



Organizational Overview

Housing for New Hope, a nonprofit organization serving Durham and Orange Counties, offers an integrated approach to ending homelessness, one that includes assistance with housing and improved health conditions and medical outcomes. The organization now serves more than 950 households each and every year, helping them obtain and maintain housing, healthcare services, and ongoing support. Healthcare is a critical component to all eight of its programs and housing options.

What We Do

Integrated Outreach Care

Without homes, people are exposed to the elements, disease, violence, unsanitary conditions, malnutrition, stress, and addictive substances. Consequently, their rates of serious illnesses and injuries are three to six times the rates of other people. Because many homeless people have limited mobility, competing daily priorities such as finding something to eat or place to sleep, and histories of mistreatment, they often avoid institutional settings and “authority” figures. Housing for New Hope offers an integrated care model for this population, which unites an outreach nurse, behavioral health case managers, and formerly-homeless peer specialists in a close collaboration. Together, they follow patients in a variety of settings: in homeless camps, on the street, at the local homeless shelter, at detox facilities, at local hospitals, and in housing.

Over the past twelve months, 235 homeless individuals were enrolled for services.

- 107 were connected to a primary care doctor, and
- 65 were assisted to obtain income benefits and medical insurance.

Access for the Uninsured

Like 47 million other Americans, the majority of homeless people do not have health insurance or the ability to pay for needed care, so many providers will not treat them. In extreme situations, many turn to emergency rooms, although ERs are costly and inappropriate for ongoing care. Housing for New Hope operates a clinical case management team to work with consumers neglected by mainstream mental health providers, without the constraints on service and reimbursement placed on it by the State Mental Health System and Medicaid.

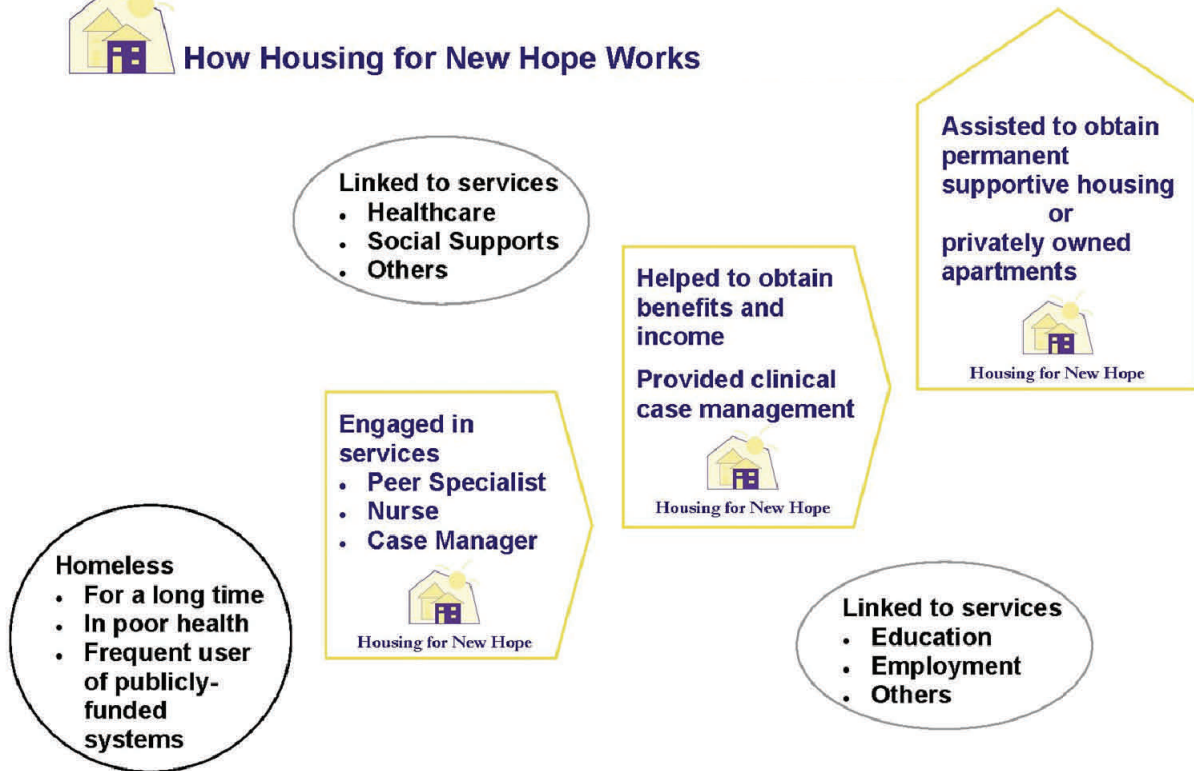
Housing for New Hope also has staff dedicated to assisting the uninsured homeless access health insurance, disability income, and other benefits utilizing the SOAR model. SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery) is a national model that HNH has been using since 2009. HNH was one of two organizations selected statewide to pilot SOAR linked to its outreach team. As part of the SOAR process, clients receive a comprehensive psychological assessment by a contracted psychologist, in partnership with Duke Health System’s LATCH program.

