



NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**HOUSING  
HEALTH**



# Hospital Partnerships with Supportive Housing

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## The Need for Affordable Housing Far Outpaces Supply

Supportive housing sits at the intersection of health, homelessness, and public systems, offering one of the most effective, evidence-based strategies to improve health outcomes while reducing costly and avoidable use of crisis services. For people with complex medical, behavioral health, and social needs—many of whom cycle repeatedly through hospital emergency departments, inpatient units, jails, shelters, and clinics—stable housing paired with tailored supports is not ancillary to care; it is foundational to it.

Hospitals and health systems increasingly recognize the powerful link between housing stability and health outcomes, as well as the impact of homelessness on care access, quality, and cost. Expanded screening for housing insecurity and stronger referral pathways to community resources represent important progress. Still, systems contend with a fundamental constraint: **in many communities, the need for affordable housing far outpaces supply**. Addressing this gap presents both a pressing challenge and a strategic opportunity for hospitals seeking to improve health outcomes, reduce unnecessary utilization of crisis care, and lower costs.

Across the country, hospitals are leveraging their unique position to benefit from and contribute to supportive housing. Many have begun investing in housing through a range of strategies, including developing affordable and supportive housing, funding supportive services, supporting high utilizers of emergency and inpatient care, delivering health services in housing settings, and contributing land for new housing development.

**This guide highlights examples of how hospitals have partnered with supportive housing initiatives and is designed to help health systems understand why these partnerships matter, what roles they can play, and how to get started.**

# Key Benefits for Hospitals that Invest in Housing

Supportive housing offers hospitals a strategic opportunity to improve health outcomes, reduce costs, and fulfill their mission to serve vulnerable populations who often turn to costly crisis service systems. Potential benefits of partnering with supportive housing include:

## Improved Patient Flow and Discharge Planning

- Supportive housing helps break the cycle of institutionalization for patients experiencing homelessness.
- Supportive housing provides stable discharge options for high-need patients, reducing unnecessary hospital stays and emergency department visits, freeing beds, and lowering costs.
- When partnering with local homeless response systems and other sectors, there is an opportunity to share and match data and identify people with high utilization of crisis care.

CSH's [Frequently Used Systems Engagement \(FUSE\)](#) work has demonstrated that providing comprehensive support to individuals who often turn to crisis systems can help them achieve stability and better health outcomes while reducing system costs.

## Cost Savings and Shifts from Crisis Care to Preventative Care

Research shows supportive housing often covers its own costs when compared to the cost of crisis services utilized. Supportive housing results in positive shifts from crisis to preventive care. CSH's brief, [The Evidence for Supportive Housing](#), highlights outcomes from multiple studies, including:

- **Montana:** A 42.2% decrease in emergency department visits and a 47.2% increase in behavioral health appointments for supportive housing tenants.
- **California:** Reduced use of psychiatric emergency services and increased use of outpatient mental health by supportive housing tenants compared to groups that did not receive supportive housing.
- **Colorado:** Fewer emergency department visits and increased office-based visits and prescription medications for tenants in supportive housing after two years than a comparison group.
- **North Carolina:** Mecklenburg County's FUSE initiative achieved a 24% reduction in ambulance service charges and a 43% reduction in hospitalization costs among participants.
- **Oregon:** Multnomah County reported 17,000 fewer emergency department visits, 200 fewer hospitalizations, and 50 fewer psychiatric inpatient stays from people participating in FUSE services in housing.

## Financial Sustainability

- Supportive housing tenants are often Medicaid-eligible, converting charity care into reimbursable services.
- Hospitals can earn developer fees, lease income, or capital gains by repurposing surplus properties for housing.

## Asset Optimization

- Many hospitals have underutilized buildings or land, which can be converted into affordable or supportive housing, reducing carrying costs and liability.
- Properties near hospital campuses are ideal for tenants needing ongoing care, supporting them in accessing outpatient and preventative care options.

## Community Impact and Reputation

- For mission-driven public and non-profit hospitals with a focus on serving those most in need, moving into providing or partnering with supportive housing is a natural extension of their continuum of services to improve health outcomes.
- Hospitals are trusted community institutions. Their involvement can reduce opposition to housing projects and improve neighborhood relations.
- Hospitals are critical partners in [Community Health Needs Assessments \(CHNAs\)](#), which increasingly identify how the lack of affordable and supportive housing impact community health. By contributing to the affordable housing field, hospitals can align with their communities' public health priorities.

## Ways Hospitals Can Engage

Hospitals can leverage their resources, expertise, and trusted relationships to address housing instability. Whether through direct development, service provision, strategic partnerships, or land contributions, hospitals can play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining housing solutions that improve patient outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and promote long term health. Below are pathways for hospitals to explore to reduce homelessness.



