



FY 2011 Appropriations: Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment Services for Homeless Populations

FY 2011 Appropriations Request

Provide \$120 million in SAMHSA homeless programs for essential mental health and substance use treatment services linked to permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families and other housing programs targeted to homeless and at risk families, youth, and individuals. This request would increase funding by \$45 million over the FY 2010 funding level, and should include the \$15.8 million new Homeless Initiative Program proposed in the President's budget proposal.

Justification

On any given night, according to 2007 data, 672,000 people are homeless, and 18 percent of these individuals are defined as chronically homeless. Years of reliable data and research demonstrate that, for families and individuals with complex needs, the most successful intervention for ending and preventing homelessness is linking housing to appropriate support services. Although there is a need for more affordable housing, funding the supportive services is even more difficult. The Department of Health and Human Services 2007 report entitled Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness broadened HHS' focus to include all homeless populations and their need for services.

SAMHSA homeless programs fill a gap created by a preference of HUD to fund housing capital needs over the critically important services that are necessary for programs to be effective. In the recent competition conducted by SAMHSA, the agency received over 500 qualified applications, of which the agency was only able to fund 68. The interest and capacity of providers to put these federal dollars to work and end homelessness for thousands of homeless individuals should demonstrate to Congress a clear mandate to significantly increase funding for SAMHSA's homeless programs.

The current FY 2010 funding level of SAMHSA homeless programs is \$75 million. This is divided between two accounts: \$32.25 million within the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) and \$42.75 within the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). The President's budget proposes an increase of \$12.1 million total, \$7.446 million for CMHS and \$4.610 million for CSAT but directs \$15.8 million to a new Homeless Initiative Program.

New Homeless Initiative Program

The President's 2011 budget proposal includes a new Homeless Initiative Program. This is a HUD/HHS partnership creating two demonstration programs: one that couples Housing Choice Vouchers with TANF and Department of Education resources targeted to families, and a second targeted to individuals that partners Housing Choice Vouchers with services funding by Medicaid and SAMHSA. The Medicaid and TANF elements come from mandatory spending and do not require an appropriations amount. However, the SAMHSA contribution must be appropriated, and the President proposes a level of \$15.8 million to fill this need. This funding includes the \$12.1 million proposed SAMHSA homeless services increase and an additional \$3.7 million from existing CSAT resources.

We applaud the Administration's recognition that the federal government can do a better job helping communities couple housing and services funding. This is a good first step. However, we are concerned that the chronically homeless demonstration would take \$3.7 million from existing resources and only states with existing 1115 Medicaid waivers can apply. We intend to work with Congress and the Administration to make sure an optimal number of states and public housing authorities, who administer Housing Choice Vouchers, can use the Medicaid and SAMHSA funding available for this program.

This document was prepared by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the National AIDS Housing Coalition, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., the American Psychological Association, the National Council for Community Behavioral Health Care, the National Health Care for the Homeless Council and the Technical Assistance Collaborative