Housing Is Healing

Housing for New Hope is the primary practitioner of the “Housing Is a Therapeutic Intervention” strategy (HTI) in its community. The concept of HTI was born from the reality that permanent supportive housing is the first step for the disabled homeless to achieve better health and quality of life, through reduced health risks and supportive services. National and local studies indicate, and Housing for New Hope’s experience confirms, that homeless clients are more receptive to



How Housing for New Hope Works



healthcare interventions and social services support after they are in their own housing, rather than while they are living in temporary shelter or on the streets. HTI patients are placed in housing immediately and a spectrum of services are made available to assist them, including case management, mental health services, medication assistance, medical care, substance abuse treatment, and life skills support.

Housing for New Hope provides housing for sixty-four tenants participating in its HTI initiative, at three apartments complexes it developed and has managed since 1997. All tenants must be linked with a case manager for ongoing support. Tenants are also offered monthly on-site wellness programming that includes sessions on diabetes, aids, mental health issues, and Medicaid obtainment.

Cost Savings to the Community

Studies done by the Durham System of Care, Duke, and UNC found that the cost of traditionally serving a chronically homeless person—shelters, 911 dispatches, ER visits—is \$9,000 to \$10,000 annually. With a home and more preventative care, those costs decreased by 30 percent.

Partnerships Make a Difference

The partnerships that Housing for New Hope has developed in Durham and Orange Counties have been critical to the health outcomes of its clients. These include the following:

- Housing for New Hope partnered with Lincoln Community Homeless Health Clinic on a joint application for funding to the State Office of Rural and Community Health. The grant funds a full-time outreach nurse for Housing for New Hope, a full-time nursing assistant for the Clinic, and a part-time physician to expand Clinic hours.

- Housing for New Hope SOAR work is part of a community-wide effort that was the first in North Carolina to be recognized as a Gold Level SOAR Certified Community. The certification, designated by the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness, reflects the commitment that Durham County has to educate consumers and health care providers about Social Security Benefits, link eligible consumers to SSI/SSDI income and health care benefits, and develop successful partnerships with key community stakeholders to support SOAR applications. Since 2009, SOAR case managers at Housing for New Hope, Duke LATCH, Carolina Outreach, and Freedom House have assisted more 55 individuals in applying for SSI/SSDI benefits. 45 were approved, accounting for an approval rate of 82 percent, with a median decision time of 67 days.
- There is an active respite care planning work group, which includes participants from Housing for New Hope, Lincoln Community Homeless Health Clinic, Duke LATCH, and the faith community. Thanks to the efforts of this group, Durham was one of four communities selected nationally by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council to receive special assistance for medical respite planning, funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration. This will included a community planning forum on respite care, led by Sabrina Edgington, a program specialist at the National Health Care for the Homeless Council.
- Housing for New Hope staff present regularly to law enforcement officers at Crisis Intervention Trainings (CIT), hosted by the Durham Center and OPC Area Program. This has benefited the homeless on multiple occasions, when the traditional response to a crisis situation related to a mental illness—incarceration—was replaced by a call to Housing for New Hope staff and an opportunity for housing and treatment.