

Permanent Supportive Housing

A Monthly Series ♦ Kickoff Webinar



The Dynamics of Homelessness and U.S. Policy Responses

12-1 p.m. Feb. 4, 2021

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Speaker: Dennis Culhane, PhD,
University of Pennsylvania

Persons with serious mental illnesses are more likely than others to experience homelessness. Homelessness policies in the U.S. have evolved as research has informed us about the dynamics of homelessness. Federal policies reflect research showing that a relatively small number of people who experience homelessness remain homeless for long periods of time, often because of disabilities that make it difficult to exit without structured support and housing (Permanent Supportive Housing). Also, federal efforts to address “crisis homelessness” have been deployed, providing assistance through “rapid rehousing” programs to prevent long-term homelessness. The initiative to end veteran homelessness combined these two approaches and led to a 50% reduction in homelessness.

This presentation summarizes the intersection of these research and policy efforts which greatly affect the need for comprehensive housing and support services for persons with serious mental illnesses. Attendees will learn:

- Homelessness is characterized by two primary dynamics: crisis homelessness and chronic homelessness;
- Crisis homelessness can be effectively addressed by providing emergency cash, case management and relocation assistance, with rent supports;
- Permanent supportive housing can successfully address chronic homelessness and is cost-neutral for many populations, research shows;
- Three federal programs – the Chronic Homelessness Initiative, the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), and the campaign to end veteran homelessness – established new and more robust policies to support these research-informed approaches;
- Homelessness assistance programs do not prevent homelessness, and rising rates of unsheltered homelessness and the aging of the adult homeless population are creating new challenges for policymakers to address.

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