# Deepen Your Impact: Medicaid's Role in Housing Development

Medicaid Housing-Related Services (HRS) offer a powerful tool for hospitals, health plans, and community partners seeking to expand supportive housing. [This resource](#) explains how HRS can finance services and infrastructure that support new housing development, without paying for bricks and mortar to improve health outcomes and reduce costs.

## **Developer/Owner/Manager: Build and operate housing directly.**

Hospitals can take a leading role in facilitating the development of new supportive housing. Hospitals can be developers, owners, and managers by acquiring property, assembling development teams, and securing financing. This approach is especially viable for systems with experience in community-based real estate, though partnerships with seasoned developers can ease entry for newcomers. As trusted community institutions, hospitals are well-positioned to navigate public concerns and build support for housing initiatives. While this role offers potential financial sustainability and revenue through developer fees and capital gains, it also involves risks such as liability and the complexities of property management.

## **Service Provider: Deliver health and behavioral services directly to tenants.**

Hospitals can operate as service providers within supportive housing, partnering with developers through formal agreements. In this role, hospitals manage social service contracts and deliver care such as case management, mental health, and substance use treatment on-site. Systems with experience beyond primary care are well-suited for this work, though it comes with challenges like coordinating complex, client-centered services and managing contracts effectively.

Hospitals also understand Medicaid and have the billing infrastructure that many community based organizations (CBOs) need as they expand their services. Partnerships in which hospitals leverage their billing infrastructure to expand networks of community providers, would expand resource access in communities. In the aging sector, this idea has been framed as a "[Community Care Hub](#)."

## **Preferred Provider or Care Coordination Partner: Refer patients and provide services through clinics or mobile teams.**

Hospitals can support tenants of supportive housing by linking existing clinical services—such as mental health care, substance use treatment, and care coordination—through formal or informal partnerships with housing providers. These services, often delivered through community health centers, are typically Medicaid-reimbursable and may offer a more efficient alternative to contract-based models. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) sites are especially well-positioned to serve this role, helping hospitals extend their impact while maintaining cost-effective service delivery.

## **Land Contributor: Lease or sell surplus property to housing developers.**

Hospitals can facilitate the creation of supportive housing by repurposing surplus properties—often well-located near transit, amenities, and healthcare facilities—for development. These sites, typically owned by public or nonprofit systems, may be offered at lower costs and generate revenue through sale or lease. Locating housing near hospital grounds can also create a steady source of patients, aligning real estate strategy with community health goals.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency

Launched in 2019, [this initiative](#) aims to reduce avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations by developing supportive housing near hospitals. With an initial funding allocation of \$12 million and additional pledges over time, the program targets frequent hospital users, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those with chronic health conditions. Hospitals collaborate with for-profit or nonprofit housing developers, contributing funds that are matched by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), up to \$4 million per project. The first project funded under the initiative, [Barclay Place](#) in Patterson, opened in 2023.

For more on Barclay Place, see: [Pioneering Affordable Housing With Integrated Healthcare Services in Patterson, New Jersey | HUDUSER](#).



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### CAMBA Gardens in New York, NY

[CAMBA Gardens I](#) is a unique project braiding affordable and supportive housing developed on underutilized land at Kings County Hospital Center in Brooklyn. The \$67 million development brought together CAMBA Housing Ventures (an affordable housing developer affiliated with CAMBA Inc, an experienced service provider), Kings County Hospital, and NYC Health + Hospitals (New York City's municipal healthcare system). The development includes 209 homes, co-located healthcare and other services, and is designed to promote tenant health and well-being.

Since reaching full occupancy in 2013, tenants have shown improved health outcomes, gained employment, and participated in educational programs, while the project has helped reduce public costs by lowering reliance on shelters and emergency rooms.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### Central City Concern in Portland, OR

In 2016, [Central City Concern \(CCC\)](#) and Legacy Health convened hospital CEOs and Medicaid organizations to invest \$21.5 million in housing and clinical services. This led to the development of 375 housing units and expanded healthcare access, reinforcing the connection between housing stability and health outcomes.

The partnership demonstrated how health and housing systems can work together to effectively address homelessness, improve health outcomes, and reduce strain on emergency healthcare systems.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### Mission Health System in Asheville, NC

[Mission Health System](#) has developed a comprehensive partnership to address homelessness through healthcare interventions and community collaboration. A key component is the [FUSE](#) model, which identifies individuals who frequently cycle through hospitals, shelters, and jails, and connects them to supportive housing and coordinated care. Mission Health also supports medical respite care, offering short-term housing and recovery support for patients experiencing homelessness who are discharged from the hospital.

