

## *IN THE CITIES: NEW SEATTLE COST SAVINGS DATA SHOW RESULTS FROM HOUSING FIRST INITIATIVES IN 10-YEAR PLAN*

*SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.* Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels this week released [data](#) showing that the city saved \$3.2 million in emergency shelter and health care costs by placing 160 chronically homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing.

"To end homelessness, we must find programs that work in reaching those who are the hardest to reach," Mayor Nickels said. "These studies show that Housing First works. Instead of letting people fall through the cracks, this program helps to stabilize and rebuild lives while taking a costly strain off our social safety net."

Separate studies by University of Washington researchers of Seattle's first two Housing First projects - 1811 Eastlake and Plymouth on Stewart - revealed similar findings. Preliminary research shows an estimated savings of \$3.2 million because of fewer visits by these formerly chronically homeless individuals to the Harborview Medical Center and the Dutch Schisler Sobering Center, as well as less use of other crisis-treatment services. Every year, the city spends approximately \$40 million to prevent or end homelessness. Since 2006, Seattle has added more than \$6 million in general fund resources for Housing First housing and service programs.

The Housing First programs are operated by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) and the Plymouth Housing Group (PHG) and supported by the City of Seattle. In the past two years, they have helped to change the lives of 100 chronically homeless individuals.

"This is a tremendous start. Working with our partners at King County, the United Way and others, we will see more facilities like these open in the months and years ahead," said Mayor Nickels. "With every new building, we take a big step toward ending homelessness in our community."

For the residents of Plymouth on Stewart, medical costs were dramatically reduced by 75 percent - or \$1.2 million - from the year prior to housing placement. Sobering Center visits dropped 97%, from 349 to just 11. Medical respite days dropped from 1,107 to zero, and inpatient hospital days dropped from 329 to 56, or 83%. Emergency room visits decreased from 191 to 50, or a 74% decrease. Residents reported that the program helped them deal more effectively with daily problems, improved their physical health, and helped them reduce drug use.

Since the opening of 1811 and Plymouth on Stewart, two more projects have been completed with the help of city funding. DESC's Evans House opened in fall 2007 and houses 75 severely mentally ill people. PHG's Langdon and Anne Simons Senior Apartments opens this month and features 23 units reserved for homeless seniors who frequently use emergency services and 22 units for homeless veterans.

In total, the city has helped pay for 215 Housing First units in Seattle. Another 288 are under construction or planned to open by 2011. A total of 1,000 are planned countywide under the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

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