



August 21, 2015

Dorothy Teeter, Director  
Washington State Health Care Authority  
PO Box 42710  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Ms. Teeter:

On behalf of the City of Seattle, I am writing to thank you for proposing a Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit in Washington's 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver application and to express our strong support.

My vision for Seattle is to create a safe, secure and affordable city for all. A city where people of all backgrounds live, raise health families, and lead productive, fulfilling lives. In order to achieve this vision, the City adopted a "housing first" strategy to provide homeless people permanent housing with access to services critical to stabilizing their lives. We also partner with King County, local governments, social organizations, and faith based communities to end homelessness in King County. This plan calls for implementing a range of prevention and service-delivery strategies demonstrated to be more effective and efficient than current practices.

Supportive housing is a nationally recognized, evidence-based best practice for serving the chronically homeless that have serious behavioral or physical health disabilities. People who are chronically homeless experience significant health risks, injuries, exposure from living outside, and barriers to accessing appropriate levels of health care.

Seattle is home to Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) has been implementing successful service-delivery strategies, including supportive housing for years. DESC works adults who are living with serious mental illnesses. DESC's utilizes an array of clinical services and supportive housing to further their mission to end homelessness. DESC is a model for the type of supportive housing Seattle and the rest of the state need.

One of the barriers to fully implementing supportive housing in Washington is a shortage of funding for services that are critical to the model's success. If approved, the Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit will bring additional resources for supportive housing services to Washington and will help make the expansion of this intervention financially feasible.

Thank you for proposing a Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit in Washington's 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver application. This proposal will create significant health care savings while ensuring people with serious disabilities are able to live with security, autonomy and dignity in their own communities.

Sincerely,

Edward B. Murray  
Mayor, City of Seattle