

August 10, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee
2467 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, LHHS Approp Subcom
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair, LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee
260 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, LHHS Approp Subcom
154 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairpersons Cole and Blunt and Ranking Members DeLauro and Murray,

We, the undersigned organizations, which represent mental health and homelessness advocacy organizations and service providers, urge Congress to act this year to spare critical SAMHSA homeless programs from harmful funding cuts, particularly the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program.

SAMHSA Homeless Programs including the PATH program are an important part of the network of services for homeless persons with severe mental illness. **If Congress proceeds with the proposed cuts to PATH of 15 percent in the House or up to 38 percent in the Senate:**

- **Fewer vulnerable persons will be served** – In 2014 the PATH program engaged 174,303 homeless persons. The PATH program targets and serves the most vulnerable homeless persons living on the streets or in shelters or who are transitioning from these places to supportive housing. A cut of 38 percent could mean about 66,000 vulnerable people would not be engaged or served.
- **Less coordination with other services will be possible** – Recently there is a new requirement that all PATH providers enter data in the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is widely used by homelessness services providers and allows communities to coordinate resources to improve their delivery and reduce costs. PATH provider information is important and funding cuts would make these data less available for community planning.
- **Less gap coverage for other mainstream services like Medicaid is available** – Medicaid can finance similar services in some states, but not in all instances or all states. PATH is needed to help fill the gaps in Medicaid and other programs when eligible persons are not yet enrolled or need additional services beyond their coverage.
- **Fewer cost savings to communities will be possible** – The PATH program is an important link for identifying homeless persons with disabilities living in shelters and on

the street and transitioning them into supportive housing. Supportive housing provides a housing subsidy along with services to keep people stably housed. Many studies have documented the cost savings of supportive housing, which is cheaper than the emergency services costs of allowing people to remain homeless. Fewer PATH funds means fewer persons are identified and placed in housing which could lead to higher emergency services costs for the community.

The U.S. has made significant progress towards the President's goal to end chronic homelessness and Veteran homelessness. We need PATH to continue to make progress towards ending homelessness among Veterans and persons with disabling conditions by identifying those in need and engaging them in services like supportive housing and accessing additional benefits to end their homelessness. We understand many of the cuts to programs like PATH are a result of sequestration caps. We urge Congress to remove the caps in order to fund vital programs like the PATH program.

We ask that Congress fully fund the PATH program at the FY15 level of \$65 million for the FY16 budget. Thank you for your important work and your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Corporation for Supportive Housing
National Health Care for the Homeless Council

State/Local Organizations