



Understanding Supportive Housing and its Benefits

Tim Klont
CSH National Resource Center
December 2008

Corporation for Supportive Housing

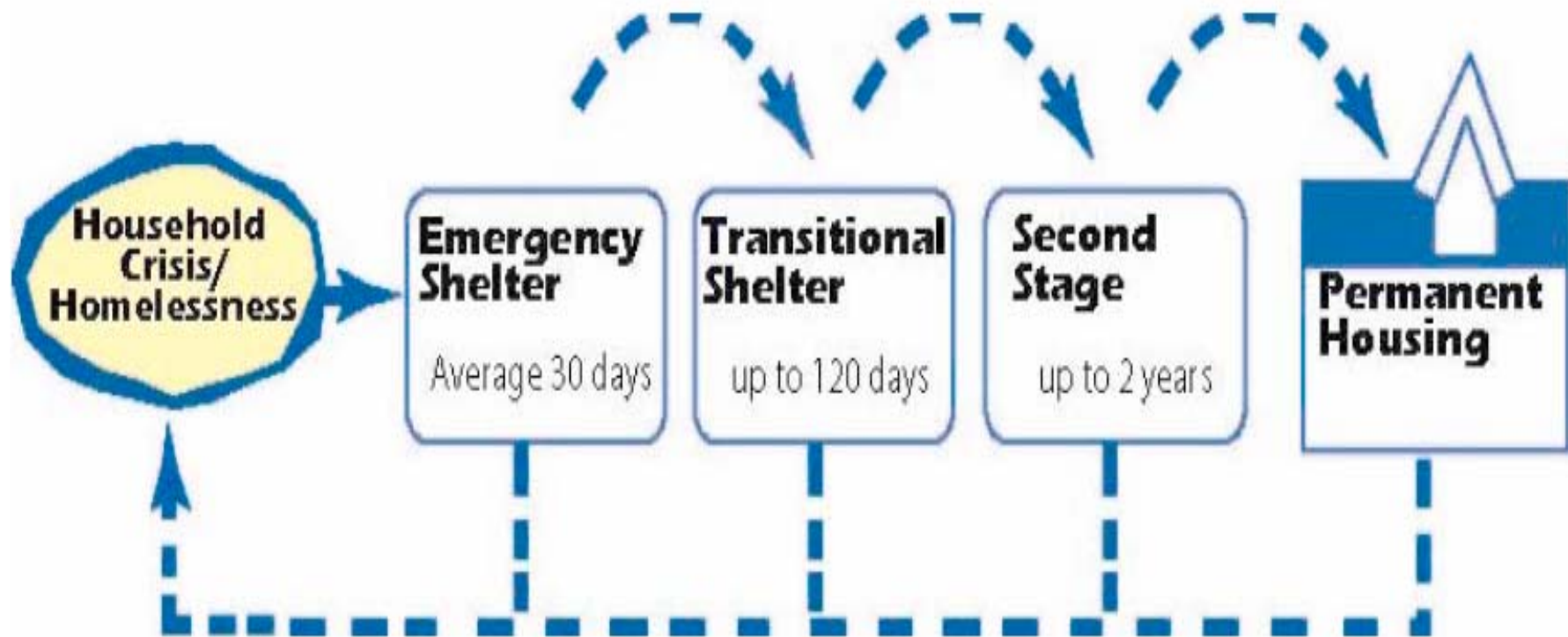
CSH is a national non-profit organization and Community Development Financial Institution that helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness.

Founded in 1991, CSH advances its mission by providing advocacy, expertise, leadership, and financial resources to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing.

The background features a dark red horizontal bar at the top, a solid orange block on the left, and a textured orange block on the right. The title is centered in the solid orange block.

Features of Supportive Housing

The Traditional System



What is a Housing First Approach?

A housing first approach rests on two central premises:

- The best way to end homelessness is to help people move into permanent housing as quickly as possible.
- Once in housing, formerly homeless people may require some level of services to help them stabilize, link to long-term supports, and prevent a recurrence.

Defining Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is
permanent, affordable housing
combined with
a range of **supportive services**
that help **people with special needs**
live stable and independent lives.

Essential Features

➤ Housing

- **Permanent:** Not time limited, not transitional.
- **Deeply Affordable:** To people coming out of homelessness.
- **Independent:** Tenant holds lease with normal rights and responsibilities.

