

HEALTHCHOICES REINVESTMENT PLAN PRIORITY

County: **LEHIGH**

Reinvestment Plan from contract year: **2005/2006 (See Note)***

Date of Submission: **11/21/2007**

**Note – the content of the PY05-06 reinvestment plan incorporates unspent funding from prior years’ reinvestment programs. Included with the submission of this plan is a request for transfer of funding, a transfer summary, and each year’s corresponding revised budget document for OMHSAS review.*

Name of Service: **Supportive Housing** New Plan: **X** Continuation Plan:

Reinvestment Service or Program – (check all categories that apply)

In-Plan Start-up

Non-Medical Only **X**

Supplemental – In Lieu of
Approved Procedure Code
Newly Proposed

Budget a. Clinical*
Budget b. Operating**
One-time only

Supplemental – In Addition to
Budget a. Clinical*
Budget b. Operating**

Priority: 1 of: 1 submitted

Year(s) in which funds are to be spent: January 2008 through December 2012 (5yrs)

Target Population: (MA eligible target population, population characteristics, number people served annually)

Lehigh County will provide equal priority for the MA eligible populations identified below: This includes people who have a serious and persistent mental illness who are:

- Currently in Community Rehabilitation Residences (CRR), whose housing and service needs can be more appropriately met in PSH;
- Young adult, (Age 18-23) transitional population;
- Forensic population transitioning out of Lehigh County Prison;
- Homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

Priority populations include people who may have extremely high rates of poverty, a desire to live in normal housing, a need for long-term supports and services in order to live as independently as possible and a desire for greater personal control, autonomy, and choice in their living situation.

Description of Program or Service: (Describe program, for: In-Plan start up- under one year. Indicate service is to be licensed; Supplemental In-Lieu of- why service is a cost effective alternative, staffing FTEs/qualifications; Children's Supplemental requires BHRS program exception application; Supplemental- In Addition to – why expected to be cost effective or appropriate but not cost effective, staffing FTEs/qualifications; and Non-Medical Only- used when all costs are non-medical)

1. Capital Investment - Housing Development Fund

Hope VI –The HART Project -\$2,000,000:

Lehigh County will develop a formalized relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Allentown Housing Authority and Penrose Properties, L.L.C, to set aside 20 units, serving 26 people, in the Hope VI project currently underway at the former Hanover Acres / Riverview Terrace project in Allentown (HART). The units will be one bedroom, (14 units) and two bedroom (6 units) apartments that will be purchased for approximately \$100,000 per unit and then made available to eligible consumers of mental health and substance abuse services for 30% of their income, but not less than \$50 per month.

This Memorandum of understanding will serve as the regulatory agreement assuring Lehigh County's interest in the project.

Leveraged Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Initiative -\$1,500,000:

These funds will be utilized to expand affordable housing capacity to address current unmet need for community supportive housing. Funding will be set aside to take full advantage, "leverage," public and private sources of capital, operational and service funding in order to expand permanent supportive housing opportunities. The County will enter into a regulatory agreement for development of a housing project(s) with the organization(s) who is awarded these funds to assure the county's interest in the proposed project in accordance with Attachment 5.

- Lehigh County will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will support projects that will serve at least one of the four priority populations identified above.
- Applicants for capital funding will be given preference in accordance with their ability to leverage other sources of funding in support of projects, e.g., HUD 811, HUD McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Programs, HOME, Community Development Block Grant, Section 8 tenant and project based resources, State Housing Mortgage Finance Agency resources, trust funds, tax credits programs, tax-exempt bonds, private debt/grants, etc. These programs provide significant capital and operational resources; however, many of these programs require matching resources, which the Reinvestment Fund can provide.
- It is anticipated that 20 to 30 beds will be created utilizing capital leveraging strategies.

2. PHFA Project Based Operating Subsidy

Lehigh County will contract \$1,000,000 with the PHFA. By entering into this administration agreement with PHFA, local non-profit housing organizations can be the

recipients of Reinvestment Funds for specific projects rather than the actual fund administrator. This avoids any potential conflict of interest (and also deter other potentially interested non-profit housing organizations) for one non-profit group to both administer the fund on behalf of County MH/MR Programs and also have access to the funding for actual housing development.

