

Having a Home: A Foundation for Recovery

Access to safe and affordable housing, along with the supports necessary to thrive there, is perhaps the most basic and powerful social determinant of health. Alliance has long been committed to "Housing First, Housing Plus," the principle of supportive housing as a platform for improving quality of life and a foundation for recovery. In 2017 we expanded on that commitment by forging new partnerships and exploring more opportunities to study housing and health.

We have continued to build on the success of our Independent Living Initiative, or ILI, a short-term, one-time assistance program for adults and children receiving enhanced services through Alliance. We used reinvestment funds to increase the ILI budget, allowing us to respond to the needs of people facing possible eviction or loss of their utilities, people in need of start-up funds to move into permanent housing, and people with behavioral illnesses transitioning from jail or extended hospital stays into secure housing.

While rental assistance remains an essential component of housing, we've dedicated ourselves to building a truly comprehensive housing program that ranges from permanent supportive housing to a continuum of housing for people who may not be ready enough to sign their own leases. We have focused our resources on reducing housing barriers and increasing options for the hardest to house people, those with complex diagnoses or histories of homelessness, insufficient or no income, criminal records, or poor credit.

This requires access to an inventory of good places to live. To achieve this we are dedicated to forging partnerships with landlords and developers to create priority access into safe and affordable housing for the people we serve over an extended periods of time.

Alliance made its first capital investment in housing in 2017 – \$550,000 in funds to purchase 25 housing units for use by the people we serve. \$250,000 supported CASA, a non-profit housing developer and property manager, in making its largest acquisition of housing units to date in Durham. The remainder was invested with a private developer to set aside units in a new construction complex.

We used \$4.2 million of State funds to partner with three developers to create access to another 40 housing units.

We have continued increasing landlord recruitment and engagement, including an aggressive and well-received landlord incentive program that pays bonuses for each new or renewed 12-month lease signed.



“ We are thinking of housing in a much more global way, asking ourselves what housing looks like for the people we serve, and then we ask what kinds of partnerships we need to forge to achieve that. ”

Ann Oshel
SVP, Community Relations

\$693,000

IN RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO OVER 400 INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES, MOVING THEM OUT OF HOMELESSNESS AND HELPING THEM AVOID EVICTION



We are also funding two pilots centered on housing and healthcare:

- A Health and Housing partnership with two Duke outpatient clinics to screen patients referred from the ED for gaps in their primary life needs like housing, food or transportation – the social determinants of health – and refer those with multiple needs including behavioral health and housing to Alliance for help.
- A partnership with two of our substance use treatment providers to provide supportive housing for individuals with addictions to opioids.

Transitions to Community Living

2017 we strengthened our commitment to provide North Carolinians with serious mental illness the opportunity to live in their communities in their own homes, with the supports and services they need to be successful. Our Transitions to Community Living Initiative, which focuses on transitioning individuals with serious mental illness from adult care homes and state hospitals and diverting individuals from entering institutional settings, is helping the state achieve compliance with the Olmstead Settlement Agreement. As a result, Alliance exceeded its FY18 goals for completed transitions.

95 MEN AND WOMEN TRANSITIONED TO SAFE AND SECURE INDEPENDENT HOUSING IN THE COMMUNITIES OF THEIR CHOICE IN 2017

Successfully transitioning people to community living requires the specialized skills and expertise of professionals across Alliance, and transforming the way we collaborated was a key element of our successful year. We introduced new staff specifically for the program, including a project manager to oversee the initiative and a provider network development specialist dedicated entirely to TCLI, and refocused an existing team member on securing additional housing inventory to meet the demand we created.

This increased housing inventory resulted from an aggressive program of recruitment and incentives made possible by our housing investment efforts and landlord outreach program, both part of our greater commitment to housing as a health care strategy.

Also part of the settlement, Alliance connected 280 individuals with severe mental illness in 2017 with services to find competitive employment and the support to keep their jobs. Most people living with serious mental illness can and want to work. Work can be one of the cornerstones in recovery and is part of living a full and meaningful life in the community.



“ This program opens a whole new life to these folks – one many of them never dreamed was possible. ”

TJ Hayes
Transition Supervisor