

## **The Number of Single Adults in New York City Shelters Hits A Record-Shattering 20,210, Underscoring Need for State-Funded Supportive Housing**

*As COVID-19 exacerbates homelessness crisis, advocates call on Governor Cuomo to follow through on his commitment to fund 20,000 units of supportive housing*

**New York, NY – December 9, 2020** – Today, the [Campaign 4 NY/NY Housing](#) unveiled a grim and record-setting milestone among homeless single adults. For the first time, the number of single adults sleeping each night in DHS shelters, including safe havens and stabilization beds, climbed to more than 20,000 (20,210). With more single adults sleeping in shelters than at any time in history, advocates urged Governor Cuomo to prioritize permanent supportive housing in a press conference today.

Between May and August, the age-adjusted COVID-19 mortality rate for homeless New Yorkers sleeping in shelters was 78 percent higher than the citywide average, underscoring the fact that housing is health care. It is crucial that Governor Cuomo follow through on his commitment to create 20,000 units of supportive housing, of which only 6,000 have been funded so far. Despite the unprecedented need, only one in five applicants approved for supportive housing is able to secure a placement and move out of a shelter or off the streets into a home of their own.

"If there is one thing the pandemic has taught us, it is that housing is health care. Our homeless neighbors need the safety and stability of a home. Governor Cuomo knows how life-changing supportive housing can be for the most vulnerable New Yorkers – now we need him to follow through on the promise he made five years ago to fund 20,000 units of this desperately needed housing," said **Giselle Routhier, Policy Director of Coalition for the Homeless**.

Failure to prioritize long-term supportive housing investments in the short-term will hold dire economic consequences. Numerous studies have shown that reducing the number of chronically homeless individuals in communities saves money by disrupting a costly cycle of housing instability for those shuttled among institutions including shelters, hospitals, and jails. "The pandemic has only exacerbated the existing need for supportive housing in New York. Not only is safe, stable housing a means to improve health outcomes, it has literally meant the difference between living and dying for thousands of New Yorkers during this health crisis. So far, sheltered New Yorkers have died from COVID-19 at a rate 78 percent higher than those who are stably housed. Housing is health care, and supportive housing saves lives," said **Cal Hedigan, CEO of Community Access**.

"Across New York, the need for supportive housing is striking and disproportionate for people of color who have been most impacted by COVID-19 and homelessness. A long-term funding commitment is crucial to the continued development of supportive housing. CSH looks forward to the Governor fulfilling his commitment to fund 20,000 units of supportive housing in the State's upcoming budget," said **Kristin Miller, Director of the Corporation for Supportive Housing**.

"These astronomical numbers that indicate such an increase in single adult homelessness, are a testament to the importance of adequately funding Mental Health Housing programs across New York State," said **Sebrina Barrett, Executive Director of the Association for Community Living**. "Our members' staff will continue to do what they always do, and have been doing especially during this pandemic--find a way to make it work and offer as much care

as they can, despite chronic underfunding. But the aforementioned statistics tell us that something needs to change."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored once again the vital role supportive housing plays in keeping vulnerable populations safely housed and safeguarding our public health," said **Judi Kende, Vice President and New York Market Leader of Enterprise Community Partners**. "Supportive housing is an integral solution to homelessness, which had already reached crisis levels in New York before the pandemic. It's even more important now to ensure that critical resources are available and accessible for the people who need them most."

"New York has been facing a homelessness crisis for years, but the pandemic has accelerated it to unprecedented heights as we now have more than 20,000 single adults sleeping in NYC shelters each night," said **Laura Mascuch, Executive Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New York**. "To meet the scale of this challenge, we need Governor Cuomo to make good on his historic pledge to create 20,000 supportive apartments by committing to fund the remaining 14,000 homes in this year's budget. This would help end chronic homelessness and create affordable housing – all while putting New York on the path to recovery by saving money otherwise spent on crisis interventions, creating much-needed jobs, leveraging private capital, and spurring investment in our communities."

"In a moment of historic homelessness and suffering, we cannot allow politics of scarcity and austerity to dominate our state. New York has the resources to overcome the pandemic and rebuild stronger by taxing the ultra-rich, so that every New Yorker has access to the housing, services, and care they need. The Governor must follow through and fund the remaining 14,000 supportive housing units he promised homeless New Yorkers in 2016," said **Paulette Soltani, Political Director of VOCAL-NY**.

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