

Barbara Geller – Hartford, CT

Director of Statewide Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Barbara Geller has been selected to receive CSH's 2014 Eastern Region Supportive Housing Champion Award for an individual in recognition to her tremendous contributions to supportive housing in the State of Connecticut, her tireless dedication to people with behavioral health disorders in need of supportive housing, and her innovation as a public servant. Ms. Geller is the Director of Statewide Services at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services in Connecticut. During her tenure, DMHAS has supported the creation of roughly 5000 units of supportive housing across Connecticut. Ms. Geller uses her public role to advance supportive housing through interagency collaboration.

Ms. Geller is one of the few remaining members of the original Interagency Committee of Supportive Housing, a unique model in which nine separate state agencies work together to develop supportive housing. She understands how precious supportive housing resources are and has advocated for triage to reach the most in need. This has resulted in special initiatives that target people high needs and high public costs: a FUSE initiative people involved with corrections and homelessness, a Forensic Supportive Housing Program, the Enhanced Housing Opportunities Program, and a Housing First Program. The work she has been a part of in Connecticut sets a national example of how the right thing to do can also be the smart thing to do. Ms Geller demonstrates daily that a strong belief that all individuals have a right to decent, safe and affordable housing with the services they need to maintain their independence in the hands of a dedicated and passionate public servant can move mountains.