

# HOUSING FIRST

NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION  
NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO END HOMELESSNESS  
CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES

## *Housing First Promotes Health*

**February 21, 2023**

*Moderated by Peggy Bailey, Vice President for Housing and  
Income Security, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*



# Agenda

## Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Peggy Bailey, CBPP

## Housing First Promotes Health

- Margot Kushel, UCSF Benioff Homelessness & Housing Initiative
- Whitney Joy Howard, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

## (Continued)

- Christy Respress, Pathways to Housing DC

## Discussion & Q&A

## Take Action & Closing Remarks

- Peggy Bailey, CBPP

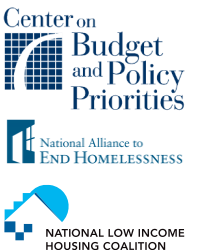
# *Welcome & Opening Remarks*

**Peggy Bailey**

*Vice President for Housing & Income Security*

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

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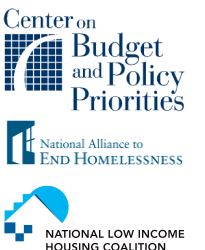
# *Housing First Promotes Health*

**Margot Kushel, M.D.**

*Director*

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University of California  
San Francisco

UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations  
Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital

Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative

# Housing First and Health

Margot Kushel, MD  
Professor of Medicine, UCSF  
Division Chief and Director, UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations  
Director, UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative



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2/21/2023

# Housing improves health conditions

- Housing provides

- Protection from the elements, protection from some violence
- A place to rest/sleep, attend to hygiene, cook, store food and medicine
- A stable address for receiving services, mail
- A sense of belonging and stability

- In so doing, housing provides:

- Prevention against infectious disease
- The ability to engage in longitudinal healthcare, adhere to medication, prioritize one's health

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Policy and Global Affairs; Science and Technology for Sustainability Program; Committee on an Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing Programs for Homeless Individuals. Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2018 Jul 11. PMID: 30148580.

# In our longitudinal studies of older homeless adults

Remaining homeless vs regaining-housing associated with:

- 2x odds of victimization
- 1.8x hazard of dying
- Elevated risk of depression

Tong MS, Kaplan LM, Guzman D, Ponath C, Kushel MB. Persistent Homelessness and Violent Victimization Among Older Adults in the HOPE HOME Study. *J Interpers Violence*. 2021 Sep;36(17-18):8519-8537. doi: 10.1177/0886260519850532. Epub 2019 May 28. PMID: 31135255; PMCID: PMC8715865.

Brown RT, Evans JL, Valle K, Guzman D, Chen YH, Kushel MB. Factors Associated With Mortality Among Homeless Older Adults in California: The HOPE HOME Study. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2022 Oct 1;182(10):1052-1060. doi: 10.1001/jamainternmed.2022.3697. PMID: 36036902; PMCID: PMC9425284.

Dobbins SK, Garcia CM, Evans JL, Valle K, Guzman D, Kushel M. Continued Homelessness is Associated with Higher Depressive Symptoms in Older Homeless Adults: Results from the HOPE HOME Study. Under Review

# Housing First

- Housing First is THE evidence-based approach to housing homeless individuals
  - NOT a specific program
  - NOT “Housing Only”
  - Housing First IS an evidence-based approach:
    - Prioritizes safe, permanent, affordable housing as the foundation
    - Engagement in services (or other pre-requisites) not required
    - Individualized approach
    - Not only for those with severe behavioral disabilities, but strong evidence for those with these disabilities



# Housing First vs Alternatives

- HF seeks to offer immediate permanent housing without requiring adherence to treatment, abstinence from substances, or “housing readiness”
- Alternatives (“high demand” “treatment first”) demand that individuals be “housing ready” prior to placement
  - Maintain sobriety, participate in treatment, agree to intensive services

# Housing First has substantial evidence-base

- Experimental evidence comparing HF strategies to alternatives
- Real-world evidence from implementation of Housing First
- ALL rigorous studies favor Housing First over alternative strategies
- Housing First does not itself \*create\* housing (nor do alternative strategies)
  - Appropriate comparison is HF vs alternative possible strategies

# Evidence for Housing First (HF)

- Compared to those in treatment first housing:
  - Those living in HF stayed housed longer
    - Less shelter use
    - Keeps people from becoming homeless again
  - What is the evidence for improved health?
    - Improved quality of life
    - Decreased psychiatric symptoms
    - Decreased substance use
    - Increased engagement in services

