

# Improving Patient Outcomes for Unhoused High-Utilizers: Evaluation of a Hospital-Community Collaborative Transitional Housing Program

Unstable housing is well-documented to increase risks of adverse health outcomes, acute healthcare utilization, and mortality, especially when compounded by age or disability. The prevalence of homelessness among hospitalized patients significantly exceeds community estimates, placing considerable strain on healthcare resources. In response, an innovative partnership between Denver Health and the Denver Housing Authority launched in December 2023 to address this issue through the 655 Broadway transitional housing program. Located adjacent to the main hospital campus, this program offers safe, temporary housing to elderly or disabled patients experiencing homelessness as they transition out of the hospital. Participants benefit from in-home support and guidance provided by care managers and housing navigators, who assist in connecting them to healthcare services and public assistance programs, with the goal of stabilizing health, strengthening community ties, and facilitating pathways to permanent housing.

This study employed semi-structured, in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of 15 program participants who had been in the program for a minimum of 45 days. Using an interview guide, we explored participants' perceptions of the program's acceptability, facilitators, barriers, and overall impact on their health and access to resources. Thematic analysis was applied to interview transcripts, allowing for coding and the identification of key themes.

Preliminary findings revealed three primary themes: **(1) Perceived Benefits** – Participants reported that the dedicated case manager and the proximity of housing to healthcare services were highly advantageous; **(2) Health Improvements and Enhanced Access to Care** – Many participants noted improved medication adherence and more consistent attendance at medical appointments; and **(3) Gratitude and Positive Impact on Housing Stability** – Participants expressed deep gratitude for the housing opportunity and described the program as a critical step toward securing permanent housing, with some being off the streets for the first time in years. Some participants, being off the streets for the first time in years, even felt compelled to share their new indoor living situation with friends from their time unhoused, despite program rules discouraging this behavior.

The qualitative findings suggest that the 655 Broadway Transitional Housing Program is well-regarded by participants, with meaningful benefits for their physical and mental well-being. These insights underscore the value of transitional housing and individualized case management in promoting health stabilization and long-term housing outcomes. Moving forward, plans include up to 12 additional interviews with key program staff, such as care managers, to better understand barriers to program implementation. Future evaluations will continue to assess the program's long-term impact and explore ways to engage tenants in their journey toward stable housing.