

As someone who has worked in the field of homelessness as a volunteer, provider, and advocate for 24 years before coming to Washington, I know how exciting this day is all over the country for those who are on the front lines of this national disgrace of homelessness.

These new and increased resources will make a difference on the streets and in the shelters across our nation.

And, I'm honored to be here with Secretary Bernardi today for this announcement that will touch the lives of so many of our poorest neighbors in the coming months and years. And Secretary Bernardi is an appropriate person to announce these awards. As a mayor he has been on the frontline of this issue, as have mayors across this country.

That's why this Administration has emphasized partnerships in responding to homelessness.

We've learned that no one level of government can get the job done alone. No state, no county, no city, no rural area. Nor can we do it alone in Washington.

Across the country momentum is constellating to create the partnership that will get the job done.

In Washington the 20 federal agencies in the Council are meeting together and collaborating to make their resources more available and accessible to homeless people.

In states, 40 governors have responded to our planning strategy and have created state interagency councils on homelessness to make state resources more available.

And on the front lines, more than 60 mayors, county executives, and city managers are moving forward to create 10-year plans to end homelessness in their communities. Three just yesterday.

Through inclusive partnerships at every level of government, new partners have come to the table and old partners have returned – business, faith based groups, and philanthropy have recommitted to homelessness through results oriented partnerships. For example, the 10 year planning process in Atlanta has resulted in a new commitment of \$6.2 million from private philanthropy.

Those new resources, together with increased federal investment in homelessness at a time when states and cities are financially strapped, offers a continuation of hope to reduce and end homelessness.

And this Administration has increased resources targeted to homelessness in the last few years. There have been no cutbacks in targeted homeless resources. Quite to the contrary, the President has proposed increases in the last several years, including a 9% increase for 2004.

This Administration has increased resources for mental health outreach, substance abuse treatment, health care programs, and housing targeted to homeless people. And the increase announced today in HUD funding is part of the commitment this Administration has made in recent years to increase resources for homeless people in the face of state and local cutbacks.

Not only was there an increase in resources focused on those already homeless in this HUD announcement, but this Administration has also prioritized prevention resources for those at risk of becoming homeless.

That's a better approach than simply waiting for people to fall to the shelters and streets.

Recent research has shown that some of the fastest growing populations of homeless people are people with substance abuse addiction, young adults aging out of foster care, ex-prisoners leaving jails and prisons, and veterans leaving military service.

Beyond what is announced here today, the Administration has targeted resources to prevent homelessness for each of these populations. In his 2003 and 2004 budget proposals, the President has requested \$200 million to create 100,000 substance abuse treatment slots; \$60 million targeted to young people leaving foster care; over \$100 million to prevent homelessness among those leaving prison; and \$14 million focused on those who are being discharged from military services.

This Administration's strategy is focused on both intervention for those already homeless and on prevention for those at risk of homelessness.

The HUD resources released today will be especially important in moving those who are in shelters and on the streets beyond a cot or the sidewalk to appropriate services and housing.

And these resources, together with other resources proposed by this Administration, will offer a whole strategy – both intervention and prevention – to move us beyond managing homelessness to ending the disgrace.

We have also prioritized the most vulnerable homeless people – those with disabilities, in long term homelessness, who are often on the streets of our communities and most likely to be at risk of death there.

I just returned from the National Homeless Persons Memorial here in Washington, memorializing deaths on the streets here in D.C. The researchers have told us that this population is experiencing what is called chronic homelessness. Researchers have also told us that this population numbering only about 10% of all homeless people, actually consumes one half of all homeless resources and also ricochets around very expensive health care, emergency rooms and acute treatment. And is most at risk of death.

So for moral, lifesaving, spiritual, and economic reasons we have a priority to address chronic homelessness.

Today's HUD announcements also commit new resources to move toward the President's goal of ending chronic homelessness in the next decade.

While chronic homelessness is a priority, this Administration is also focused on other profiles of homeless people, especially homeless families and youth.

Today's announcement continues those commitments and increases the resources to end family homelessness and all other profiles of homeless people. Next month this Administration will begin a focus on family homelessness.

Finally, we recognize that there have been cutbacks at the state and local level on social services and services have impacted homeless people over the past few years. During that time this Administration has increased resources to demonstrate the continuing partnership of the federal government with states, cities, and the private and non-profit sectors in the response to end homelessness.

**This increased investment today by HUD
strengthens those national partnerships and supports
this Administration's initiative to end chronic
homelessness in the next ten years. And moves us
closer to the day when this national disgrace will be
ended for all Americans.**