



Groups Aim to Lower Healthcare Costs, Improve Outcomes

Meeting of Innovators Here Hosted by Avalon Housing

September 28, 2015 (Ann Arbor, MI) – Four organizations intent on simultaneously addressing the most complex instances of homelessness, reducing healthcare costs and improving medical and mental well-being are meeting this week on the University of Michigan campus to advance their plans to grow an effective model that blends housing with health services. Providers from Los Angeles, San Francisco and Connecticut are convening with their colleagues here and other professionals as part of the [CSH Social Innovation Fund \(SIF\)](#) national initiative, locally known as [FUSE \(Frequent Users Systems Engagement\)](#).

“[Avalon Housing](#) and our partners in Washtenaw County are really excited about this opportunity to meet with all SIF providers, to share our work on SIF/FUSE and highlight the progress being made by each of the four communities,” said Carole McCabe, Executive Director of Avalon Housing. “These are some of the brightest and best innovators in the country, working every day to figure out and implement what it takes to end homelessness and provide housing and cost-effective healthcare to our most vulnerable neighbors.”

CSH is leading a five-year national initiative to address the problems of homelessness and rising health care costs by demonstrating how supportive housing pulls people with the most complex issues out of the revolving door of costly crisis services. Backed by a prestigious [federal Social Innovation Fund award](#) from the Corporation for National and Community Service, the initiative is leveraging the FUSE model of housing linked to health services that saves public dollars and improves the lives of very vulnerable men and women.

“States and communities spend billions of dollars each year on programs that simply bounce vulnerable people around between shelters, hospitals, detox centers, and then back on the streets again, never really addressing their needs or improving their situations,” said Sarah Gallagher, CSH Director of Strategic Initiatives. “These individuals and families are forced to be

super-utilizers or what is known as frequent users of costly crisis services, and they are overtaxing ERs, shelters, jails and other emergency care. SIF is all about using the FUSE model to change this paradigm so that people are off the streets for good, in real housing, with ongoing and preventative healthcare to keep them healthy at a lower cost to all of us."

CSH estimates super-utilizers are about 5% of those homeless for longer periods of time and that they absorb approximately 50% of the cost of services due to the fact that homelessness exacerbates health issues, limits access to effective care, and inhibits healthy behaviors.

To date, the CSH SIF initiative has found housing for over 500 people nationally, with over 90% remaining housed and over 85% retaining primary healthcare that reduces their regular visits to hospital emergency departments and other crisis care.

CSH works with four teams across the country that are using supportive housing integrated with care management, and primary and behavioral health, to improve outcomes while decreasing public costs among individuals with complex needs. The teams are:

1. [Avalon Housing - Ann Arbor, MI](#)
2. [AIDS Connecticut - Connecticut \(statewide\)](#)
3. [Los Angeles County Partnership - Los Angeles County, CA](#)
4. [Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation - San Francisco, CA](#)

Avalon Housing began leading the local SIF/FUSE effort in August as part of a transfer of all supportive housing services from Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw. So far, the SIF project in Ann Arbor has housed 100 participants and received enthusiastic backing from the community, including a recent donation of \$150,000 from the Saint Joseph Mercy Health System.

Avalon Housing has been developing and managing permanent supportive housing for more than 20 years, and has recently expanded their provision of support services. They started a partnership with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission earlier this year by implementing a new comprehensive services team to support SIF participants and other at-risk residents of the Housing Commission's 106-unit Miller Manor project. Over the past few months, 45 high-needs individuals with very long histories of homelessness have been able to move into the recently renovated building thanks to the availability of 24/7 staff support - meeting a need identified by advocates in Ann Arbor for more than a decade.

The Miller Manor project is one of three new US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants currently being implemented by Avalon. The most recent grant

includes the addition of 50 new permanent supportive housing vouchers to sustain the SIF/FUSE project and expand the target population to include frequent users of the criminal justice system.

"FUSE has played a leading role in helping Washtenaw County reach the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2016," said McCabe. "SIF and Washtenaw's efforts align with HUD's objectives by bringing community partners together to prioritize those most in need, coordinate services and effectively use our limited resources. Linking the housing and healthcare services makes a huge difference in people's quality of life, and saves the community money."

Contact: Robert Friant, CSH
robert.friant@csh.org
212-986-2966, Ext. 245