

# SNAPS Special NOFO: Leveraging Health Care Resources

(Sent via SNAPS listserv on 8.17.2022)

On June 22, 2022 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released the [Continuum of Care Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness \(Special NOFO\)](#). This is a first-of-its-kind opportunity to address unsheltered homelessness and homeless encampments, and it includes funds set aside to address homelessness in rural communities.

To support communities in developing their plans to address rural and unsheltered homelessness, HUD is highlighting existing TA resources through a series of listserv messages. Today's message focuses on leveraging health care resources.

## Leveraging Health Care Resources

In their [Integrate Health Care](#) blog from August 2018, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) states that people experiencing homelessness often have serious and complex health challenges, including mental health problems and substance use disorders, chronic medical conditions like diabetes and hypertension, and infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and tuberculosis. Further, [research from the California Policy Lab](#) finds that these health challenges are particularly severe for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Those experiencing unsheltered homelessness were 25 times as likely to report having all three of the following conditions concurrently when compared to their sheltered peers: physical health condition, mental health condition, and substance abuse condition. Ensuring access to quality health care must be a part of a community's work to end homelessness.

Combining health care resources with safe, affordable, and accessible housing improves health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, improves their quality of life, and has the added benefit of reducing costs in the healthcare system. Health care services are more effective when a patient is stably housed, and in turn, maintaining housing is more likely if proper health care services are delivered. This is why leveraging healthcare services to support people with histories of homelessness is so important.

The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed many communities to expand their partnerships with healthcare organizations, including public health. This collaboration has built a solid foundation to continue to grow these partnerships. Examples of organizations that can help you leverage healthcare resources include Health Care for the Homeless providers, mental health and recovery treatment programs, local hospitals, and state and local health departments. When determining which organizations you should engage, it is also important to include people with lived experience in discussions on what health care partnerships and resources are needed at the table.

Listed below are some tools and fact sheets that may be of assistance as you work to leverage health care resources in your homeless system.

[Federal Health and Social Service Programs That Support People Experiencing Homelessness](#) (USICH)

[Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection](#) (NHCHC)

[COVID-19 & the HCH Community: Needed Actions from Public Health and Emergency Response Systems](#) (NHCHC)

[Building connective tissue for effective housing-health initiatives](#) (Brookings)

[Homeless in the ED: Partnerships to Improve Care, Pt. 3 - YouTube](#) (NHCHC)

