

Dear

I hope you are well.

I am writing to ask for your support of a very important effort to ensure the stability of the 40,000 currently occupied supportive housing units for formerly homeless individuals with special needs by [adding your name](#) to the growing list of campaign endorsers.

[Bring it Home](#): *Better Funding for Better Care* is a campaign to add adequate funding to the New York State budget to ensure that many dozens of agencies providing housing and social services to our most vulnerable New Yorkers can continue providing the quality care that their clients need and deserve and ensure that they don't return our streets and shelters.

If you would like to add your name to those calling for this much needed funding we invite you to you to [sign on](#) as an Individual, Organizational or [Faith Leader signer](#). Faith Leaders names will also be added to our [faith leader letter](#) to be delivered to Governor Cuomo in the next few weeks.

As we celebrate the State's recent and historic commitment of 20,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 15 years, we are dismayed to note that the existing system of mental health housing is on the brink of financial disaster, with many providers now thinking the unthinkable, that they will shutter units of housing putting thousands of New Yorkers at risk due to over two decades of severely and increasingly inadequate reimbursement rates. As illustrated in the recent Op-Ed in the [Poughkeepsie Journal](#), with 40,000 currently operating units of mental health housing, the state has not kept its promise to fund them adequately. If the state does meet its moral obligation to protect this critical system by providing adequate support for people with serious psychiatric disabilities, who often have significant medical conditions and substance abuse issues as well, the state risks seeing some of our most vulnerable people end up back on our streets.

To quote the Op-Ed by Toni Lasicki, Executive Director of the Association for Community Living (ACL) "By not providing these housing programs the funding they need, recovery can be impacted negatively to point of destroying lives and families. Beyond these moral implications, which are troubling enough, ignoring this funding crisis will also create a tremendous burden for New York's taxpayers. When these residents are forced to seek care in an emergency room, the heightened cost of treatment and interventions are borne by taxpayers. When they are incarcerated, often for minor infractions, they end up in prisons or jails where the annual cost can exceed \$55,000 per person. When they are hospitalized, the cost is over \$300,000. This is entirely unsustainable, both for the New Yorkers suffering from psychiatric disabilities and for the state's taxpayers.

Right now, our state's 17 psychiatric hospitals house just 3,200 people, at a cost of approximately \$310,000 per person. Meanwhile, the state funds each community-based housing unit at between \$7,600 and \$40,000 per person per year, which is completely insufficient for providers to offer the critical services they are obligated to provide - especially for those programs that include room and board, medication supervision, case management, transportation, rehabilitation services, 24-hour staffing and more.

And this is truly a statewide problem, with thousands of people being served in every corner of the state. Nearly half of our population - nearly 22,000 - live in New York City and the surrounding suburbs, including Westchester County. But nearly 5,000 live in the Hudson Valley and Albany, with another 4,400 in Buffalo, Rochester and surrounding areas and more than 3,700 on Long Island. More than 36,000 people are served in this system of housing, operated by non-profits, across the state'.

The [Interfaith Assembly](#) is joined by our allies, the [New York State Council of Churches](#), the [Presbyterian Network to End Homelessness](#) and [Broadway Presbyterian Church](#), in inviting faith leaders to actively support this effort.