➤ Services

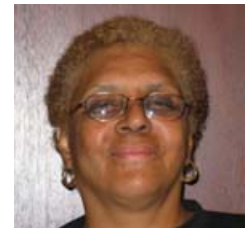
- **Flexible:** Responsive to tenants' needs.
- **Voluntary:** Participation not condition of tenancy.
- **Independent:** Focus on housing stability.

The Need

- As many as 150,000 individuals have nowhere to call home for years on end.
- For decades, communities have “managed” homelessness without addressing the underlying causes.
- Emergency and institutional systems are significant sources of care and support, yet they discharge people into homelessness.
- Government is spending hundreds of millions of dollars per year, yet homeless rates are growing.

Supportive Housing is for People Who:

- Are chronically homeless.
- Cycle through institutional and emergency systems and are at risk of long-term homelessness.
- Are being discharged from institutions and systems of care.
- Without housing, cannot access and make effective use of treatment and supportive services.



What Populations Are We Talking About?

- Chronic homeless with disabilities
- Veterans
- Families
- Youth
- Re-Entry
- HIV/AIDS

Who Lives in Supportive Housing?

Table 1. Disabilities/Health Conditions among Supportive Housing Tenants

	HHISN	Closer to Home	THCH
Severe mental illness	86%	85%	55%
Substance use disorder	91%	70%	25% (alcohol) 24% (drugs)
Co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders	75%	56%	25%
Chronic health conditions			
HIV/AIDS	13%	8%	7%
Hypertension	N/A	16%	N/A
Heart Disease	N/A	8%	N/A
Diabetes	N/A	14%	N/A

Who Lives in Supportive Housing?

Table 2. Tenant Demographic Characteristics

	HHISN	Closer to Home
Gender		
Male	73%	69%
Female	27%	30%
Ethnicity		
African-American	53%	49%
White	32%	32%
Latino	8%	13%
Native American	5%	
Asian	2%	3%
Other		3%
Age	43 (median)	49 (mean)



**A Proven,
Effective
Strategy**

A Strategy That Works *For People*

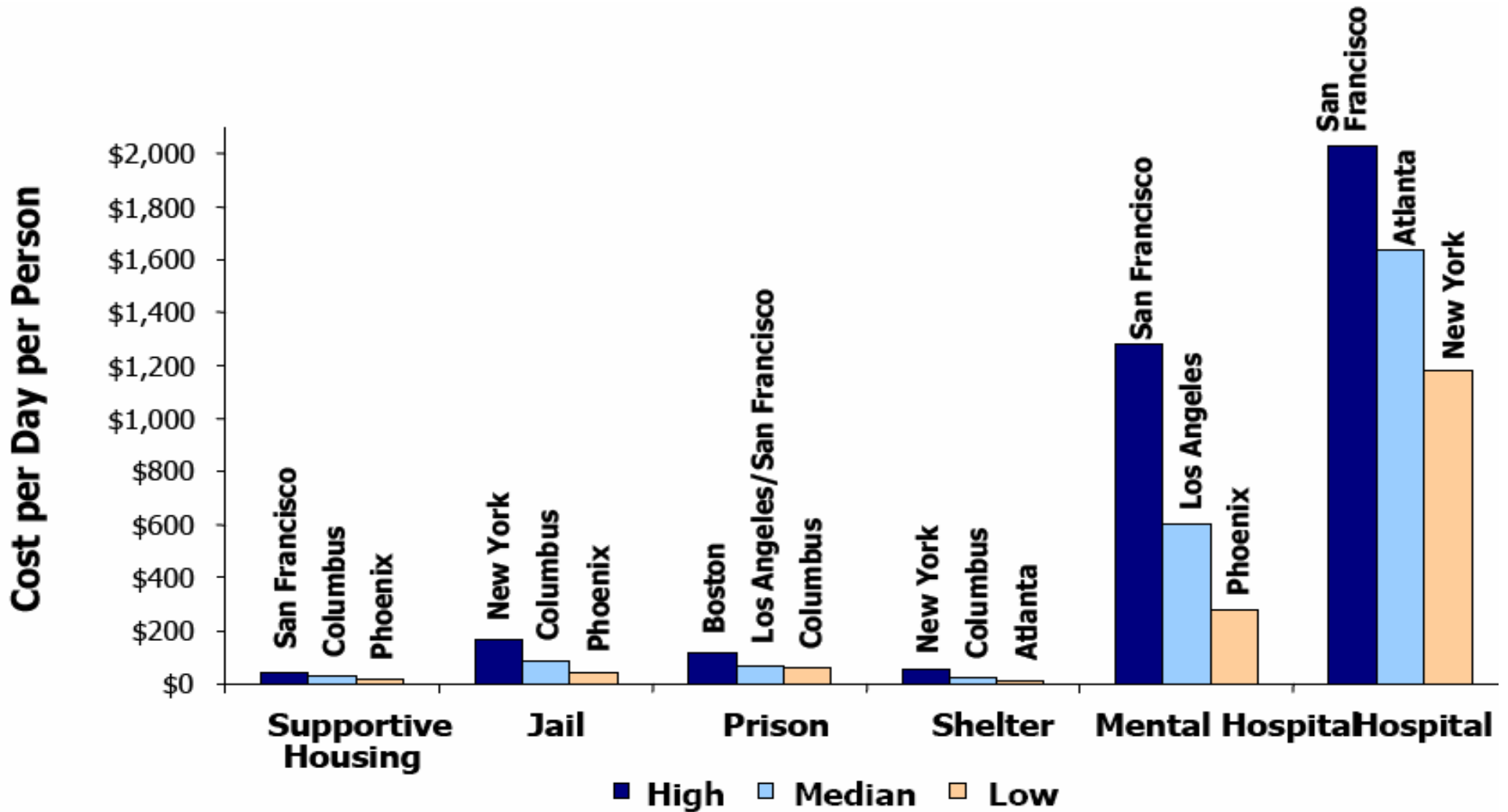
- Emergency room visits down 57%
- Emergency detox services down 85%
- Incarceration rate down 50%
- 50% increase in earned income
- 40% rise in rate of employment when employment services are provided
- More than 80% stay housed for at least one year