- PHFA is well positioned to take advantage of leveraged housing opportunities with the Tax Credit Program, PennHomes and other housing finance programs
- Lehigh County MH/MR will negotiate an Administrative fee with PHFA.
- Lehigh will enter into a Regulatory Agreement with a qualified developer upon the developer's successful award of tax credits and/or other affordable housing development projects by the PHFA. This agreement will specify how the county's interests in the project are secured.

3. Rental Subsidies

Bridge Subsidy Program

Lehigh County will develop a bridge subsidy fund to provide rental assistance to eligible consumers who are on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers. Funding of \$345,802 will provide a subsidy of up to \$450 per month for approximately 12 individuals for five years. It is hoped that individuals receiving the subsidy will receive a Section 8 voucher within two years which would allow additional members to be served by the program.

Lehigh County will establish a Bridge Subsidy Program that will:

- Recognize the significant demand for Section 8 subsidies, has resulted in lengthy and closed waiting lists, requiring interim strategies to expedite access to housing for people with immediate needs;
- Provides a temporary subsidy to a consumer until a more permanent, long term Section 8 rental subsidy becomes available. Applicants to the program will be required to apply for a Section 8 subsidy;
- Provides an individual immediate access to permanent supportive housing with the bridge subsidy with access to more long term housing support;
- Strengthens the housing/ services relationship between Lehigh County MH/MR and the Allentown PHA, working in collaboration with consumers, family members and landlords to address housing and service needs;
- Provides a safer and more secure environment with units that are required to meet HUD's Housing Quality Inspection standards.

Master Lease Program

Lehigh County, through its contracted clearinghouse provider, will explore relationships with landlords in the local housing market to develop a master lease subsidy fund to provide rental assistance to eligible consumers who are on the waiting list for Section 8 vouchers. Funding of \$824,000 which will provide a subsidy of up to \$450 per month for approximately 30 individuals for five years.

The Lehigh County Master Leasing Program will:

- Require a contract with the Management / Clearinghouse provider agency, (five year duration), to administer the program and negotiate master leases with landlords in the local real estate market place.
- Provide an opportunity to identify and select quality rental housing units and landlords to engage in a master leasing relationship.
- “Jump start” the availability of permanent supportive housing units by having “hard” units available through this established relationship.
- Provide the opportunity to allow additional people to be served by the program if Section 8 subsidies become available in two years.
- Reduces impact of Federal housing rules and regulations in securing available units in a timely manner.
- Provide opportunities to serve people who are considered harder to serve or whose rental histories or background make them unlikely candidates for housing vouchers.

4. Program Management / Clearinghouse

Lehigh County will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to select an organization to act as a "clearinghouse" for the housing needs of mental health and substance abusing consumers. This Clearinghouse will coordinate activities with the MH/MR/D&A office, but will have sufficient authority to achieve the goals of the County's housing plan. The housing clearing house will be the central connection between priority consumers who need access to permanent supportive housing and community housing units. To insure a close collaboration with the tenants served under this plan, two to three Peer Housing Support Team members will be utilized (from the CFST) by the Management /Clearing House to provide essential housing support services.

The Lehigh County Housing Clearing House strategy will:

- Provide consumers with greater opportunities to access permanent supportive housing and “real choices,” and preferences in selecting housing;
- Serve as the Lehigh County’s central resource for managing and coordinating permanent supportive housing units including: Housing Development Fund;

Master Lease Program; Bridge Subsidy Program; Project-based Operating Subsidy Program; Contingency Program, and the Housing Support Services initiative. This initiative will also include the creation of a housing support team.

- Ensure that high priority consumers on waiting lists are informed of all housing options, e.g., units available, Bridge Subsidies, etc., and assist them in making decisions regarding options;
- Coordinate and maintain housing information, through the creation of an Lehigh County Internet Data Base and Supportive Housing Resource Library that will benefit consumers, family members, case managers, provider agencies and the public, at no cost to the user, (which may include collaboration with an existing housing data bases/ locator service, e.g., PHFA Apartment Locator Service, Social Serv.com, etc.)
- Coordinate regularly scheduled permanent supportive housing training activities and technical assistance on housing issues to the Lehigh County MH/MR Program.
- Be given sufficient authority and the resources to effectively carry out this important mandate.
- Utilize two / three Peer Housing Support Team members (from the LV Consumer / Family Satisfaction Team (CFST) who will provide housing support services as outlined under #7 Housing Support Services to tenants provided with housing under this plan.

