



ISSUE

Recuperative care for those experiencing homelessness

MMA Position

To ensure that Minnesotans experiencing homelessness can receive needed short-term care in their recovery following hospitalization, the MMA supports expanding Medical Assistance (MA) coverage to include recuperative care.

Background

Recuperative care, also known as medical respite, is a not-for-profit health program and a nationally recognized model. Recuperative care offers healthcare providers a way to discharge patients experiencing homelessness and provide them with continued health and treatment services when hospitalization is no longer required – but when a safe place to heal from an illness or injury is still needed.

A gap exists between acute medical services that are provided in a hospital setting, and homeless shelters that are not equipped to, or do not have the capacity to, provide medical care post-hospital stay.

Medicaid should pay for recuperative care services, including clinical care coordination and support services not currently reimbursed in a shelter or other short-term housing. Providing a vulnerable population with recuperative care will result in improved health outcomes, increased appropriate access to care, reduced emergency department visits, and may also decrease the use of detox centers and the criminal justice system as alternatives to behavioral health and shelter systems.

Talking Points

- Recovery following discharge from a hospital can be difficult for a person who does not have a home in which to recover.
- Patients experiencing homelessness are twice as likely to be readmitted within a week of discharge from the hospital and are more likely to be admitted to the hospital to care for high risk, costly conditions.
- Patients experiencing homelessness are at risk of an earlier death than people who have stable housing.
- Patients experiencing homelessness tend to be the costliest consumers across multiple systems.
- Recuperative care is short-term care for people experiencing homelessness who are not ill enough to be in a hospital, yet too ill to recuperate on the streets.
- Recuperative care provides coverage for care coordination and temporary housing during recovery.

Resources

Hennepin Healthcare: Recuperative Care for People Experiencing Homelessness