A Strategy That Works *For People*

Housing is Healthcare

- Even when services are not a condition of tenancy, tenants participate at high rates:
 - 81% health care utilization
 - 80% mental health treatment
 - 56% substance abuse services
- Rates of opportunistic infections of HIV+ individuals are greatly reduced.

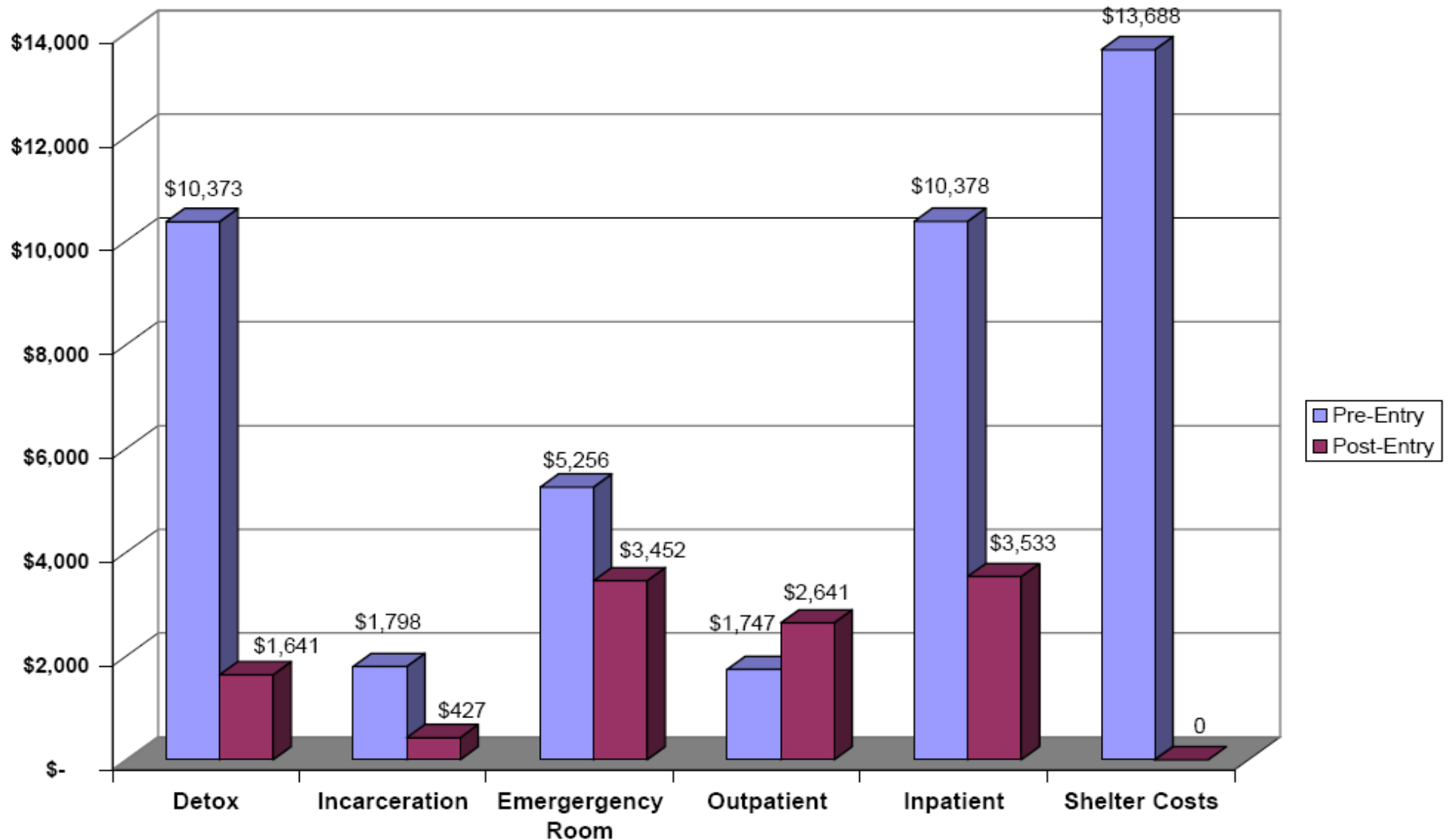
A Strategy That Works For Public Systems



