

Executive Summary of A PLAN FOR PROMOTING HOUSING AND RECOVERY-ORIENTED SERVICES

*Prepared by the Housing Work Group of the Adult Advisory Committee of the
Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS), November 2006*

GOAL: That the mental health system ensure that all Pennsylvanians with serious mental illness and co-occurring disorders have access to a range of decent, safe, affordable housing options and recovery-oriented services.

FIVE MAJOR BARRIERS:

1. Incomplete Acceptance of the Recovery Concept
2. Lack of Funding and Other Resources
3. Lack of Informed Consumer Housing Choice
4. Lack of Decent, Safe, Affordable, Accessible Housing
5. Lack of Local Networks of Flexible Recovery-Oriented Services and Resources for Individuals to Obtain and Maintain the Housing of their Choice

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

POLICY: OMHSAS shall:

1. Target assistance to 5,000 households within 5 years.
2. Assist Counties to shift \$100 million from Community Rehabilitation Residential Services (licensed group homes) to housing and recovery-oriented services by the year 2012.
3. Approve NO new group homes.
4. Expand technical assistance and training to counties.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING: OMHSAS shall require counties to:

1. Review housing and support needs of individuals.
2. Develop individual housing plans, inventory of housing resources, and consumer-driven strategic housing development plans.

ADMINISTRATION: OMHSAS shall require that:

1. Every county establish a Local Housing Option Team (LHOT) or housing coalition to expand options.
2. Every county have at least one full-time staff person to address housing issues.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS: OMHSAS, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) shall work together to:

1. Establish development strategies and partnerships that leverage public and private dollars.
2. Help nonprofits to access funds for project start-up.
3. Establish a Bridge Housing Fund for short-term rental assistance.
4. Establish a Permanent Housing Rental Assistance Program.
5. Explore financing options for homeownership, Fairweather Lodges, and other nontraditional supportive housing options.
6. Work with DPW to provide opportunity for people living in personal care homes to move to supportive housing in the community.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: OMHSAS shall provide funding options and guidance to counties to create flexible supports to:

1. Help individuals obtain and keep housing of their choice.
2. Expand peer services for housing support.
3. Help Counties realign local resources to create flexible supports, including re-directing group home funding and using Community Hospital Integration Project Program (CHIPPs), HealthChoices reinvestment, and other dollars.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA): OMHSAS shall secure funding to expand Technical Assistance to Counties to:

1. Assist counties in planning and expanding housing options.
2. Continue and increase training for staff, developers, providers, consumers, and families in recovery, advocacy, and housing planning, options, and resources.

To access the entire housing plan, please use this Internet link:

<http://www.pahousingchoices.org/HWGReport.pdf>