housing helps them to manage their illness, to feel part of a community, and to improve the quality of their daily life. These outcomes are all parts of their **journey towards recovery**. Thus, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) pursues many strategies to promote safe, decent and affordable housing for persons receiving behavioral health care. **Supportive housing** is one such strategy.

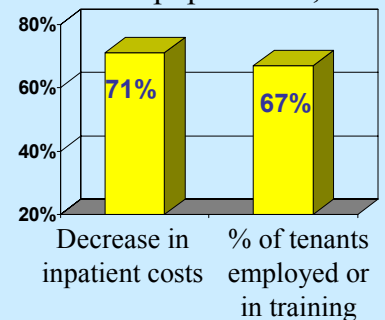


Mary Seymour Place
Hartford

Supportive housing provides community-based, affordable housing options and supportive services for persons who have special needs but who are able to live independently if they have some assistance. Residents typically hold their own lease and onsite case management or other supportive services are available as a voluntary option for tenants. Housing developed under the program also serves individuals and families without special needs in order to create integrated housing settings.

What has our experience taught us about supportive housing? During the 1990's DMHAS participated in a partnership known as the Connecticut Supportive Housing Demonstration Program that developed 281 units of affordable, service-enriched rental housing for homeless and at-risk populations, many with mental illness, histories of substance abuse, or HIV/AIDS.

An independent evaluation* of this demonstration program found that tenants **decreased** their use of restrictive and expensive health services and **increased** their use of less expensive ongoing and preventive health care. Neighborhood property values increased for eight of the nine projects and remained stable for the ninth. Overall, development of the project yielded \$72 million in direct and indirect economic and fiscal benefits to Connecticut communities.



Building on Success

The Governor and the Legislature authorized a **new Pilots Supportive Housing Initiative**. DMHAS is currently working with many other organizations to develop housing units for 570 persons whose head of household has serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder, is homeless or at risk of homelessness, and has an income at or below 50% of the area median income. **Extraordinary collaboration** among many public and private organizations is essential for the success of these projects. Credit must be given to these key partners.

Partnerships Work

Connecticut Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Social Services, and Economic and Community Development, Office of Policy and Management, CT Housing Finance Authority, private entities including the Corporation for Supportive Housing, local housing developers and behavioral health service providers, private foundations such as the Melville Charitable Trust, and the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing being created is **affordable, good quality, accessible to transportation, and safe and secure**. Units are being developed both through leasing of existing scattered-site apartments, and through acquisition, new construction or rehabilitation.

* Thank you to the Corporation for Supportive Housing for information used in this issue. Copies of the evaluation report may be requested from them at (203) 789-0826 or ct@csh.org.