

From: [Gayle Giese](#)
To: [Zach Summerlin](#)
Subject: Public Comment on State PSH Workgroup
Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 4:52:58 PM
Attachments: [We sent you safe versions of your files.msg](#)
[Public Comment Letter on State PSH Workgroup.pdf](#)

Mimecast Attachment Protection has deemed this file to be safe, but always exercise caution when opening files.

Hi Mr. Summerlin,

Thank you very much for putting this important workgroup together!

I've attached a letter of public comment from the Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition.

With appreciation,

Gayle Giese
President, FLMHAC



Gayle@FLMHAC.org
www.flmhac.org



May 10th, 2023

Florida Housing & Finance Corporation
c/o Zach Summerlin

Via e-mail: Zach.Summerlin@Floridahousing.org

Re: Support for the Statewide Permanent Supportive Housing Workgroup

The Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition (FLMHAC) heartily thanks the Florida Housing & Finance Corporation for establishing, overseeing, and inviting stakeholders to participate in the statewide permanent supportive housing workgroup to create a State Plan to provide supportive housing for Florida's vulnerable populations, including those with serious mental illness.

FLMHAC is a coalition of 29 local behavioral health advocacy organizations. Most are affiliates of NAMI Florida, which partners with FLMHAC to provide legislative advocacy in our state. We are family members and peers with lived experience. We consistently identify the critical need for more permanent supportive housing as a top priority.

The *2022 Florida Cultural Health Disparity and Behavioral Health Needs Assessment, An Analysis of the Managing Entity Behavioral Health System of Care*, p. 27, identified 676,982 adults with serious mental illness living in Florida in 2020. Many receive only Social Security income of \$914 per month and are unable to pay affordable housing rental rates. They may not meet the HUD criteria for homelessness, but are *at risk* of homelessness. Supportive housing is the cornerstone for their recovery, allowing treatment to be effective.

Long-term sustainable funding through a Supportive Housing Trust Fund that includes some funding for health and wellness services would:

- Reduce homelessness
- Decrease hospitalizations
- Prevent incarcerations
- Encourage re-entry into the workforce and volunteerism
- Significantly reduce costs of behavioral health care
- Reduce stigma of mental illness by integration into the community
- Support recovery and restore lives

As evidenced by 2018 results from the pilot programs in Miami-Dade, Duval, and Pinellas Counties, providing supportive housing to individuals experiencing housing instability and utilizing an abundance of crisis services showed success in avoiding the costs of victimization, criminalization, hospitalization, emergency, and homeless services. Appropriately placed, individuals with SMI have opportunities to live lives of dignity and productivity. Additionally, state and local governments may reinvest the savings in rental assistance and other community housing supports.

Again, thank you for leading this important endeavor!

Gayle Giese, President

Florida Mental Health Advocacy Coalition

www.flmhac.org

gayle@flmhac.org