5. Housing Support / Support Services

Lehigh County MH/MR will develop a Peer Housing Support Team to be incorporated in the Management/Clearinghouse initiative. The Housing Support Team will consist of Certified Peer Specialists from the LV Consumer / Family Satisfaction Team (CFST). Team members will be trained in and may provide the following services:

Pre-Tenancy Assistance

- Assessment of housing preferences and housing history;
- Assist consumers in determining housing preferences if needed;
- Assist consumers in compiling housing information needed for housing applications (if needed) such as credit reports, landlord references, income and asset documentation;
- Assist in identifying available housing units and rent subsidies including resources listed by the Clearinghouse;
- Assist consumers in obtaining, completing and submitting housing applications. (If agreed to by the consumer, Housing Specialist to be copied on all correspondence);
- Assist consumers in attending any meetings with housing provider including providing or arranging transportation and attending meetings as needed;
- Assist consumers in filing appeals and requests for reasonable accommodation under Fair Housing Law; and
- Assist consumers in setting up a system to track application progress.

Move-In

- Assist tenants to understand basics of landlord/tenant law and lease requirements;
- Assist tenants with security deposit, securing furniture and other household items;
- Assist tenants to access Contingency Fund if needed;
- Assist tenants with moving-in activities;
- Assist tenants to establish utilities and telephone;
- Assist tenants in orienting to home and to neighborhood;
- Identify any housing or community living related skills training needed including home maintenance, shopping, cooking, and budgeting; and
- Provide housing or community living skills training or make appropriate referrals.

Tenancy Stabilization

- Work with tenants to secure Section 8 or other rental subsidy if unit does not have project-based subsidy or tenant does not have a permanent subsidy source on move-in;
- Maintain routine contact with tenants to ensure early detection of any housing issues;
- Provide ongoing housing-related skills training if needed and identify any issues that may require additional training by other parties consistent with Treatment or Recovery Plan;
- Intervene with landlords if needed to problem solve;
- Maintain communication with assigned Service Coordination Unit, case manager and/or Community Treatment Team (for Housing Support Teams only);
- Coordinate meetings with tenant's case manager and service providers if needed to resolve issues (for Housing Support Teams only);

6. Contingency Funds

Lehigh County will create a contingency fund to assist eligible consumers with the one-time expenses associated with moving into permanent supportive housing. Funding will primarily be used for security and rental deposits and the essential furniture and household goods needed to establish a home. They may, at times, be utilized to cover tenant damages not covered by a security deposit. These contingency funds will be managed by the Housing Clearinghouse and /distributions to individuals will be approved and monitored. Ceiling amounts and frequency of use will be established by Clearinghouse management and the County at the time of implementation, but will not exceed \$1000 per person per year. A contingency fund of \$300,000 would allow Lehigh County to assist 60 consumers per year:

The Contingency Fund will:

- Provide funding for essential furniture and household goods necessary to establish a residence; (when no other source of funding is available)
- Provide funding for security and utility deposits; (when no other source of funding is available)

- Encourage agencies and consumers to take advantage of opportunities in the market place to access furniture, utility deposits, e.g., second hand stores, utility fee waivers, etc;
- Provide funding for no interest loans, as a revolving fund, with 6 months to 24 month repayment terms;

Description of Fund Expenditures: (Narrative identifying major budgeted items for clinical and operating expenses and total costs. Identify on-going funding source for program/services. Provide Attachment 5 information as applicable).

A general proposed pro-forma budget is as follows:

<u>Housing Strategy Categories</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u>
Capital Funding	3,500,000
PHFA Project Based Operating Subsidy	1,000,000
Rental Subsidy - Bridge	345,802
Rental Subsidy - Master Lease	824,000
Program Management / Clearinghouse	580,000
Housing Support / Support Services	100,000
Housing Contingency Fund	300,000
Total Reinvestment Request	<u>6,649,802</u>

Clinical Costs* – Narrative and major budgeted items, includes personnel and benefits

See description of Fund Expenditures above.

Operating Costs** – Narrative and major budgeted items, includes travel, telephone, office supplies, fixed assets, facility purchase, etc. Complete Attachment 5 below if applicable. Housing Development (In accordance with new Attachment 5 guidelines, specify the terms of any capital and operating or other rental subsidy agreements including number of units access agreement and length of agreement):

Lehigh County affirms the Housing Plan meets the requirements of Attachment 5. See description of fund expenditures above.

