Paving the Way for a More Prosperous Future for Young Adults:
Preliminary Results of an Outcomes Study of the Chelsea Foyer at the Christopher

MAY 2014 — Paving the way for a prosperous future for young adults means making sure that they have access to opportunities that help them successfully navigate the transition from adolescence to adulthood. This transition can be a difficult one, and for some, it happens in a context of even greater challenges. Young adults who are aging out of foster care, who are homeless, or are struggling with mental illness require unique supports to help make this transition more productive, focused and successful.

Supportive housing programs that combine housing and targeted services have been shown to be a promising intervention for a variety of at-risk populations. The Chelsea Foyer at the Christopher, developed by Good Shepherd Services (GSS), is an innovative youth development and trauma-informed model for supportive housing that serves 40 young adults between the ages of 18-25 years who are aging out of foster care, homeless, and/or at risk of becoming homeless. Residents can live at the Foyer for up to two years and access an array of services, including workshops on life skills, finance, and employment to prepare them for independence. Studying and understanding the true impact of such programs is, unfortunately, often limited by many factors, including the availability and consistency of data on a wide range of outcomes, the inability to identify appropriate comparison groups, and other methodological challenges. But thanks to a unique collaboration between Good Shepherd Services and the Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI), researchers were able to compare several outcomes of Chelsea Foyer participants to the outcomes of a comparison group of individuals who applied for and were eligible for supportive housing but who were not placed in supportive housing. This work was made possible with generous support from the Larson Family Foundation.

The logic model below shows the expected linkages between program components and intended outcomes.

* includes Government benefit and assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Cash Assistance (CA), Medicaid, Social Security Income (SSI)
Major Results

In this stage of the research study, the first three outcomes shown in the logic model above were examined for differences in service use between the Foyer participants and the comparison group. Of these outcomes, statistically significant differences were found in the use of the single adult homeless shelter system and jail system during the two years after the program start date or eligibility date.

Foyer participants had significantly lower rates of shelter use and jail stays than the comparison group. During this period, 28.9% of the comparison group used a Department of Human Services (DHS) single adult shelter, while only 16.7% of the Foyer participants were in a shelter at some point. Similarly, 16.4% of the comparison group were in a Department of Corrections (DOC) jail during this period, compared to only 6.5% of the Foyer participants. **Controlling for other factors, Foyer participants were 36% less likely to have a stay in the single adult shelter system and 55% less likely to go to jail during this time period.**

Service Use Two Years after Start Date or Eligibility Date

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Comparison Group (n=159)</th>
<th>Foyer Participants (n=138)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Adult Shelter</strong></td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jail</strong></td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
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Sources: NYC Department of Homeless Services and NYC Department of Correction

Implications

The preliminary results from this evaluation have promising programmatic and methodological implications. The lower rates of homeless shelter and jail stays for Foyer participants relative to their comparison group peers point to the benefits of this program model for young adults. To expand the program, however, funding streams need to be designed to finance comprehensive models through city, state and federal agreements. This study also exemplifies how administrative data can be used to track participant outcomes, even for smaller scale programs. While there are limitations, this type of evaluation can be useful for program assessment and planning. Making use of administrative data allows programs to measure participant outcomes across multiple systems and provides the basis for a meaningful index of the well-being of participants after exiting a program.

1 All members of the comparison group were eligible for supportive housing through New York/New York III under Population I, which is specifically for young adults under the age of 25 years who are aging out of foster care.

2 Propensity score matching estimates the likelihood that an individual would receive a specific treatment (i.e., the Chelsea Foyer) based on specific characteristics that are known prior to entry into the treatment. Nearest neighbor 2:1 matching with replacement was used to decrease the number of Foyer participants who were dropped from analysis, while still maintaining an adequate sample size and precise matches.

3 Poisson regression is typically used for count outcomes. Here binomial outcome data can be thought of as approximately Poisson and therefore, relative risks can be estimated with this model.