

FOR RELEASE

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New Options for States to Improve Health Care for Homeless Individuals with Chronic and Complex Health Needs

Brief outlines opportunities for designing Medicaid care management services focused on improving health outcomes and lowering costs by reducing hospitalizations and other crisis services.

Hamilton, NJ, June 6, 2012 – A [policy brief](#) released today by the Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) details new opportunities to link Medicaid care management with supportive housing for homeless individuals with the goal of reducing the cycle of chronic homelessness. The brief was made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Through the expansion of Medicaid under health reform, nearly all of the 1.2 million individuals in the U.S. who are homeless will have access to new insurance coverage. “Roughly 110,000 of these individuals are chronically homeless and more likely to have chronic and complex health conditions,” says Deborah De Santis, CSH President and CEO. “For these individuals, homelessness and housing instability make it extremely difficult to get the care they need when they need it. Instead they are often frequent users of expensive inpatient, emergency, and crisis services.”

[Medicaid-Financed Services in Supportive Housing for High-Need Homeless Beneficiaries: The Business Case](#) details new options for states to link stable affordable housing with “high touch” supports that connect people with chronic health challenges to a network of comprehensive primary and behavioral health services. A growing body of evidence suggests that this strategy can reduce costs, improve health, increase survival rates, foster mental health recovery, and reduce alcohol and drug use. To help states prepare for Medicaid expansion and anticipate the needs of this high-need population, the brief:

- Details the business case for using Medicaid to finance supportive housing-based services;
- Highlights potential Medicaid authorities that states can use to fund supportive housing-based services; and
- Raises considerations for policymakers to address in designing strategies that use Medicaid resources to provide supportive housing-based services.

“Linking care management with supportive housing for high-risk homeless Medicaid beneficiaries offers the potential to improve health and quality of life and also generate savings through reduced hospital and emergency room use,” says Stephen A. Somers, PhD, CHCS President. “Through the Affordable Care Act, states can leverage various Medicaid service options, such as health homes, to build tailored programs to support the needs of these newly eligible beneficiaries.”

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The [Center for Health Care Strategies](#) (CHCS) is a nonprofit policy resource center dedicated to improving health care access and quality for low-income children and adults, people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, frail elders, and racially and ethnically diverse populations experiencing disparities in care. CHCS works with state and federal agencies and health plans to develop innovative programs that better serve Medicaid beneficiaries. For more information, visit www.chcs.org.

For over 20 years, [CSH](#) has led the national supportive housing movement. We help communities throughout the country transform how they address homelessness and improve people’s lives. CSH develops innovative program models, provides research-backed tools and training, offers development expertise, and collaborates on public policy and systems reform. CSH is a certified community development financial institution (CDFI). We make it easier to create and operate high-quality affordable housing linked to services. To date, CSH has made over \$300 million in loans and grants, and has been a catalyst for over 150,000 units of supportive housing. For more information, visit csh.org.