To better identify and serve patients facing housing instability, Mission Health has implemented the use of ICD-10 Z codes to document social determinants of health and housing instability. The hospital also contributes community benefit funds to local organizations for case management, housing infrastructure, and in-reach services. Additionally, Mission Health has provided financial support for emergency shelter programs like Code Purple, including a \$75,000 donation in 2025 to expand cold-weather shelter capacity in Asheville and Buncombe County.

This multi-pronged approach strengthens the link between healthcare and housing, improves discharge planning, and enhances access to supportive services for vulnerable populations.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### AdventHealth Partnership in FL

In 2014, AdventHealth contributed \$6 million to support efforts aimed at ending chronic homelessness in Central Florida. Regional leaders used this funding to initiate a campaign focused on breaking the cycle of long-term homelessness by adopting a low-barrier approach. This effort prioritized over 200 individuals with high utilization of crisis services and provided participants with stable housing along with comprehensive support services and case management. According to AdventHealth, participants in the pilot program who remained housed for at least a year saw nearly a 60% drop in emergency room visits. Most of the case management services were provided by the local healthcare center for the homeless health center. This partnership is critical in continuing to provide access to healthcare.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### Steps Forward in Sacramento, CA

Four major health systems—Dignity Health, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, and UC Davis Health—partnered with Sacramento Steps Forward, the lead organization for the CoC, to reduce chronic homelessness. Their [collaboration](#) includes investments in programs like [Whole Person Care](#) and [Medical Respite](#), and they work together to strengthen the local homeless response system.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### Vida @ Sloan's Lake in Denver, CO

The housing development at Vida @ Sloan's Lake, co-located on Denver Health's campus, shows how Denver Health and Hospital Authority (Denver Health) and the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) built a meaningful hospital and housing partnership. DHA redeveloped a Denver Health building into 175 units of affordable housing for older adults and people with disabilities.

The first floor of the building is dedicated to community and health services operated by Denver Health. Some of the services and amenities include; a resident gym, senior center, community rooms, dialysis center, and health center clinic (with provider primary, family, maternal, behavioral health, and lab services). The two partners worked together to design a memorandum of agreement to provide clarity around roles and referral pathways to ensure efficient referrals into housing and healthcare services.



## COMMUNITY EXAMPLES

### Flexible Housing Subsidy Pools

A Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool (Flex Pool) is a model designed to scale supportive housing and reduce homelessness. Flex Pools combine and streamline multiple sources of funding, such as government, private, and hospital investments. Depending on how they are structured, Flex Pool resources may utilize existing housing stock by providing rental subsidies and services, or to finance the development of new supportive housing units.

The model is adaptable, supporting a range of service programs and populations through partnerships with a variety of funders and providers. Flex Pools emphasize stability and health by prioritizing housing as a foundational step toward recovery and well-being. Hospitals can be involved as funders, referral partners, or in other ways. Examples of Flex Pools include:

- [LA County Department of Health Services: Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool Guide](#)
- [Cook County Health: Flexible Housing Pool Program](#)
- [San Diego Flexible Housing Pool | Brilliant Corners](#)



## Partnering for Maximum Impact

Hospitals play a crucial role in addressing homelessness, not just through healthcare but by actively participating in supportive housing efforts. These institutions frequently treat patients who experience homelessness, many of whom face repeated cycles of hospitalization and discharge back to the streets or shelters.

By engaging in supportive housing—either directly or through partnerships—hospitals can help break this cycle and contribute meaningfully to the broader goal of ending homelessness in America.

## About Us



CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) advances affordable and accessible housing aligned with services by advocating for effective policies and funding, investing in communities, and strengthening the supportive housing field. Since our founding in 1991, CSH has been the only national nonprofit intermediary focused solely on increasing the availability of supportive housing. Over the course of our work, we have created more than 512,500 units of affordable and supportive housing and invested more than \$2.2 billion in communities. Our workforce is central to accomplishing this work. We employ approximately 170 people across 30 states and U.S. Territories. As an intermediary, we do not directly develop or operate housing but center our approach on collaboration with a wide range of people, partners, and sectors. Learn more at [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).



The National Center for Housing + Health (NCH+H) is an innovative resource dedicated to advancing the alignment between affordable housing and healthcare. The Center brings together innovations, proven models, and practical strategies and policies that help housing providers, healthcare organizations, policymakers, and community and system leaders work better together — and make a bigger difference for people and communities. Learn more at [www.housinghealthcenter.org](http://www.housinghealthcenter.org)