Source: The Lewin Group

A Strategy That Works For Public Systems (Denver, CO)

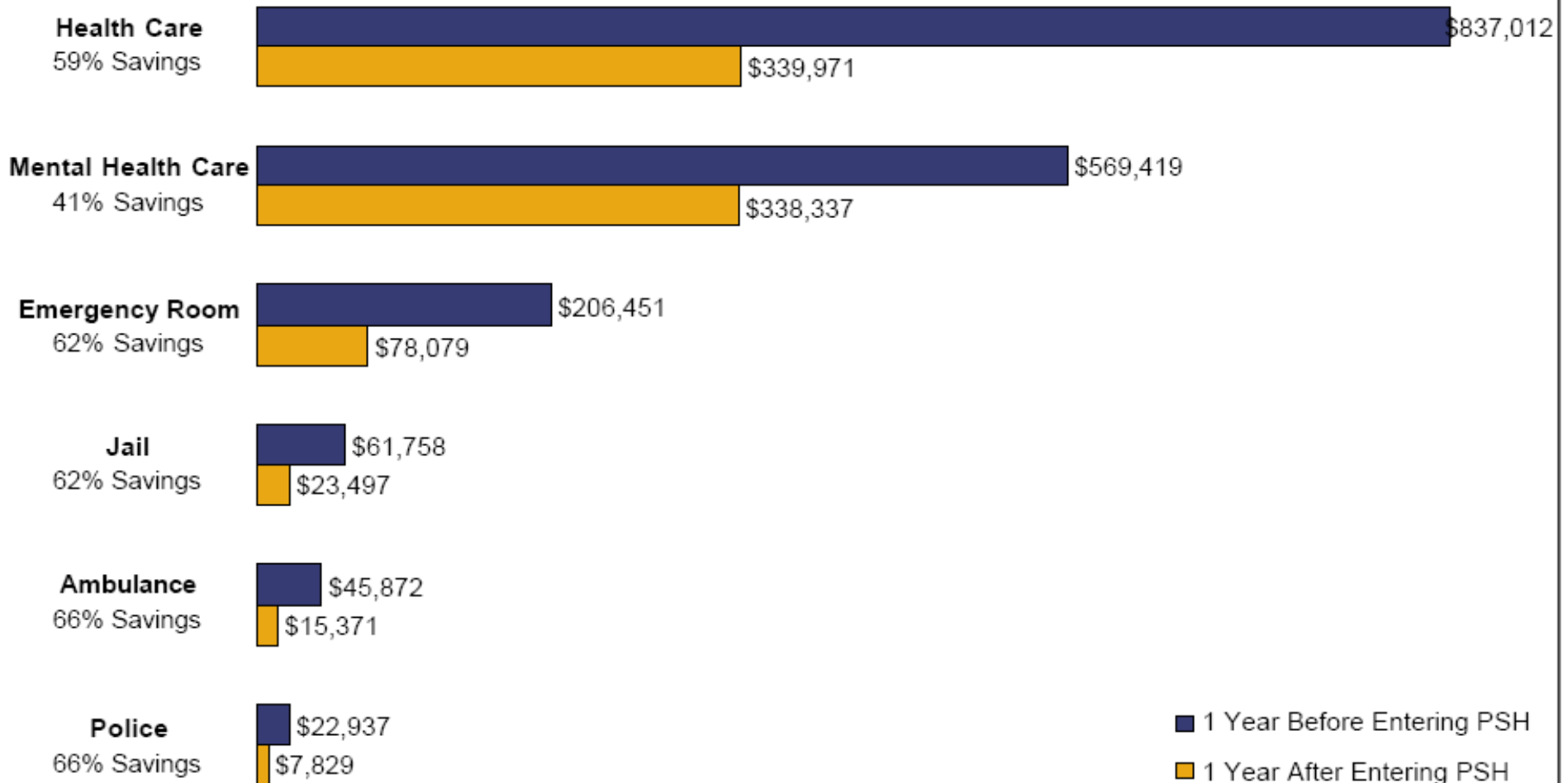
CHANGE IN AVERAGE SERVICE COSTS



A Strategy That Works

For Public Systems (Portland, ME)

Cost Savings After Participants Entered Supportive Housing



A Strategy That Works *For Communities*

Furman Center for Real Estate & Urban Policy at New York University (2008)

- Examined the impacts of 7,500 supportive housing units in New York City over the last 20 years.
- Prices of properties closest to supportive housing increase in the years after the housing opens, relative to other properties in the neighborhood but further from the supportive housing.
- Properties somewhat further away (500-1,000 feet) show a decline in value when SH first opens but then prices increase steadily – perhaps as the market realizes that fears about the SH turned out to be wrong.
- Density and mix of tenancy did not appear to have an impact.

A Strategy That Works *For Communities*

Project H.O.M.E.'s Economic & Fiscal Impact on Philadelphia's Neighborhoods

- Before the arrival of a Project H.O.M.E. facility, house values in the neighborhood were already below average.
- Immediately following the opening of a Project H.O.M.E. facility, housing values were not adversely affected.
- In the years following the opening of a Project H.O.M.E. facility, housing values in the neighborhood appreciated over time at a significantly higher rate than the citywide average (6.8% vs. 5%).

A Strategy That Works *For Communities*

The Wellesley Institute (Toronto)

- Tenants live on very limited incomes so their ability to spend is not large; however, they tend to shop locally.
- Contributed to “cohesion on the street.”
- Contributed to the collective efficacy of their neighborhoods through actions around noise, speed, tidiness, and crime.
- Only 45% of the neighbors knew the building was supportive housing.

The background features a dark red horizontal bar at the top left, an orange square at the top right, a large orange square on the bottom left containing the text, and a large orange square on the bottom right with a fine grid pattern.

Developing Supportive Housing

Differences Between Affordable & Supportive Housing

- Services budget
- Tenant selection and screening
- Safety and security
- Coordination of property management and supportive services
- Private space for service delivery
- Materials and furnishings

Basic Types of Supportive Housing

- **Single-site:**

Apartment buildings exclusively or primarily housing individuals and/or families who are formerly homeless and/or have chronic health challenges.

- **Scattered-site:**

Rent subsidized apartments leased in open market (scattered-site).

- **Integrated:**

Apartment buildings with mixed tenancies, but with units set-aside for formerly homeless.



Development Options

- Turnkey
- Co-Development
- Master Leasing
- Service Contract

Siting Considerations

- Existing housing options
- Current concentration – if any – of affordable housing
- Broad community development or neighborhood revitalization strategies
- Market and demand
- Zoning

Siting Considerations

- Proximity to:
 - Service provider(s)
 - Transportation options
 - Grocery stores and pharmacies
 - Places of worship
 - Community centers
 - Employment and/or volunteer opportunities
 - Educational opportunities
 - Open space

Contact Information

Tim Klont

**Senior Program Manager, National Resource Center
Corporation for Supportive Housing**

(312) 332-6690, x18

timothy.klont@csh.org

www.csh.org