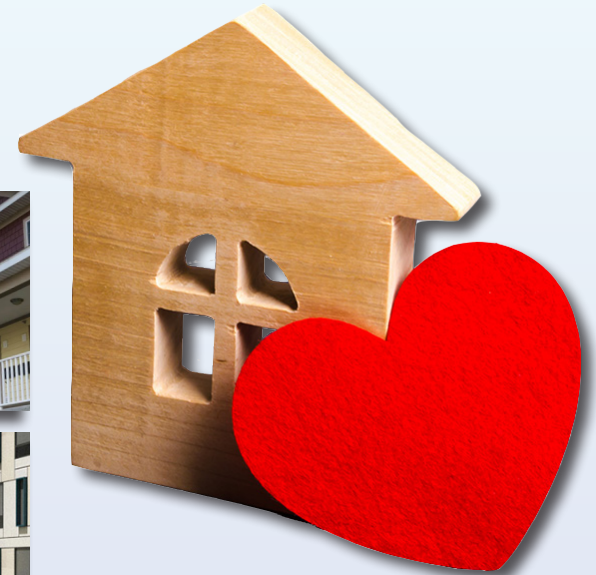


HOUSING:

A vital link to recovery



Mental health professionals have long known that a stable living environment is essential to the process of recovery.

“Homelessness puts one at risk for poor health,” according to a report by the **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**. “Exposure to infection, to the elements, and to the violence of the streets is common. Lack of control over nutrition or personal hygiene or sleep demeans and debilitates homeless people. Risky survival behaviors are the currency of the streets. The psychological toll is as dire as the physical.”

“Poor housing can result in worse mental health. Adverse conditions such as dampness, mold and cold indoor temperatures may be associated with anxiety and depression. Worse yet, lack of affordable housing may lead to homelessness, which can exacerbate mental health issues,” the report adds. “A focus on social determinants of health can lead to better mental health outcomes, including preventing mental illness. We all have a role to play in addressing them, individually and as members of society, working with local, state and federal government, nonprofits, and companies.”

Instability in housing is one of the social, economic, and physical-environment factors that shape an individual’s mental health across their lifespan, according to *The Social Determinants of Mental Health: A White Paper Detailing Promising Practices and Opportunities at the New York State Office of Mental Health*, a paper by **Merrill Rotter, MD**, Senior Forensic Advisor to the Commissioner of OMH, and **Michael T. Compton, MD, MPH**, Research Psychiatrist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

“Social determinants likely have a more potent effect on behavioral disorders than physical illnesses. One reason is the fact that social determinants are both risk factors for and consequences of behavioral disorders, like serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders,” they wrote.

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HOPE. RECOVERY. RESILIENCE. Addressing the Social Determinants of Mental Health

- Adverse childhood experiences
- Discrimination or social exclusion
- Exposure to violence
- Criminal justice involvement
- Low educational attainment
- Unemployment or job insecurity
- Poverty and income inequality
- Neighborhood poverty

Highly detrimental US societal problems

Socioeconomic status and opportunities for accruing wealth

Basic needs in terms of housing, food, transportation, and health care

- Housing instability
- Food insecurity
- Poor access to transportation
- Poor access to health care

Immediate and global physical environment

- Adverse built environment
- Neighborhood disorder
- Pollution
- Global climate change impact

Sixteen categories of social determinants of mental health, in four broad areas.

OMH report offers recommendations to address the social determinants of mental health

As the disparate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has made tragically evident, societal inequalities in living conditions and access to health care among segments of our state's population are critical contributors to the health and well-being of the people we serve. New York State is working through several avenues to address these inequities.

A new report from OMH, *The Social Determinants of Mental Health: A White Paper Detailing Promising Practices and Opportunities at the New York State Office of Mental Health*, describes these inequities in detail and offers opportunities for solutions.

The paper was written by **Merrill Rotter, MD**, Senior Forensic Advisor to the Commissioner of OMH, and **Michael T. Compton, MD, MPH**, Research Psychiatrist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Social determinants and their impact

The White Paper discusses the “social determinants of mental health,” which are the social, economic, and physical-environment factors that shape an individual’s mental health across the lifespan.

Social determinants likely have a more potent effect on behavioral disorders than physical illnesses. One reason is the fact that social determinants are both risk factors for and consequences of behavioral disorders, like serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Dr. Rotter | Dr. Compton

They include discrimination, unemployment, housing instability, food insecurity, and poor access to health care, among others.

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For more on the social determinants of mental health, read the Summer 2020 edition of OMH News at: <https://omh.ny.gov/omh-web/resources/newsltr/docs/omhn-summer2020special.pdf>.

We welcome your comments at: omhnews@omh.ny.gov.

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“For example, the stresses associated with housing instability can impact a person’s clinical condition, including behaviors that imperil future housing opportunities. The population OMH serves is at the intersection of several groups with significantly greater exposure to social determinants — including people experiencing discrimination, trauma, poverty, insufficient access to health care, criminal/legal contact and insecure housing.”

OMH has been working through several avenues to address the urgent need for housing and to strengthen mental health resources in our communities. One such program is the development of “supportive housing.”

Supportive housing

Supportive housing, as defined by the **Supportive Housing Network of New York**, is “affordable housing with onsite services that help formerly homeless, disabled tenants live in dignity in the community.”

Supportive housing came into being in response to the homelessness crisis in New York City in the 1970s. Supportive housing is permanent and affordable. Tenants hold leases and pay about a third of their income in rent. Residences are owned and operated by nonprofit organizations and are accountable to their city, state, and federal funders.

“Supportive housing is the most humane and cost-effective solution to ending homelessness for vulnerable people: individuals and families dealing with mental illness, trauma/abuse, addiction, and chronic illness including HIV/AIDS,” the network adds. “Because supportive housing either replaces a blighted building or lot, it jump-starts neighborhood renewal. Because of front desk coverage 24/7 as well as security features, supportive housing frequently contributes to increased community safety. As a result, studies have shown that supportive housing increases property values.”

Other types of housing that are developed along with supportive housing projects can include emergency shelters, which are often where people experiencing economic shock first turn for support through a wide range of services; and transitional housing, which typically involves a temporary residence of up to 24 months with wrap-around services to help people stabilize their lives.

“Supportive housing allows individuals living with mental illness to receive the services they need in their homes and live independently and successfully in their own community,” said OMH Commissioner **Ann Sullivan, MD**. “These programs provide safe and stable housing for formerly homeless people living with mental illness. They will now be able to receive the support services they need right in their own homes, allowing them to become independent, productive and successful members of their community.”

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Moira Tashjian, MPA, Acting OMH Executive Deputy Commissioner (fourth from left) takes part in the groundbreaking for the Veddersburg Apartments in Amsterdam.



For more on the Supportive Housing Network of New York, visit: <https://shnny.org>.

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Funding through State Supportive Housing Initiative

These projects are being built through the **Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative**, called “ESSHI.” ESSHI is an inter-agency program initiated by New York State to create and preserve supportive housing units throughout the state.

Administered by OMH, it includes representatives from the Department of Health, New York State Homes and Community Renewal, Office of Addiction Services and Supports, Office of Children and Family Services, Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

The program’s goal is to build and preserve more than 100,000 units of affordable housing and 6,000 units of supportive housing over five years. Thus far, this initiative has provided for the construction of more than 7,000 units of supportive housing for vulnerable populations, including veterans, victims of domestic violence, frail or disabled senior citizens, young adults with histories of incarceration, homelessness or foster care, chronically homeless individuals and families, as well as individuals with health, mental health or substance use disorders.

The most recent round, the fifth under this program, includes 179 conditional awards to help 104 community providers create housing opportunities in 41 counties throughout the state. The conditional awards provide service and operating funding for permanent supportive housing units and will allow applicants to secure separate capital funding to finance the development and construction of their housing projects.

Funding will be used to provide rental assistance and services to eligible target populations to ensure their housing stability. They provide New Yorkers with a range of specialized housing options and support services, while helping community organizations finance construction, operate buildings, and provide critical services throughout the state.

The 2021 State of the State proposal called for extending this concept by allowing commercial property owners to convert underused office buildings and hotels to residential use, including affordable and supportive housing.

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OMH participates in the ribbon-cutting at the Clinton Avenue Historic Apartments in Albany.

Services ▾ Housing

Featured



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[Apply for Assistance](#)

For information on New York State’s housing services, visit: <https://www.ny.gov/services/housing>.

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Breaking ground or recently completed

- **Albany – Clinton Avenue Historic Apartments**, a \$56 million rehabilitation project of 70 formerly distressed row houses in an older section of the city, was completed this summer. Developed by Home Leasing, LLC, the project offers 210 safe and affordable homes for families with 40 apartments set aside for residents who are formerly homeless or at-risk of homelessness, and those with mental illness who will receive on-site supportive services. Most of the apartments are affordable to households earning up to 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), with 32 apartments affordable to households earning up to 90 percent of the AMI. Forty households will receive rental subsidies and supportive services through ESSHI. On-site support is provided by DePaul Community Services, Inc. which will coordinate health care, employment, educational, vocational rehabilitation, and clinical services.
- **Amsterdam –** Ground was broken this summer on the **Veddersburg Apartments** in Amsterdam. The three-story building, developed by DePaul Properties, will have 62 apartments, 31 set aside for residents in need of support services. Apartments will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 60 percent of the AMI. “This is going to be a beautiful building, but actually it’s going to be a beautiful home for *individuals*,” said **Moira Tashjian**, MPA, Acting OMH Executive Deputy Commissioner at the groundbreaking. Half of the tenants will receive services from DePaul’s on-site services supporting medical and mental health case management.
- **Bronx –** Construction started this summer on a development at **1159 River Avenue** in South Bronx, a 19-story building that will have 245 apartments – 148 set aside for individuals and families who have previously been homeless, including those in need of supportive services. Of these units set aside, 128 households will have access to on-site services and rental assistance funded through ESSHI. Remaining rental units are reserved for low-income individuals and families. Supportive services provided by Community Access, Inc., will include linkage to and coordination of services with other community resources, including primary care and mental health services, and direct support in a variety of areas including goal setting, systems navigation, self-advocacy, educational/vocational/employment information and referrals, nutrition, harm-reduction strategies, and social supports.
- **Glens Falls – Cooper Street Apartments**, a transitional and permanent supportive housing development, was completed this summer. Its 28 permanent supportive housing units are available for a range of populations, including individuals living with mental illness and young adults ages 18 to 25. The other six units will serve as transitional housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. OMH provided operating funding through ESSHI. Support services will be provided by the Warren-Washington Association for Mental Health and will include case management, legal assistance and advocacy, benefit assistance, counseling, and crisis intervention, among others.
- **Manhattan –** New York State is providing funding for two new supportive housing developments in Upper Manhattan. The state’s Homeless Housing and Assistance Program will help create 71 supportive housing units at **Bishop House Apartments** in Central



Aerial rendering of 1159 River Avenue in South Bronx. (Urban Quotient)



Ribbon-cutting at Cooper Street Apartments in Glens Falls. (Glens Falls Post-Star)

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Harlem, operated by The Bridge, which will provide case management, daily-living skill and vocational training, substance-use treatment, and physical and mental health care services. The Bishop House Apartments will be reserved for homeless New Yorkers who are either suffering from severe mental illness or were recently released from incarceration. An additional 56 housing units are being developed at **Jericho House** in Harlem. Jericho House will provide shelter and services to homeless adults who are recovering from substance abuse disorders. Residents there will receive case management, crisis intervention, relapse prevention, career counseling, job readiness and substance use treatment.

- **Saratoga Springs** – The **Promenade Apartments**, a \$20 million affordable and supportive housing development located in downtown Saratoga Springs, was completed this summer. The development is providing 63 affordable homes, including 10 apartments reserved for homeless veterans. It consists of a four-story building with 41 apartments and three two-story townhouse-style buildings with 22 units. The development features 31 one-bedroom, 26 two-bedroom, and six three-bedroom apartments – all affordable to households earning at or below 80 percent of the AMI. Developed by Norstar Development USA, L.P. and the Saratoga Springs Housing Authority, the project includes 10 apartments reserved for individuals who need supportive services, with a preference for veterans. Supportive services will be provided by the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition.
- **Syracuse** – Completed this summer was **Butternut Crossing**, a seven-building neighborhood revitalization project in Syracuse's Northside neighborhood. The mixed-use, mixed-income development has 53 affordable apartments, including 11 homes reserved for people who need supportive services to live independently. Eight apartments set aside for persons with physical disability or traumatic brain injury. Six apartments are fully accessible and move-in ready for persons with mobility impairment and three apartments are move-in ready for persons with a hearing or vision impairment. Thirteen households will receive project-based Section 8 housing vouchers provided by the Syracuse Housing Authority. The project includes a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments that are affordable to households with incomes that range from 30 to 90 percent of the AMI. Butternut Crossing includes 11 apartments supported by services and operating funding through ESSHI. Services will be provided by Catholic Charities of Onondaga County, working with OMH.
- **Troy** – Construction has also started on the **Hillside Views**, an affordable and supportive housing development in the city. The project will create 51 energy-efficient affordable homes with 26 units reserved for previously homeless households in need of support services. The project, developed by the Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program, will consist of one four-story building with 28 apartments and seven townhouse-style buildings at scattered locations. As part of the project, four blighted buildings will be demolished and the lots will be combined into eight sites. All apartments will be affordable to households earning at or below 60 percent of the AMI. Twenty-six apartments are reserved for formerly homeless individuals who will have access to on-site support services through Unity House. Six apartments are fully adapted and move-in ready for people with a mobility impairment and three are fully adapted and move-in ready for people with a hearing or visual impairment.



Promenade Apartments in Saratoga Springs.



Butternut Crossing in Syracuse (Housing Visions)



Rendering for Hillside Views in Troy.

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Residential revitalization on the Kingsboro campus

In July, New York State announced a proposal to redevelop 7.2 underused acres of the Kingsboro Psychiatric Center campus in Brooklyn to build a 900-apartment residential community with affordable, supportive, and senior housing.

Some of the apartments will be designated for home ownership programs. The project will replace two aging homeless shelters originally built in the 1930s with build two state-of-the-art shelters. The development will include a 10,000-square-foot grocery store, a public green space, a full-sized basketball court, areas for urban farming, and a greenhouse. A 7,000-square-foot community hub will be the site of a workforce development training center, performance venues, exercise facilities, and computer-equipped classrooms.

Funding will come from the state's \$1.4 billion Vital Brooklyn initiative, which invests in eight integrated areas – including health care and housing, establishing a new standard for addressing chronic economic and racial disparities in Brooklyn's high-need communities.

The project is expected to be completed in four years. The development will create 3,700 construction jobs and more than 200 permanent jobs for the residents of East Flatbush and surrounding neighborhoods.

In August 2020, Empire State Development – in collaboration with New York State Homes and Community Renewal – requested proposals to bring a modern, mixed-use wellness-oriented development to the campus.

The development team is made up of Almat Urban, Breaking Ground, Brooklyn Community Services, the Center for Urban Community Services, Douglaston Development, Jobe Development, and the Velez Organization. Designing development are the New York office of Adjaye Associates and Studio Zewde, a Harlem landscape architecture and urban design firm.

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the inequalities among the state's at-risk and in-need communities, including a fundamental need for safe and affordable housing. Through the Vital Brooklyn initiative, the state is better addressing these needs by transforming underutilized land on the Kingsboro Psychiatric Center campus into a community-oriented development that provides housing and programming to better serve those in-need.

Artist rendering of the residential community project on the Kingsboro Psychiatric Center campus.



For information on the Vital Brooklyn Initiative, visit: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/vital-brooklyn-initiative>.

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And on the way ...

In April, New York State announced more than \$98 million had been awarded to create 1,054 affordable homes in 20 separate developments throughout the state. This funding will help revitalize communities, fight homelessness, and expand access to energy-efficient, affordable housing opportunities. The investment will build more than 1,000 homes for seniors, veterans, adults with special needs, and households experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

- **Amsterdam – Holland Circle Apartments** will feature 48 affordable apartments with supportive services for 27 adults living with mental illness.
- **Ballston – Dominic Hollow Apartments** will offer 60 affordable apartments with 30 homes reserved for individuals in need of supportive services.
- **Binghamton – North of Main Revitalization** will rehabilitate six properties and construct one new building on vacant land to create 23 affordable apartments.
- **Bronx – Mt. Hope Walton Apartments** in the Mt. Hope neighborhood will include 103 workforce apartments with 16 homes reserved for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- **Brooklyn – Bethany Senior Terraces** in the Flatbush neighborhood will include 58 apartments for seniors age 62 and older with 18 apartments reserved for senior households in need of support to live independently. **The Hart** in Bedford-Stuyvesant will be constructed on underused hospital property and will feature an ambulatory care center, a mental health outpatient program, and a co-located primary care center to be operated by One Brooklyn Health System. The building will also offer 57 affordable apartments, including 38 supportive homes for seniors and adults living with mental illness.
- **Buffalo – Olympic Avenue Apartments** will transform a vacant historic school into 46 affordable apartments. **West Side Homes**, a scattered-site development, will rehabilitate two existing properties and construct 12 new buildings to create a total of 49 apartments. Sixteen apartments are set aside for adults in need of supportive services.
- **Cicero – Monarch Commons** involves the demolition of vacant and underused structures and the new construction of a 50-unit building for seniors age 55 and older. Fifteen homes will be reserved for veterans.
- **Cohoes –** Funding was allocated for **Erie Point** to create 40 apartments and a pocket park across eight scattered locations. Half of the apartments will be paired with supportive services for families experiencing homelessness. Homes and Community Renewal also awarded Section 8 Project-Based Vouchers that will provide rental assistance for eight of the households.
- **East Hampton – Three-Mile Harbor** will consist of five town-house-style buildings with 50 affordable apartments and a community building in an area with access to high-performing schools.



Rendering of the Dominic Hollow Apartments. (RISE Services)



Rendering of the Mt. Hope Walton Apartments. (New York Housing Conference)



Rendering of Bethany Senior Terraces. (New York Housing Conference)

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- **Ithaca – Carpenter Park Apartments** will be constructed on underused land adjacent to a farmers market and will have access to the Cayuga Waterfront Trail.
- **North Elba – MacKenzie Overlook**, a 60-unit affordable housing development, is a priority of the Regional Economic Council Strategic Plan and will initially be used to temporarily house college athletes competing in the Winter Universiade Games in 2023 before becoming permanent rental housing.
- **Orangetown – Homes for Heroes Veterans Apartments** will convert a former Army barracks into 14 supportive homes for veterans experiencing homelessness.
- **Pawling – The Woods at Pawling** will include 80 mixed-income affordable apartments for families in an area with a high-performing school district.
- **Rome – Copper City Lofts** will feature 64 apartments and ground-floor commercial space. The development will create a more walkable and vibrant downtown in the city.
- **Seneca Falls – Huntington Apartments** will transform an historic vacant factory into 53 apartments with 27 units reserved for veterans experiencing homelessness.
- **Sennett – Sennett Meadows Senior Housing** will include 60 apartments for seniors age 55 and older with 18 apartments set aside for seniors and veterans in need of supportive services.
- **Utica – Johnson Park Apartments** will offer 62 apartments, including 33 for seniors and adults in need of supportive services.
- **Waterloo – Lafayette Apartments** will convert a vacant historic school building into 33 affordable apartments for seniors 62 and older with six supportive homes for senior households who require assistance to live independently.



Rendering of Homes for Heroes Veterans Apartments. (Rockland Homes for Heroes)



Rendering of Sennett Meadows Senior Housing. (Genesis Housing)



New York State Office of Mental Health's Suicide Prevention Center of New York (SPCNY) will be hosting a suicide prevention symposium titled **"AIM for Zero: Suicide Care is Healthcare."** This three-day, virtual symposium will bring together the leading suicide prevention experts to discuss the impact and importance of the Zero Suicide framework in healthcare systems, the importance of equity and inclusivity, and strategies for high impact healthcare outcomes, while highlighting cutting edge tools for implementation.

The first 500 registered attendees will receive a complimentary AIM For Zero gift package.

DAY I	DAY II	DAY III
Zero Suicide in Healthcare Tuesday, September 28 8:30am-12:30pm	Equity, Culture Responsiveness & Suicide Prevention in Healthcare Wednesday, September 29 8:30am-12:30pm	Going from Good to Great in Suicide Care Thursday, September 30 8:30am-12:30pm



NY Project Hope Coping with COVID

The NY Project Hope COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline is available for people who are experiencing anxiety, stress and depression during the Coronavirus emergency. Call **1-844-863-9314** for free and confidential support.