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Commissioner

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

February 14, 2019

Dear Supportive Housing Providers:

The NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) is pleased to release the attached revision of the Supportive Housing Guidelines, which are effective March 1, 2019.

Background

OMH introduced Supportive Housing (formerly referred to as Supported Housing) in 1990 as an initiative to facilitate an increase in long-term/ permanent housing options for people with mental illness coupled with individualized support services designed to help them maintain their housing in a community-integrated setting.

Supportive Housing may be provided either through a scattered-site or a single-site approach. In addition to procuring Supportive Housing funding for units to be located throughout the community, NYS has invested significant capital as well as ongoing operating and debt service resources in single-site, non-licensed congregate housing projects known as Supportive Single Room Occupancy (SP-SRO).

The SP-SRO model provides permanent supportive housing within older single use and newly developed mixed-use buildings integrated with low-income housing units. The services approach is similar to the scattered site model in designing person-centered, recovery-oriented support plans intended to assist individuals in remaining stably housed. These services may be provided on-site and/or through community providers.

The scattered site and congregate (SP-SRO) models are procured and operated differently, though they share the function of providing permanent housing with supports for people with mental illness, that is integrated in the community. These models are now referred to more broadly and collectively as “Supportive Housing”.

Applicability

In view of the changes Supportive Housing has undergone since its inception, it is important to ensure that all concerned parties are aware of current OMH guidelines regarding the operation of Supportive Housing. Among these changes and clarifications, is that these guidelines are intended to apply to both scattered

site Supportive Housing and SP-SROs, including housing developed under the Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative (ESSHI).

Intent

The modifications to the Supportive Housing Guidelines include clarifications around eligible costs; documentation of services and expenses; rent calculation based on household composition; expected characteristics of supportive housing settings to ensure eligibility for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), etc. Furthermore, units developed under ESSHI may have additional reporting requirements as established by the ESSHI Interagency Workgroup. These will be covered in future correspondence or an addendum to the Supportive Housing Guidelines.

While these guidelines include various clarifications, the concept of Supportive Housing has not changed. Supportive Housing has been, and continues to be, a vital means for persons with mental illness to succeed in community-based housing and move toward increasing independence and recovery.

Input from various sources within and outside of OMH was sought during the development of these revisions. Any questions regarding these guidelines may be directed to the dedicated supportive housing mailbox (omh.sm.SupportiveHousing@omh.ny.gov).

Thank you for the dedication, care and the impactful services being provided on behalf of persons with mental illness through this program.

Sincerely,

Brett Hebner

Brett Hebner
Director,
Bureau of Housing Development and Support