



Housing and Services, Inc.

Testimony of Jim Dill
Executive Director
Housing and Services, Inc. (HSI)

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Thank you City Council members and Speaker for receiving my written testimony for this year's budget hearing and regarding the proposed \$1.876 million cut to more than one-third of onsite HASA supportive housing case managers. For HSI alone, this cut puts 80 households in Council Districts 6 and 15 at greater risk of homelessness and declining health. The resulting impact within the district will be an immediate increase on costly and burdensome emergency services and a company-wide weakening of HSI's services provision for 535 formerly homeless clients in District 2, 9, 6 and 15.

HSI develops and operates programs in for four supportive housing projects for formerly homeless New Yorkers. Founded in 1987, HSI is a pioneering organization in supportive housing. Our 535 units throughout Manhattan at Kenmore Hall, The Narragansett and Cecil Hotel, and a Scatter Site I Program in the Bronx are staffed by 85 employees. Each program provides affected populations with customized services to maintain them in safe, suitable and affordable housing. Clients include the elderly, people who live with HIV/AIDS, the mentally ill, people with physical disabilities and those who struggle with addiction. On-site programming includes medical care, mental health counseling, educational/ vocational training, and other comprehensive services designed to promote housing stability and greater independence.

The HASA on-site Case Management contract pays for 4 social services staff including 2.5 case managers at The Narragansett and one case manager at Scatter Site I in the Bronx. These programs serve 80 households of individuals and families with children with intensive case management services vital to our clients. At The Narragansett, 83% of clients have a history of drug abuse. Of 80 HIV/AIDS households receiving HASA-funded services, more than half are diagnosed mentally ill or mentally ill with a chemical addiction.

The Narragansett is in District 6 at 2508 Broadway (SE corner, 94th and Broadway) and was a collaborative, human services effort originally undertaken by HSI, the City Council, Community Board 7, Chase CDC and New York City agencies. In 1995, HSI developed the Narragansett Hotel, a 100-unit supportive housing residence, with 60 units occupied by

individuals with HIV/AIDS. NYC HRA's HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) has provided funding for the 60 HIV/AIDS clients/units at the Narragansett Hotel since 1995, allowing HSI to successfully provide housing and supportive services to chronically homeless single adults with HIV/AIDS.

HSI has also successfully operated a 20-unit HASA funded, Bronx based HIV/AIDS Scattered-Site Program since 1992. HSI master leases 20 scattered-site apartments in 15 Bronx multifamily apartment buildings, and supervises the provision of supportive services to 15 single adults with HIV/AIDS, and five families with at least one family member affected by HIV/AIDS. This program is a model of success for the most independent form of supportive housing.

Narragansett's population is difficult to engage and especially requires intensive case management and links to community organizations, medical professionals and agencies that help HSI with clients who are living with mental illness and drug addiction as well as HIV/AIDS. Some of the services we offer and linkages we provide are:

- Substance abuse counselors who conduct weekly face-to-face counseling sessions as part of a prescribed treatment plan. HSI also makes off-site referrals to substance abuse professionals, as needed, as well as to relapse prevention counseling.
- Medical and mental health services include 24-hour medical emergency service and a crisis intervention program through Services for the Underserved.
- 12-step groups, acupuncture for stress management and weekly group HIV/ AIDS support meetings.
- Referrals to detoxification centers, outpatient clinics or hospitals for treatment, as needed.
- Transportation to medical appointments or help grocery shopping for clients whose frail health prevents travel.
- Visiting nurses services
- On-site meals program
- A variety of medical and mental health services from A.C.I. (Cornerstone) Inpatient detox and rehab, Conifer Park: 28 day inpatient rehab, Upstate NY, GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis), Ryan Center: Provides a variety of medical and mental health services, Harlem United: Outpatient drug and medical treatment program, and Smither's: Drug detox and 28-day rehab.
- Advent Lutheran Church hosts holiday meals for clients, twice a year for over a decade.

The HASA cut will increase caseloads by 30%, going beyond tolerable limits for intensive case management. Without intensive case management services and within a brief period of time, the complex needs of these clients living with HIV/AIDS would not be met and their physical and mental health would decompensate. The immediate results would be increases in calls for Emergency Medical services, Fire Department services, and Police Intervention services; the 24th Precinct and emergency rooms at Mt. Sinai, St. Luke's Roosevelt, and Lenox Hill hospitals. Many of our residents would return to streets or shelters. HSI's 22 years of serving thousands of New York's homeless with the

in-depth care appropriate for their conditions will be severely crippled and as a result the neighborhood would change.

The increased use of emergency services by the homeless is widely-known as a burden on community resources. Corporation for Supportive housing estimates average costs per person per day for supportive housing as \$41.85 compare to \$164.47 of jail, \$74 for prison, \$54.42 for shelters, \$467 for mental hospitals and \$1,185 for hospitals. Eliminating a systematic approach for expensive and logistically burdensome alternatives is contrary to a fiscally conservative and proactive approach. Supportive Housing is the lowest cost alternative for New York's homeless, but it is also a more manageable and humane response to the problem than the more complicated and volatile systems of emergency care.

Not only will the Upper West Side's hospitals and police be more burdened with clients who are being treated with intensive case management or clients who have become homeless again, but the change will be visible on the streets. HSI is very aware of the history of our neighborhood near the Broadway Mall, and the days during deinstitutionalization when people in need were disengaged from services and out on the streets. Part of our commitment to the community who allowed us to purchase and manage The Narragansett was linked to our confidence in our social services. The question of a 30% reduction of services becomes a question of history and community. Will the Broadway Mall look 30% more like it did prior to HASA's funded case management for the formerly homeless living with HIV/AIDS?

While 45 nonprofit providers try to manage this cut internally in 4,354 units of housing, externally the public will be sharing the burden in spaces like Madison Square Park, Broadway Mall, Central Park, Union Square, Crotona Park, Prospect Park - all in proximity to where service cuts will fall. The City's proposed cut to HASA supportive housing is one of many cuts providers are facing from New York City and New York State this year.

On behalf of HSI's 84 staff, 7 Board members, 335 clients, 85 people in Manhattan District 6 and Bronx District 15 who call HASA Case Management Services-funded Narragansett and HSI Scatter Site home, as well as the many partner organizations, businesses, and individuals who work with HSI, we strongly urge you to restore the \$1.876 million in HASA on-site case management. The cut will be negated by immediate economic and human costs.