Facility or land Purchase or Renovation: (Attachment 5: Summarize what is being purchased/ renovated and ownership arrangement including who owns title. Indicate agreement for disposal of assets upon sale.)

Not applicable

Fixed Assets: (Identify fixed assets to be purchased - vehicles, computers, furniture, equipment, etc. Indicate County Code for purchasing will be followed for items requiring competitive bid.)

Not applicable

Data Analysis and Expected Outcomes: (Identify number of HC members in target population, describe unmet or under-met needs, what is expected to be achieved by the service and data to be collected to measure outcomes. For Supplemental In-Lieu of services identify the service from which cost offsets will be achieved.)

Priority group #1 includes people with serious and persistent mental illness who are currently in Community Rehabilitation Residences (CRR), whose housing and service needs can be more appropriately met in PSH.

Supportive housing has had demonstrated effectiveness in working for people who face complex life challenges—individuals and families who have very low incomes and have a serious or persistent mental illness. PSH has reduced emergency room and inpatient care (medical, psychiatric and substance abuse), jail, police, emergency medical services, the court system, in addition to being more cost effective for the mental health delivery system than transitional and other residential programs.

- Lehigh County MH/MR currently has 118 consumers in Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) programs. It is estimated that 40 consumers would be able to move into affordable permanent housing with the availability of housing and the right supports.
- 18 consumers reside in an Enhanced Personal Care Boarding Home (PCBH) developed with CHIPP funds who have consistently expressed a high degree of satisfaction with this PCBH.
- 15 consumers are in Personal Care Boarding Homes and require additional support services (funded with CHIPP dollars).
- The Community Support Plan initiative evaluating all residents of Allentown State Hospital who have been there for 2 or more years shows the following stats on housing needs. 59 Lehigh County residents were evaluated with the following results:
 - 35%-CRR or Enhanced CRR
 - 22%-Personal Care Boarding Home or Enhanced Personal Care Boarding Home
 - 17%-Specialized Long Term Structured Residence
 - 12%-Nursing Home
 - 5%-MR Residential Program
 - 3%- community apartment with supports
 - 3%-Traumatic Brain Injury specialized residential program
 - 3%-Specialized Sexual Re-Offense Prevention

76 discharges from Residential Treatment Facilities (RTFs) from 7/1/06 to 6/30/07.
(15 were transfers to alternate RTFs)

Priority #2 includes young transitional adult population, (Age 18-23), who suffer from serious or persistent mental illness and are in need of PSH.

Nationally, rates of homelessness among young adults are alarming. These burgeoning rates prompted a recent documentary expose entitled “Aging Out.” This documentary depicted the inherent struggles that youth face as they age out of the current child welfare

system into adulthood. What it brought to light was the fact that countless youth are entering adulthood, void of the appropriate supports and linkages.

Health Choices has provided services 2,223 members within the 18-23 year old demographic since the programs inception in 2001 (an average of 371 members served per year). In the most recent period from April 2006 through March 2007 (12 months), 795 members within this specialty population have had claim experience (over two times the average over the 6 years). It is reasonable to conclude that this is a growing population within the membership with service utilization, each of which is in need of permanent housing. (Claims from April 2006 through March 2007 included 66 members utilizing crisis intervention, 7 members using emergency room services, 127 members using inpatient services, and 111 utilizing RTF levels of service.). On the average, 33 members per month "age out" of children's services, and are in need of stable residency (permanent housing) to adequately promote assimilation, and affiliation.

Programs established under this plan to address the needs of the young adult transitional population will be designed to promote greater independence, and include the following:

- Meeting mental and physical health needs;
- Developing and sustaining family supports and/or other adult supportive relationships;
- Developing and sustaining peer and other social relationships;
- Improved understanding of housing alternatives (Permanence Affordability, and Landlord/Tenant Issues);
- Ensuring acquisition and retention of critical personal identification documentation (Birth certificate, Social security card);
- Improved financial literacy (Personal budgeting, Banking services, Credit);
- Completing necessary education and/or training and understanding and exploring employment and career alternatives;
- Understanding and relying upon local transportation and community resources;
- Identifying and developing recreational interests;

Priority population #3 includes the forensic population who are transitioning out of Lehigh County Prison:

Prisons and jails are no place for people who are suffering from serious and persistent mental illness, and increasingly the criminal justice and mental health systems are focusing attention on this critical issue. Lehigh County established TEAM MISA in March 2005. The team consists of representatives from the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, County Mental Health Office (Deputy MH Administrator and Forensic Case Manager), Director of Pre-Trial Services, Adult County Probation Supervisor and Lehigh County Prison's Deputy Director of Treatment, Mental Health Coordinator and Assistant Director of Corrections. This multidisciplinary team meets weekly to review cases of people with mental illness and/or substance abuse that have been charged with a crime. The vast majority of cases reviewed involve current incarceration and pre-sentence status. The goal is to provide recommendations to the courts that address mental health and/or substance abuse treatment needs, community safety and acceptable home plans. TEAM MISA data for fiscal year 06/07 showed that 41 out of 104, or almost 39%, did not have appropriate housing options.

Released inmates face extraordinary obstacles in securing appropriate housing in the community—especially housing in the inmate’s community of origin that is affordable, located near employment opportunities, and in “safe” neighborhoods. Investing resources in comprehensive outpatient treatment programs and permanent supportive housing have demonstrated effectiveness as jail diversion and treatment strategies.

It is difficult to estimate the number of state and county prisoners that face homelessness upon release from incarceration. Shelter and services providers report more than 50% of homeless clients have spent 5 or more days in a city or county jail in their lifetime, which may initially have been a result of their homelessness.

Priority population #4 includes people who are suffering from or persistent mental illness and are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Without a stable place to live and a support system to help them address their underlying problems, (serious mental illness, substance abuse, disorder, chronic medical condition, etc.), most homeless people bounce from one emergency system to the next—from the streets to shelters to public hospitals to psychiatric institutions and detoxification centers and back to the streets--endlessly. While services are necessary to help tenants maintain stability, being housed is an essential first step in addressing these conditions that often have gone untreated for many years. Therefore, the combination of housing and supportive services creates a synergy that allows tenants to take steps toward recovery and independence. In supportive housing, people can live with stability, autonomy, and dignity.

- It is estimated that at least a third of the people living on the streets and in shelters have a severe and persistent mental illness.
- FY06/07 there was 5,885 active adults in the Lehigh County mental health system and 230 or 3.9% were homeless at time of intake. This includes people in shelters and rescue missions.
- The number of chronic homeless individuals identified in the Point in Time count for 2007 was 67.

Supportive Housing Impact on Homelessness*:

- Decreases of more than 50% in tenants' emergency room visits and hospital inpatient days; decreases in tenants' use of emergency detoxification services by more than 80%; and increases in the use of preventive health care services.
- Increase of 50% in earned income and 40% in the rate of participant employment when employment services are provided in supportive housing, and a significant decrease in dependence on entitlements – a \$1,448 decrease per tenant each year.
- A study of almost 5,000 homeless individuals with mental illness placed in supportive housing through the NY/NY program confirmed that nearly 80% remained housed a year later, with 10% moving on to independent settings.

*Corporation for Supportive Housing Research Initiatives

2007 Continuum of Care Objectives:

- In 2007 begin occupancy of 22 units for chronically and non-chronically homeless individuals funded in 2006 through the Lehigh Valley Assertive Community Team (LVACT) Housing Supports Program.

In 2007 begin occupancy of 22 units of Tenant-Based Rental Assistance for the disabled and chronically homeless, funded in 2006, through the Lehigh County Conference of Churches.

Stakeholder Involvement in Decision Making: (Stakeholder participation summarized and demonstrated support)

In every forum with consumers, families, providers and other stakeholders, over the past ten years, housing has always been identified as an unmet need and top priority.

These conversations occur in focus groups, at all three Advisory Boards (HealthChoices, MH/MR and D&A), at the regular monthly Service Area planning meetings and in fact, virtually everywhere consumers, providers, and County staff gather to discuss needs.

This plan offers the first opportunity to significantly expand access to safe affordable housing and offer a solid foundation for wellness and recovery.

A committee consisting of consumers that meet OMHSAS criteria for transitional youth has been established to assist in every aspect of the development of the Transitional Youth Housing Project. The consumers currently reside in various types of community housing including our bi-county Young Adult CRR, independent living with supports and Enhanced Personal Care. The committee will also include staff from Elwyn Behavioral Health, Inc. and County mental health staff. We are planning our first meeting in early February. We will meet at the Clubhouse of Lehigh County. This committee will also have the opportunity to review the findings of the housing survey developed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing.