

# SUPPORTIVE HOUSING DESERVES YOUR SUPPORT

## "Supportive housing works."

- Roberta Achtenberg, Former Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

A homeless veteran breaks his cycle of dependency. Elderly parents receive medical services and dignity. Families of persons with mental health disabilities are reunited. Because supportive housing avoids overuse of expensive institutions and unsuccessful intervention strategies, taxpayers pay less to help more people.

Since the early 1980's, innovative non-profit organizations across the country have been developing and refining a practical, proven, and cost-effective solution called "supportive housing." Supportive housing — permanent rental housing matched with a range of support services — is working.

Because of its documented successes in providing permanent solutions to complex problems, supportive housing is changing policymakers' opinions about efficient public investments in housing and social services for our most vulnerable populations.

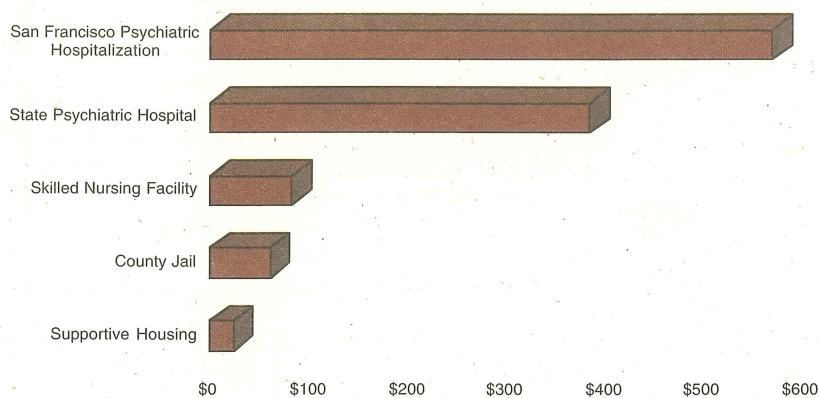
### • **Successful solutions to homelessness, elder care and housing for persons with disabilities**

Every time and for whatever reason a vulnerable person loses his or her housing, his or her problems are compounded. Supportive housing enables residents to first achieve housing stability and then develop self-sufficiency. The percentage of people who remain in supportive housing instead of falling back into unhealthy patterns can be as high as 85% for even the hardest-to-house populations.

### • **Cost-effective**

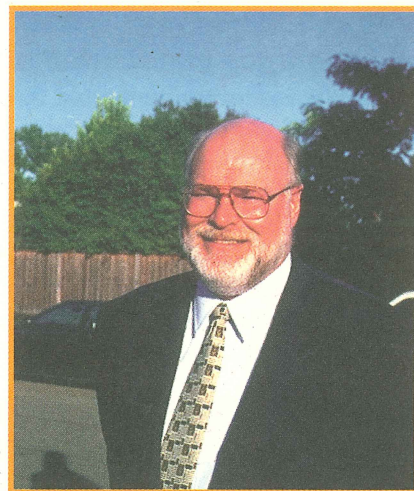
Linking needed services to permanent housing provides the stability and opportunity for residents to address their underlying health problems, employment needs and special needs deficits. Support services are designed to minimize long-term dependency on government safety

This chart demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of supportive housing on a per diem basis compared to other housing alternatives for homeless and disabled persons in California. *Source: Corporation for Supportive Housing, 1998.*



*"Supportive housing improves the quality of life for the person and is good for our communities. It helps a person live independently and provides a more effective alternative to costly institutions."*

— James T. Beall, Jr., Supervisor, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors



nets. While the cost of supportive housing varies according to the population housed, the services provided, and the location, supportive housing generally costs between \$7,000 and \$15,000 per tenant per year. The alternatives to supportive housing — crisis approaches to care, institutionalization, and repetitive short-term treatment — are both less effective and more expensive.

### • **Flexibly serves a wide variety of populations**

Each supportive housing development is designed in terms of physical structure and availability of services for the actual populations who will live in it. This flexibility keeps costs down while providing tailor-made services to seniors, persons living with HIV/AIDS, or a homeless family.

### • **Increases employment**

Whether residents are returning to the workforce or entering it for the first time, combining stable housing with accessible vocational training, placement and adult education helps ensure a successful transition. Supportive housing reduces false starts and encourages jobseekers to take reasonable risks. In first-year data from a national pilot program *Next Step: Jobs*, employment rates doubled after tenants moved into supportive housing.

### • **Reduces substance abuse recidivism**

As Alcoholics Anonymous has shown, substance abusers need supportive networks to rid themselves of bad habits. Supportive housing offers both professional and peer support for recovering persons. Through daily contacts with tenants, service staff can anticipate problems

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and intervene before they become crises. In one Minneapolis study, substance abuse program graduates stayed sober at a rate of 90% in supportive housing, as compared to 55% for every other housing option.

