

Health Care for the Homeless Mobilizer

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council

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Inclusion: The Solution to Homelessness

National Council Adopts 2008 HCH Policy Statements

The Board of Directors of the National Health Care for the Homeless Council has adopted a set of 13 policy statements for 2008. Collectively, the policy statements delineate the Council's advocacy work for the upcoming year by addressing federal policies that reflect the Council's policy priorities. The statements provide a thorough analysis of homelessness and present an agenda for policy changes that, if enacted, would end and prevent contemporary homelessness in America.

Within the context of a human rights perspective, the National Council long has advanced an advocacy agenda that offers fundamental solutions to poverty while also promoting the need for adequate and appropriate safety net services for people experiencing homelessness. Homelessness, a symptom of poverty, will end only we enact inclusive policies that provide universal health care, affordable housing, and livable incomes for all. The statements summarized below (available at www.nhchc.org) provide data, analysis, and specific policy recommendations to inform your advocacy work throughout the year.

Homelessness and Health analyzes the relationship between health and homelessness and calls for universal access to health care and housing through targeted mainstream public programs, including the reauthorization of Health Care for the Homeless projects through the Health Centers Renewal Act of 2007.

Universal Health Care and Homelessness examines the health care crisis in America as it relates to people experiencing homelessness and proposes a universal health care plan with a single-payer financing mechanism.

Medicaid, SCHIP and Homelessness calls for protecting Medicaid entitlements, simplifying and expediting the application process, guaranteeing access to all need medical services, and calls reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program with funding to cover all uninsured children below 200% FPL.

Disability Benefits and Homelessness seeks to assure adequate SSI/SSDI benefits for disabled persons, and calls for the inclusion of substance abuse as a disability entitlement.

Addiction, Mental Health, and Homelessness urges the strengthening of mainstream public programs, increased funding for PATH and THP programs, the use of harm reduction approaches to addictions recovery, and the inclusion of behavioral health services in all insurance plans.

Housing and Homelessness calls upon Congress to establish a National Housing Trust Fund, emphasizes “housing first” policies, and recommends the reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Act, to include increased funding, an expanded definition of homelessness, and the restoration of public housing.

Fair Wages and Homelessness promotes the right to fair and livable wages and calls upon Congress to enact a universal living wage indexed to the local cost of housing.

Incarceration, Homelessness and Health evaluates the growing trend of criminalizing the homeless and advocates for improved continuity of care despite incarceration, guaranteed housing upon release from prison, and effective ways to promote the reintegration of ex-offenders.

Institutional Discharge and Homelessness seeks to prohibit public institutions from discharging people into homelessness and promotes the investment in medical respite care facilities.

Children and Youth Homelessness calls for the reauthorization and increased appropriation of SCHIP, the inclusion of mental health services in private and public health insurance plans, and adequate educational opportunities for homeless youth.

Military Spending and Homelessness opposes increases in the Defense budget and calls for the redirection of 15% of current military spending toward housing, health care, and other mainstream programs.

Medical Respite Care seeks to ensure access to medical respite services for homeless services providers and designate respite care as a reimbursement for Medicaid and other insurance plans.

Federal Tort Claims recommends that Congress reintroduce Community Health Center Volunteer Physician Protection Act, which extends liability insurance coverage to volunteer providers at HCH projects and other Consolidated Health Centers.

ACTION:

- **Download and distribute** the 2008 National Health Care for the Homeless Council’s Policy Statements. You can retrieve the policy statements at www.nhchc.org. Share them with your staff, Board, and Members of Congress and use them for your advocacy work throughout the year.
- **For more information**, contact the Council’s Health Policy Organizer, Adrienne Breidenstine, at abreidenstine@hchmd.org or call 443-703-1337.

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