Julia R. Woodhall-Melnik & James R. Dunn (2016) A systematic review of outcomes associated with participation in Housing First programs, *Housing Studies*, 31:3, 287-304, DOI: [10.1080/02673037.2015.1080816](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2015.1080816)

# Alternatives to Housing First tend to struggle with engagement

- Treatment First/Sober living
  - Programs that require treatment as a condition of housing have been found to have limited engagement in treatment OR housing

**BREAKING NEWS** San Jose: Police searching for woman accused of kidnapping her 2-year-old daughter



NEWS > TRANSPORTATION • News

## **BART oversaw \$350,000 Salvation Army program that treated one person, audit finds**

Multiple reports document alleged wage theft, opaque spending, and a \$2.2 million conflict of interest



# HUD-VASH program

- Collaborative program between HUD and the VA
- **Housing First** model
  - Housing voucher is paired with VA case management and supportive services
- Positive outcomes:
  - Keeps veterans housed
  - Fewer days using alcohol and/or drugs (compared to standard care)
  - Increased healthcare utilization
- Veteran homelessness has decreased dramatically over past decade with adherence to HF policies

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/military-and-veterans-affairs/veteran-homelessness-an-overview-of-state-and-federal-resources.aspx>

Cheng AL, Lin H, Kaspro W, Rosenheck RA. Impact of supported housing on clinical outcomes: analysis of a randomized trial using multiple imputation technique. *J Nerv Ment Dis.* 2007;195(1):83-88. doi:10.1097/01.nmd.0000252313.49043.f2

# Housing First works for those with severe behavioral disabilities

- Permanent supportive housing
  - Subsidized housing
  - Linked supportive services that are voluntary
  - **Housing First** model – start with the housing

# Permanent Supportive Housing keeps people housed

- Meta-analysis found that PSH offered on HF basis increases long-term housing stability for those with moderate and high support needs
- An RCT using chronically homeless, highest users of services found:
  - PSH housed 86.4% of participants (vs. 36.2% usual care)
  - Participants stayed housed for **92.9%** of 3-year follow up period

Aubry T, Bloch G, Brcic V, Saad A, Magwood O, Abdalla T, Alkhateeb Q, Xie E, Mathew C, Hannigan T, Costello C, Thavorn K, Stergiopoulos V, Tugwell P, Pottie K. 2020. Effectiveness of permanent supportive housing and income assistance interventions for homeless individuals in high-income countries: a systematic review. *The Lancet Public Health*.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30055-4).

Raven, Niedzwiecki, & Kushel. (2020) A randomized trial of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless persons with high use of publically funded services. *Health Services Research*.

# Permanent Supportive Housing improves some health and healthcare access measures

- While not consistent, studies show positive benefits for:
  - HIV outcomes (new diagnosis, viral load, mortality)
  - Medication management
  - Preventive screenings
  - Non-acute healthcare utilization (mental and physical health)
- If housing happened earlier, would outcomes be even better?

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Policy and Global Affairs; Science and Technology for Sustainability Program; Committee on an Evaluation of Permanent Supportive Housing Programs for Homeless Individuals. Permanent Supportive Housing: Evaluating the Evidence for Improving Health Outcomes Among People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2018 Jul 11. PMID: 30148580.

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# Some evidence to support PSH improves mental health

- Possible improvements in depression, anxiety, problematic substance use

Dickson-Gomez J, McAuliffe T, Quinn K, et al. The comparative effectiveness of different models of permanent supportive housing on problematic substance use, depression, and anxiety symptoms over time. *Am J Orthopsychiatry*. 2021;91(4):514-523. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000550>.  
Aubry T, Bloch G, Brcic V, Saad A, Magwood O, Abdalla T, Alkhateeb Q, Xie E, Mathew C, Hannigan T, Costello C, Thavorn K, Stergiopoulos V, Tugwell P, Pottie K. 2020. Effectiveness of permanent supportive housing and income assistance interventions for homeless individuals in high-income countries: a systematic review. *The Lancet Public Health*. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(20\)30055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(20)30055-4).

# Housing First is a philosophy

- Not everyone needs PSH
  - Some just need housing
  - But principles of housing first remain the same!
- 
- Housing ends homelessness

# Final thoughts

- Housing is foundational to good health
- Housing First keeps people housed, but has limited evidence of health benefits
- Everyone needs housing that they can afford - and our solutions to homelessness have to start there

There is no medicine as powerful as housing!