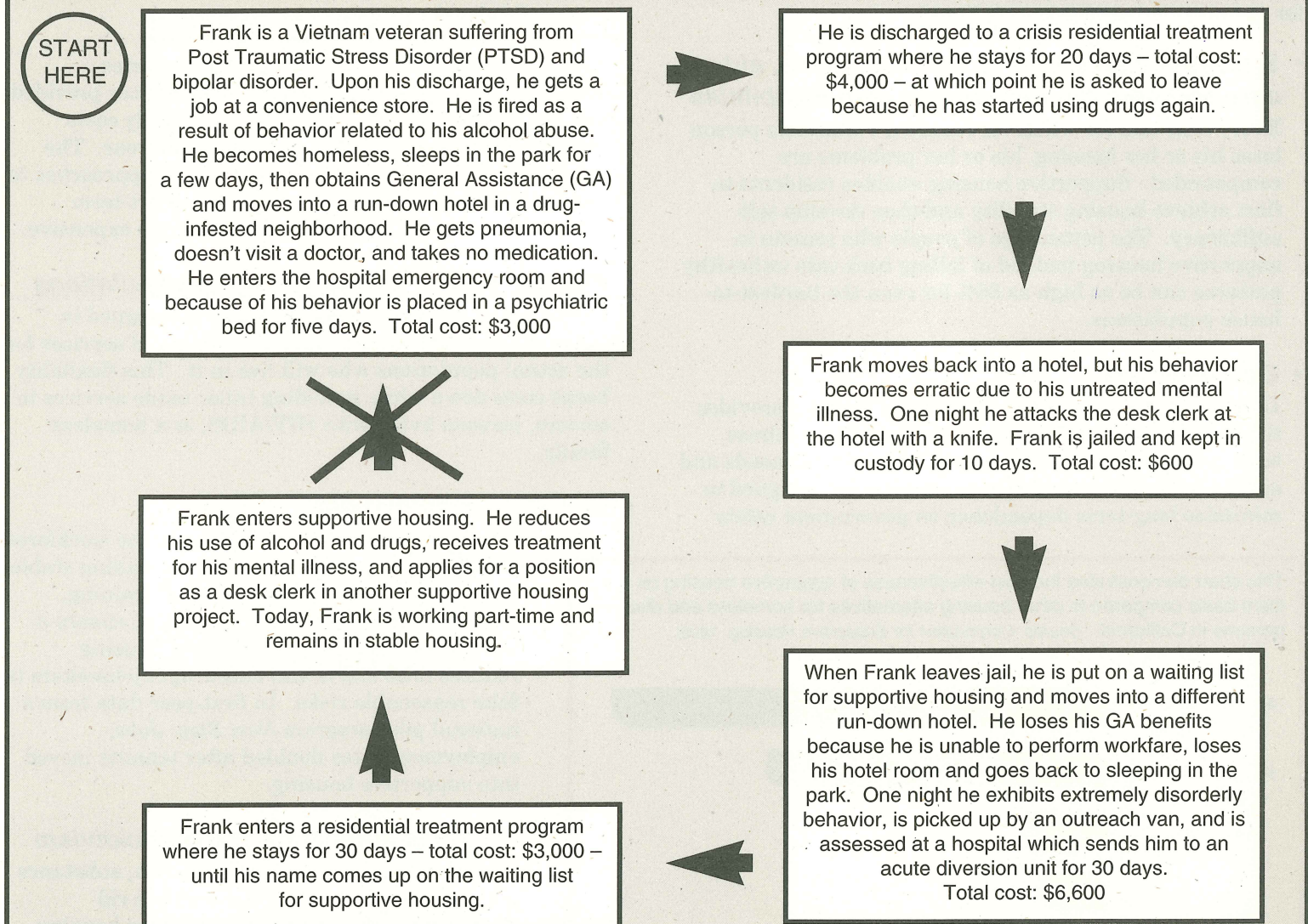
- **Leverages substantial private sector and philanthropic resources**

Public resources dedicated to supportive housing build on substantial private and philanthropic contributions already committed and leverage even more funding. For example, the Corporation for Supportive Housing has channeled \$26.5 million of primarily philanthropic funds to nonprofits developing supportive housing. And, the National Equity Fund has placed more than \$120 million of corporate equity in supportive housing developments.

- **Utilizes the expertise of nonprofit providers**

The nonprofit organizations which pioneered supportive housing have developed the capacity to extend its benefits to more communities. Their expertise in designing appropriate services, guaranteeing quality property management and ensuring that each development fits the neighborhood can be tapped to make the best use of this model.

## The Cost of Homelessness vs. the Cost of Supportive Housing — a prototypical San Francisco Vietnam veteran's case history



The total cost to provide care in California for Frank while he is homeless is over \$17,000 a year. For approximately \$8,000 a year (or \$22.00 per day), Frank could have been living independently and building a new life in supportive housing. *Source: Corporation for Supportive Housing, 1998 Background Report.*