

Dialogue
HUD Regional Office
San Francisco, California
February 6, 2003
Remarks by Philip F. Mangano

Thank you for that kind introduction, Lily

You are so fortunate in this Region to have Lily Lee. She's thoughtful, analytical, and unafraid of change. Those are important attributes to the effort to end homelessness.

It's always good to be back in California especially in the West Coast sister city of my hometown, Boston. I believe that some of you know that I lived in this state back in another lifetime. No, no. Not in the Shirley MacLaine sense.

I worked in the music industry down in the city south of here, the City of Angels.

Is there anyone here from Los Angeles?

My office was on Hollywood Boulevard. I couldn't believe the Boulevard back then. Every day was Halloween.

My office was directly across the street from Graumann's Chinese Theatre – you know where they have the sidewalk of stars. Now that was one cultural landmark that brought me back to my ancestral Sicilian roots. Hands and feet in cement.

There were a lot of problems in that city back when I lived there. The traffic was unbearable. There was about a half an hour a day when the freeways weren't parking lots.

And then, of course, there were those chronic problems. You know. You couldn't drink the water. And you couldn't breathe the air. Other than that, you know how warm and hospitable and community building the music industry is.

Whenever I could, I would escape to one of the places you all are from. This city or northern or central California, South of Los Angeles, Arizona, Nevada.

In other words, North, South, or East. A few times I went west to Australia to escape.

Now, Los Angeles had a lot of problems back then – but **one** current issue was not visible, either there or in my excursions to other cities and places.

There was **no** pervasive homelessness.

Which, unfortunately, can no longer be said. Either here or any place in the country.

Last time I was in San Francisco just a month ago, I remember people coming in from late night walks or early morning runs **marveling** at the number of homeless people on the streets, in doorways, and walking around.

And just last week I was in Los Angeles. I met with the city's homeless commission, LAHSA, – which previously I had known as the capital of Tibet – but discovered that out here it's the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. And I met with the Los Angeles Hunger and Homeless Coalition and spoke at their first annual gala, and met with commissioners, homeless providers, and homeless people. None of which existed in such numbers when I lived there.

Most strikingly, however, I went down to Skid Row and spent the better part of a morning there, visiting programs and walking the streets. I've traveled a lot in this country and overseas (both before and after this job), but I've not seen quite what I saw in Skid Row in Los Angeles. If it had been the set for a movie about an impoverished third world country, it would have been convincing.

Block after block after block of city encampments. Hundreds, thousands of people out on the streets, living in tents and cardboard boxes. I've seen it before. I've been involved in this issue for 24 years now. I'd seen it in New York City and in Sydney and in Seattle. But I'd never seen such a visible, expansive, and institutionalized street encampment.

All summer I'd been hearing about, reading about and visiting encampments from Cape Cod to Orlando to Chicago and the South. But nothing I had seen rivaled the scope of human tragedy and policy failure that I saw on those blocks.

All of it here in the United States of America. Not south of the border. Not in Southeast Asia. Not in sub-Saharan Africa. But right here in the shadow of our Statue of Liberty, of our silos filled with grain, of our office towers reaching skyward.

After two decades of the worst case of **affluenza** this country has ever experienced, the side effects of that condition linger visibly on the streets of our gentrified cities, hidden in our rural communities, and secret in our suburban enclaves.

We cannot allow ourselves to be anesthetized to the Skid Rows of our communities. We cannot accept them as intractable elements of the social landscape. In doing so, we would betray the promise of America and compromise our sense of moral right.

I tell you today, it is unacceptable. Unacceptable to you. Unacceptable to me. Unacceptable to Secretary Martinez. To the Cabinet. To the President, to the

Administration, to our country. Unacceptable. And we intend to do something about it.

And the **evidence of our intent** is empirical. In the President's FY '03 budget. In his call to end a profile of homelessness. In the \$35 million Joint NOFA targeted to the streets of our country announced last Monday. In the Samaritan Initiative targeted at chronic homelessness announced in the President's budget this Monday.

We intend to make a difference on the streets and in the encampments of this country.

How many of you have worked on this issue more that 2 years? More than 5? More than 10? 15?

Why did we enlist in the first place?
For the easy work that you leave at the office?
For the 9-5 schedule?
For the high pay and generous perks?

No. For most of us, we saw something that was wrong. Unfair. Disgraceful. And we wanted to respond. To make a difference. Whether we came from political, philosophical, sociological, anthropological, spiritual, or ideological reasons, we all felt a call. A calling to our poorest neighbors. To relieve their privations. We never dreamed it would last this long.

When I got the call to go to Washington, I resisted. I did not want to leave my beloved Boston or the work I had done there for 22 years on this issue, the last dozen directing the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance.

We were based in Boston. So we are abolitionists. It's in the gene pool there. When you see a social wrong, you want to right it. When you see a social evil, you want to end it.

So we were engaged in that work of abolitionism there. Working on prevention strategies at the back door of systems of incarceration, detention, mental health, managed care, welfare, foster care, substance abuse, housing trying to apply a tourniquet to the hemorrhaging into homelessness.

And in addition to prevention, we were working on intervention. Creating that "starter housing" for homeless people virtually eliminated during those decades of affluenza. As if the appropriate antibodies to battle homelessness had been depleted during the economic boom, leaving our immune system compromised and unable to respond to our current post affluenza, post 9/11 economic virus. (Just another reason to dislike Osama.)

Those SRO's and lodging houses and YMCA residences and inexpensive apartments that disappeared were the "starter housing" for our poorest neighbors. Just as young couples are exiled to ex-urbia to get into the housing market to eventually be able to own in the preferred suburban or downtown location, poor people need to get into the housing market through low cost or no cost housing.

In Massachusetts, the Governor's research showed that most of that housing disappeared in the period of affluenza. In fact, in the past two decades, 96% of all SRO's in that state were lost. And that's true in many cities around the country. We worked with the Governor and we were formulating a replenishment plan for the poorest.

So I didn't want to leave. And did so only after meeting with Secretary Martinez and studying the President's '03 budget. Rhetoric is one thing; resources are quite another. And both the Secretary and budget reflected the latter.

I saw a commitment I had advocated for becoming a reality with an abolitionist theme in the President's call to end chronic homelessness in 10 years.

So now I'm living in Washington, trying to see how it all makes sense. I was an advocate for 23 years. I worked on a breadline. Directed a city's homeless efforts. Worked with African American churches. Began a clergy group. Founded a regional advocacy initiative and evolved it into a state advocacy alliance of 80 agencies and 200 programs.

I was a homeless advocate for 23 years. Now I've been a federal employee for 10 months. I've already started a 12-step group – you'll like the acronym. Federal Employees Anonymous in Recovery. That's right, the acronym is FEAR. You know how every meeting starts – Hello, I'm Philip. I'm a federal employee. Pray for me. I'm responsible to a higher power. The White House. Just kidding. If I've learned one thing in Washington, it's how committed and dedicated federal personnel are to this issue.

I had to be sworn in. They chose the date of that event – March 15. The Ides of March. What kind of cultural sensitivity is that? Are there any Italians here? Raise your hands. Don't be afraid. No one's filming. You know what I mean. This isn't Newark.

I was in Chicago recently. You know, they claim to be the birthplace of pizza in this country. Most cities have a Starbucks on every corner. In Chicago, it's a pizza parlor. I asked them if there were any Italians in the audience. 300 people. Nobody raised their hand. I was shocked. Then I found out later, they're all in the witness protection program. **Oh! You've been watching the Soprano's!**

Since I got to Washington, I've been closeted in meeting after meeting ushering me into the deep mysteries of federal employment, protocols, ethics, regulations, and more ethics. More ethics briefings than any other subject. Ethics, ethics, ethics.

Now, when I returned to Boston a number of years ago from Los Angeles where I worked in the music industry – **where there were no ethics briefings** – I thought I wanted to be a Franciscan. The priest I went to for instruction told me about the vows – poverty, chastity, and obedience. **Poverty, chastity, obedience.** Now one for three might be good enough for Barry Bonds or Jeff Kent, but not good enough for the Franciscans.

Now I've been meeting with the ethics attorneys in Washington. They're providing instruction. Guess what?
I'm back to the same three vows.

There is one vow I will take with you today. I vow I will work with you here in San Francisco, across California in this Region and throughout our country to end homelessness for our poorest neighbors. So help me, God.

That Presidential commitment to ending chronic homelessness, rooted in the research of Culhane and Burt, is unprecedented and unparalleled. No administration budget has ever called for the **ending**, the elimination of any profile of homelessness. Encouraged by the 10-year plan of the National Alliance to End Homelessness and supported by the research that tells us that this 10% of the population consumes half of all homeless resources, this Administration has responded.

One of the President's first acts was to revitalize the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness. Dormant for six years in the previous administration, one agency's approach to homelessness strategy marked the federal response.

This Administration recognizes that all federal departments and agencies need to be at the table. And so in the FY '02 and FY '03 budgets, the President refunded the Interagency Council and appointed me as its Executive Director on that fateful day last March.

Since then we've expanded the membership to 20 federal departments and agencies, adding the White House's USA Freedom Corps and Office of Faith and Community Based Initiatives just recently. We've convened two meetings of the full Council at the White House and have a third scheduled for next month. Both meetings have pulled together cabinet secretaries, deputy secretaries, and assistant secretaries in the highest-ranking meetings ever held in our country on the issue of homelessness.

Further, a Senior Policy Group of appointees meets monthly and a Program Group of career staff bi-monthly.

Additionally, the Council is in the process of hiring 10 Regionally based staff – through the commitment of Secretary Martinez – to replicate the interagency, intra-agency, intergovernmental, and intercommunity work being done in Washington and across the country. Tomorrow, we continue the interviewing process for this region, blessed with a number of highly qualified candidates.

Council revitalization, more agencies at the table, increased staff – they're all signs of the deepened commitment. But, meetings and personnel are one thing – resources to get the job done are another. As we used to ask in Massachusetts, are you putting your resources where your rhetoric is?

Are there tangible deliverables from all this collaboration? Or is it all just a rhetorical screen to mask the issue's seeming intractability?

A legitimate question. And here's a substantive response.

This Administration's commitment was evident in the President's FY '03 Budget Proposal. In a difficult fiscal year, the President proposed increased funding for nearly every targeted homeless program and increased numerous mainstream programs that assist homeless people.

He requested 34,000 new Section 811 vouchers. He requested a \$268,000,000 increase in HOME funds to produce housing for the poor. He offered 52,000 new substance abuse treatment slots, so needed to respond to chronic homelessness. He increased funding \$60 million for transitioning from foster care to residential and social stability. And, related to the budget, the Administration has just invested \$100 million across the country for the re-entry of ex-prisoners.

This translates into \$2 million to every state for ex-prisoners re-entry, that is reintegration through better discharge planning. Read – **homeless prevention**.

In the President's NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND Initiative, the Administration created a liaison for homeless children in every school district in America – over 14,000 of them – to ensure educational parity for homeless children. That guarantee of mainstream educational opportunity not only de-pathologizes and de-stigmatizes these children, but also creates a long-term homeless prevention strategy. We cannot tolerate generational homelessness. One generation is enough. It, too, is unacceptable. Can I get an amen?

In the budget and other initiatives, the President took action and invested resources that would both prevent and end homelessness. He revitalized the Council, recognizing that **no one federal agency could do the job alone**. The entire federal government is needed on the front lines.

Perhaps, most significantly in that FY '03 budget, the President began an initiative that has created momentum across the government and the country. He called for that 10-year initiative to end chronic homelessness.

Targeted to the most vulnerable – people with a disability – mental illness, addiction, or physical – and a long-term episode of over a year – often on the streets of our communities or in encampments – the Initiative prioritizes the most vulnerable.

To be inclusive of those with varied disabilities is not to be exclusive in policy or resources of those with different profiles. Individuals without disabilities and families are also in focus. In fact, the next Council sponsored focus group is targeted on innovative initiatives addressing family homelessness.

Two weeks ago we reconvened the Policy Academy process, promising that every state would have an opportunity to attend an Academy focused on investing mainstream resources to end chronic homelessness. The past Academies, bringing together state decision makers from a wide range of mainstream resources, have enhanced the federal/state partnerships to address the homelessness of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Last Monday, we released a \$35 million NOFA targeted to the streets of our country, putting resources behind the President's initiative.

This Monday in the President's budget proposal for 2004, homeless resources were **increased** by 14% - increased by 14% in a year when states and localities are cutting and slashing social service and homeless resources. To put this increase in context, the increase for defense was 4.2% and for homeland security, 5.5%. But 14% for homeless programs.

An increase in the Housing Assistance Grants. The kept promise of Shelter Plus Care renewal funding. A doubling of the chronic homelessness Samaritan Initiative resources meant to make a difference on the streets of our country.

Increased Home mainstream housing production funding by \$113 million.

Increased Healthcare for the Homeless funding – nearly \$16 million new dollars for a 13% increase.

Increased PATH funds for mental health outreach – a 7% increase.

In the Section 811 housing production program for disabled people, a prioritization for those at risk of homelessness.

A 77% increase in the VA's grant and Per Diem Program and a 9% increase in the Department of Labor's Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Program.

In mainstream programs that will end and prevent homelessness, a substance abuse voucher program of nearly \$200 million to treat 100,000 people.

A \$300 million increase in the Low Income Heat Assistance Program. A \$169 million increase for Health Care Centers. A continuation of the requested \$60 million for Foster Care transition assistance. Increases in Employment and Training funds at Labor and in the Job Corps program.

And, the promise from SSA, the Social Security Administration, to **reduce the processing time** of disability claims. Can I get an amen on that one!

Most other targeted and mainstream programs impacting homeless people are at minimum level funded.

If we had achieved level funding across all programs in this most difficult fiscal year – a year in which 45 of 50 states are cutting budgets and services – you're feeling that here in California – if we had just achieved level funding, it would have been a victory.

Instead, a number of targeted mainstream programs have received increases. 14% in targeted programs. And other mainstream programs have been prioritized or reformed in a way that will benefit homeless people and prevent homelessness.

What else?

First, I'm happy to report that, to their credit, there are now at least 5 federal departments that have intra agency work groups focused on homelessness – HUD, HHS, VA, Labor, and SSA. The last being so critical as the provider of SSI, a vital resource in ending chronic homelessness.

So inter and intra agency collaborations at the federal level. But for the past 27 years, we've been in the process of devolution. **Once federal**, resources and decision-making are now devolved to the states and localities. Now intergovernmental collaboration is essential – the federal, state, and local governments must work together from the same strategy.

To facilitate those collaborations we've asked every Governor to identify a point person for their administration on the issue of homelessness to relate to the Council. We've asked the same of the Mayors of the country's 100 largest cities. The response has been heartening. (Be certain that your Governor's Office has named someone.) We'll be using these contacts to disseminate information about funding possibilities, research, data, and best practices.

Beyond interagency and intra-agency and intergovernmental collaborations, at the Council, we are also seeking what I call inter-community collaborations. Ensuring that homeless providers and advocates and behavioral and primary health groups, as well as other related housing and service agencies, are on board. The Policy Academies are one vehicle of these collaborations.

So interagency, intra-agency, intergovernmental, and inter-community collaborations. **Partnerships**, really, to deliver the performance outcome sought – the end of chronic homelessness in our country. Making a difference on the streets of our nation.

Partnership to accomplish the good. **To move beyond partisanship to partnership.** I was recently at the U.S. Conference of Mayors. I spoke at their plenary session two weeks ago and last month attended their annual hunger-homelessness press conference. We agreed – the President of the Mayors, Tom Menino and the Chair of the Hunger – Homelessness Task Force, Mayor Purcell of Nashville – we agreed, **on this issue** there can be no toleration of **partisanship**, only room for **partnership**. There's no D or R or I or G on this issue. We're all together.

Anything more?

Second, a welcomed challenge to the U.S. Conference of Mayors that by next January 100 Mayors will have signed on to plans to end homelessness in their cities in the next 10 years. Indianapolis, Memphis, Philadelphia, and a handful of other cities have such plans. And most recently, and significantly, Mayor Richard Daley in the nation's third largest city, Chicago, endorsed such a plan and indicated his administration's support.

Just five years ago, such plans would have been deemed risky and naïve. No one even contemplated such a notion. Then, the risk and naïveté was in **having** such a plan.

Now the paradigm is shifting. The risk and naïveté might be in **not** having such a plan. The political risk of not planning for such a visible and media attended social problem now outweighs other considerations.

What was unthinkable just a few years ago is now emerging as common sense. What seemed naïve is now sound policy. What was thought of as intractable is now subject to strategies.

After 20 years of response, we now realize homelessness won't go away on its own. If it's ignored, it only gets worse.