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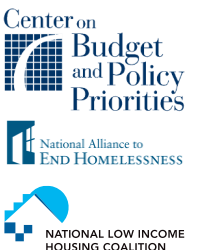
# *Housing First Promotes Health*

**Whitney Joy Howard**

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Health Services

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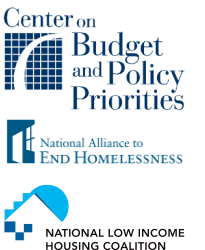
# *Housing First Promotes Health*

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# **Pathways** to Housing DC

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# Pathways to Housing DC:

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Pathways to Housing DC seeks to transform individual lives by ending homelessness and supporting recovery for those with psychiatric disabilities and other complex health challenges. We believe housing is a basic human right, and aspire to change the practice of homeless services by:

- Providing immediate access to permanent housing without preconditions
- Setting the standard for services driven by consumer choice that support recovery and community integration

# Programs & Services



**Homeless Services**  
Street Outreach  
Downtown Day Services  
Center



**Housing First**  
ACT Teams  
DHS Case Management  
Veteran Services



**DC Superior Court**  
Urgent Care Clinic



# Who We Serve

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- Average length of time homeless 5+ years. As many as 30 yrs.
- 56% over the age of 55
- 72% male, 26% female, 2% transgender
- 87% African American, 10% Caucasian, 2% Latino
- 100% serious mental illness & 80% co-occurring disorders on the ACT teams
- High medical needs: hypertension, diabetes, HIV, obesity, cancer, etc.
- 100% living well below the poverty level

# Housing First Programs

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**813 people supported in our Housing First programs in DC and MD**

- Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- Veterans: Assertive Case Management (ACT 'lite')
- PSH: Case Management

# Housing First for Health



- Grant funded project to bring primary care to our Housing First participants
- Nurse Practitioner partnered with one of our ACT team members to conduct home visits
- Triaging most complex needs and those disconnected from medical care
- Ultimate goal to connect to ongoing care in the community



# Contact

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**Pathways DC**  
@PathwaysDC



PathwaysDC



@PathwaysDC

# *Discussion and Q&A*



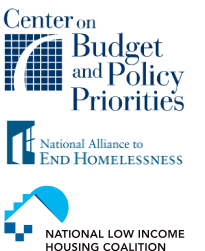
# *Take Action & Closing Remarks*

**Peggy Bailey**

*Vice President for Housing & Income Security*

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

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# Housing First Resources



- [State and Congressional District Profiles](#)
- [Factsheets on Housing First](#)
  - Why Housing First is a [critical strategy](#) for ending homelessness.
  - [Research](#) on the effectiveness of Housing First.
  - How Housing First [cut veteran homelessness](#) in half.
  - How Housing First [supports recovery](#) from substance use disorders
  - How Housing First supports people with [mental health conditions](#)
  - [Key facts](#) about Housing First
  - [Q&A](#) on Housing First
  - [Responding to Unsheltered Homelessness](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Cicero-Backed Legislation](#)
- [Talking Points to Oppose the Housing PLUS Act](#)

# Take Action—Educate Stakeholders About How Housing First Supports Health



- **Build alliances with state and local health care providers and leaders**
  - Health Care for the Homeless [Clinics](#) and other Federally Qualified Health Centers ([FQHC](#))
  - Mental health and substance use providers, including Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics ([CCBHC](#))
  - Medicaid [managed care](#) organizations (MCO)
  - Hospitals and health systems
- **Advocate for and help implement Medicaid coverage of housing-related services**
  - Use [this CSH map](#) to learn if your state Medicaid program covers or is seeking coverage of tenancy support services
  - Connect with state Medicaid advocates and state Medicaid agency officials
- **Educate and engage mayors, local council members, state interagency councils on homelessness, etc.**

# *Story Collection*

We are inviting organizations to share stories you have already collected about how Housing First has benefited the people you serve. If you have gathered stories for your organization's annual report or other resources, please let us know! Reach out to Alayna Calabro at [acalabro@nlihc.org](mailto:acalabro@nlihc.org).

This will be part of an ongoing effort to incorporate and uplift the stories of people with lived experience; we are working to expand our capacity to better collect stories directly from people with lived experience in the future.



# *Resources*

**Next Webinar: Monday, March 20 from 2:30-4:00 pm ET**

**Register at: <https://bit.ly/3XJFKoe>**

**Learn more about Housing First: <https://bit.ly/3vHf8YR>**

