



Housing First Program: A Partnership with New Hope Housing



The Opportunity

For some of our members at UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, utilization of the health care system is just one of many components to achieving good health. Members who live with complexities — chronic medical conditions, behavioral health issues and gaps in basic needs, like those experiencing homelessness — often seek help with frequent visits to ERs, hospitals and other facilities. These individuals seldom see improved health outcomes, yet the cost of care accumulates. Our team recognized the challenges of our members experiencing homelessness in Harris county, and to help impact their whole health, we developed a partnership with New Hope Housing to provide immediate access to safe and affordable housing.



The Innovation

The Housing First Program launched in October 2019 – UnitedHealthcare identified ten initial participants and arranged to pay 100% of their monthly rent for 12 months at New Hope Perry Street. Members selected to participate in the program were individuals who:

- Were identified as homeless
- Had a behavioral health diagnosis
- Struggled with substance use disorder
- Experienced significant unmet physical health needs



By providing housing we strived to:

- Deliver more appropriate care, at a lower cost
- Address behavioral health and chemical dependency issues
- Make a positive impact one member at a time

Case managers from UnitedHealthcare and New Hope Housing worked together to build out a support system to provide wraparound care which includes intensive and fully integrated case management, close collaboration and continuum of care meetings with the member's medical and behavioral health providers, as well as regular meetings and assessments with the UnitedHealthcare medical director. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic UnitedHealthcare supplied New Hope Housing with laptops for members to maintain ongoing engagement with physicians and support team.

Members in the program also receive:

- A welcome basket filled with necessities like bedding, towels and toiletries
- Support from New Hope staff to obtain state identification, social security cards and social security award letters
- Fresh fruits and vegetables from Second Serving agencies
- Opportunity to attend weekly substance use support meetings



The Outcomes

Since 2019, four out of the ten members housed at the New Hope Perry Street location have graduated from the program and transitioned to their own residence using Section 8 voucher funding. In October 2020, UnitedHealthcare expanded the program and partnership with New Hope Housing — ten additional members will enter the program at the New Hope Dale Carnegie location. So far, two members have already moved into their new homes. We plan to continue to expand programming to address additional needs of the individuals we serve and look forward to the future success of our members participating in the Housing First Program.




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