There is increasing hope on this issue now, even in the face of rising numbers. Not illusory, transient hope spun on anecdote and conjecture and one-dimensional plans. But a hope that is fashioned on research, data, technology, planning, performance outcomes, and resources.

Finally, and, perhaps, most importantly, our commitment is to the creation of a **new standard of expectation**. We're no longer satisfied with managing the effort or maintaining the programs or accommodating the response. No. We have a new standard that requires **visible, measurable, quantifiable change**. On the streets of your state, in the shadows of your shelters, and, most importantly, in the lives of your homeless neighbors.

We're not going to be satisfied any longer moving homeless people from one city to another. Or from one side of town to the other. Or from one homeless program to another. We have a new standard – abolishing homelessness.

There's not a person in this room who doesn't know that homelessness is a disgrace. And whether it's a systems failure or a personal failure, no one should be left out on the cold streets of our communities. No child should be consigned to a shelter. No veteran should be eating out of a dumpster.

As the Indianapolis Plan tells us, such images are unworthy of this great and affluent nation and not worthy of the states and communities you represent.

The new standard of expectation requires performance outcomes related to **ending** homelessness. That's what the President has called for. That's what Mayors are calling for. That's what some Governors are moving toward. **Ending** this social disgrace.

And that new standard is made possible by new research and new technologies that support the objectives and offer solutions. The Chicago and Indianapolis plans feature a "housing first" approach. Based on high retention, low recidivism programs for chronic homeless people in several cities, the philosophy and practicality of housing first is simple – the most appropriate nexus point for the delivery of health and social services is housing. That there is no service, no health benefit that can be delivered on the streets or in shelters more effectively or with better outcomes **than in housing**. Not one. So, **these** plans and **that** strategy say, begin with housing. Invest there. And customize clinically based

engagement services for outreach on the streets and to support and stabilize tenancies. Here in San Francisco you have an exceptional model of such a program in the Direct Access to Housing Initiative.

And the plans all highlight and prioritize prevention planning and strategies. They focus on discharge planning from systems of behavioral health, detention, incarceration, and youth services. Research in a number of locations indicates that a substantial number of people entering the front door of homeless programs come from the back door of such systems.

Our Governor in Massachusetts, when alerted to this engagement, took action to disengage the back door of systems from the front door of homeless programs through discharge planning protocols and purchase of service contractual sanctions.

The President did not have to back the ten-year initiative to end chronic homelessness. He could have followed some people's advice and eliminated those paragraphs from his budget.

Mayor Daley did not have to sign the ten-year plan for his city. He could have followed the advice of some, and avoided such a commitment.

The Governor of Massachusetts could have dismissed the issues of discharge planning and prevention of homelessness. He could have responded to the voices that told him to take a pass on these issues, to walk on by.

They heard those voices. They did not have to stop for those most vulnerable, disabled people. As in the story of the Samaritan of old, they could have been among those who walked on by. And left it for others. For the feds. For the state. For the locality. For the providers.

But, instead, each stopped and offered resources. And asked all to stop and help. Not just to serve people in **place** but to move them **to a place** to live, safely, and securely.

In other locations some have walked by, averting their eyes from the gathering humanity. Some, dusting off 19th century vagrancy ordinances attempt to hide the disgrace for 30 or 60 or 90 days. Only to see its reappearance soon thereafter. But Chicago and Massachusetts and this Administration have stopped, not to be punitive in the imposition of law, but to be proactive in the provision of care.

Thirty-five years ago Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed this very story. He tells us that the Samaritan came by and stopped and asked the question: "What will happen to this man, this woman, this child if I do not stop to help them?" Dr.

King tells us that what made the Samaritan great and good was that he did not ask what will happen to **me**, but what will happen to this person, this family. The Samaritan was willing to take a risk and be naïve for the sake of another.

In the last few weeks we've heard a lot about Dr. King and having a dream. And during Black History Month, we'll hear a lot more about realizing that dream. A dream born in abolitionism.

Well, there are many here in this room who have shared a dream. A dream that someday soon no American will need to be on the streets. That no American family will need to be in a shelter. That no American veteran will be homeless. An abolitionist dream. A home for every American.

The stakes are high. Lives are in the balance. Our vision and our partnerships must embrace every citizen of our states. Stopping for all, ensuring that no one will be left behind. And that everyone will be known by a single name – **neighbor** – and treated as one.

Thank you.