



Fact Sheet
An Act Relative to Community Housing and Services
Lead Sponsors: Representative Kevin Honan and Senator Pat Jehlen

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Permanent Supportive Housing is “decent, safe and affordable community-based permanent housing providing tenants with the rights of tenancy and linked to voluntary and flexible supports and services designed to meet consumer needs.”¹

The Need for Permanent Supportive Housing

Academic research and practical experience indicate that permanent supportive housing can help the majority of individuals and families at risk of homelessness, elders, or persons with disabilities achieve stability and independence in the community. In many cases, supportive housing requires access to three components:

- Capital funds to write down the costs of development;
- Operating assistance to make the rent affordable to extremely low-income households; and
- Access to voluntary community-based supportive services.

While not sufficient to meet the needs, the Commonwealth has programs in all three of these areas. Oftentimes, however, a proposed or existing program will have access to one or two of these three vital elements but not all three simultaneously. Particular gaps that have been identified include: (a) “connectors” that can assist extremely low-income persons who need services to secure these from community organizations; and (b) supports for extremely low-income families. Models such as resident coordinators or Housing Support Teams have proven effective in making these “connections” occur.

Coordination of access to these elements is absolutely critical but requires enhanced collaboration and coordination among key state agencies including housing and human service agencies.

Goals of Proposed Permanent Supportive Housing Legislation

The legislation proposes several actions to address the need for permanent supportive housing:

- A Memorandum of Understanding to be developed among state agencies to identify shared barriers to creating supportive housing, an Action Plan to coordinate the three critical elements, and an assessment of the long-term need for supportive housing.
- Demonstration Program of 1,000 units or more of permanent supportive housing
- Establishment of Community Housing Support Service Action Grant through the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness for supports such as service coordination and Housing Support Teams.

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¹ Technical Assistance Collaborative, Boston MA