

*IN THE CITIES: PORTLAND, MAINE ANNOUNCES THIRD ANNUAL
DECREASE IN CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AND RELEASES NEW COST
DATA*

PORTLAND, MAINE. Maine's largest city, Portland, has announced its third consecutive annual decrease in chronic homelessness. With a general population of just under 65,000, Portland has reported a 49% decrease in chronic homelessness since 2004.

Also released this week was new cost benefit data identifying savings achieved by the Greater Portland area by moving individuals from chronic homelessness to stability in housing. Service costs in ambulance and emergency room use, jail nights, and police contacts were cut in half after housing placement, dropping from an average of over \$28,000 per person annually to \$14,000, as shown in research supported by MaineHousing, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

In the area of health costs, data show a reduction of 59% for a savings of \$497,042, while emergency room costs decreased by 62% for a savings of \$128,373, and general inpatient hospitalizations decreased by 77% for a savings of \$255,421. Suggesting that participants switched to using less expensive outpatient treatment, prescription drug costs increased by 31% for a cost of \$46,049.

Phase One of the cost study collected data from formerly homeless people living in the greater Portland area, Phase Two will obtain data from formerly homeless people living in York County and Phase Three will review the other parts of the State of Maine.

Individuals from both Preble Street and Logan Place, two key supportive housing initiatives for persons who are chronically homeless, took part. MaineHousing provided the impetus for the study, applied for the funding to pay for it, and convened an advisory committee to oversee the process, which was also encouraged by the State Interagency Council. Cumberland County Jail, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Medical Center, MaineCare (Medicaid), Mercy Hospital, Milestone Foundation, Portland Fire Department, Portland Homeless Health Clinic, Portland Oxford Street Shelter, Portland Police Department, Riverview State Psychiatric Center, Shalom House, and Spring Harbor Hospital were participants.

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