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Research, Addressing Homelessness through Permanent Supportive Housing: Barriers to Building and Sustaining Permanent Supportive Housing

Introduction

Francesca's research project focuses on the effectiveness of Permanent Supportive Housing as a solution to homelessness and the barriers to its implementation and sustainability. Her project examines Permanent Supportive Housing as a promising solution by providing stable housing coupled with supportive services, thereby addressing both housing and health needs. Utilizing data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Family Options Study and other qualitative reports, Francesca evaluates the cost-effectiveness of Permanent Supportive Housing and its capacity to provide long-term stability for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. The research highlights that Permanent Supportive Housing significantly reduces homelessness and is cost-effective. The cost to support an individual in permanent supportive housing is [approximately \\$1,162 per month](#), which is 60% less than the cost of emergency and social services provided to an unhoused individual, reported at [\\$2,916 per month](#).

Barriers to Permanent Supportive Housing

Despite its benefits, the availability of Permanent Supportive Housing units is insufficient to meet demand, with significant barriers in approval processes, funding, and community resistance. The review and approval process for Permanent Supportive Housing projects is lengthy and complex, involving multiple regulations and entities. And funding for Permanent Supportive Housing is fragmented, with capital, operations, and services each sourced from various programs, creating a disjointed system. Additionally, rising costs and insufficient funding increases also threaten the viability of PSH projects. For example, insurance premiums have surged by [50%-500% between 2022 and 2024](#), significantly impacting affordable housing projects' budgets.

Policy Solutions

To address these barriers, it is recommended to streamline the review and approval process for Permanent Supportive Housing projects by simplifying and expediting it. For example in California, they passed Senate Bill 35, which streamlines multi-family development. Senate Bill 35 has been successful in streamlining the development of [156 projects which equates to 18,000 housing units](#). It would also be beneficial to consolidate funding into a unified stream covering all phases of Permanent Supportive Housing projects and establishing emergency funds to address unexpected financial gaps can enhance project sustainability. Additionally, leveraging healthcare funding, specifically Medicaid, for supportive services within these housing projects, and providing technical assistance to housing providers to navigate complex funding mechanisms, can significantly bolster the capacity to provide sustainable Permanent Supportive Housing.