



**Testimony of Steven Banks, Commissioner
New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services**

**Before the New York City Council General Welfare Committee
The DHS Fiscal Year 2017 Preliminary Budget
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I would like to thank the City Council's Finance and General Welfare Committee and Chairs Julissa Ferreras-Copeland and Stephen Levin for giving us this opportunity to testify today about the Department of Homeless Services' budget and efforts to address homelessness in our City, particularly those reforms that we have implemented over the past few months as part of the 90-day review of homeless services.

My name is Steven Banks and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services. On December 15, 2015, the Mayor ordered a 90-day review of homeless services and he asked First Deputy Mayor Tony Shorris, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Operations Mindy Tarlow, and I to conduct the review. Following her appointment, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Herminia Palacios has joined in this effort. During the review, I have been overseeing the operations of Department of Homeless Services in my capacity as the administrator and commissioner of the local social service district. Joining me today are DHS's First Deputy Commissioner Lorraine Stephens, Deputy Commissioner, Fiscal and Procurement Lula Urquhart, and HRA's Chief of Staff Jennifer Yeaw.

New York City is facing increasing economic inequality as a result of low wages, the lack of affordable housing, and increased cost of living. Today approximately 46 percent of New Yorkers live near poverty and approximately 22 percent live below the poverty line. This income inequality, combined with other causes of homelessness such as domestic violence, overcrowding and eviction, are what bring people to our shelter system. We did not arrive at this crisis overnight and it will take some time to address the multifaceted drivers of homelessness.

As part of the 90-day review process, we have been conducting a comprehensive review of the City's homeless services policies and practices. We have met with homeless people in shelters, on the streets and in focus groups; advocates, shelter and homeless services providers, other non-profit organizations, national experts and researchers, former DHS Commissioners, and elected officials; and staff at DHS, HRA and other City agencies. We have also surveyed best practices in other jurisdictions, and we received feedback from United States Department of

Housing and Urban Development. The resulting review is being presented to the Mayor with draft recommendations for his consideration. When he has reached his decisions, the Administration will present the next steps to the Council and the public.

Because of the urgency of the problem, we have not waited for the completion of the review to start implementing substantial reforms. And I would like to begin my testimony today by reviewing those reforms.

IMPLEMENTING HOME STAT TO ADDRESS STREET HOMELESSNESS

One of the first reforms was the creation of HOME-STAT (Homeless Outreach & Mobile Engagement Street Action Teams). Partnering with existing homeless response and prevention programs, HOME STAT is the most comprehensive street homelessness outreach effort ever deployed in a major U.S. city.

Starting this month, canvassing by the Mayor's Office of Operations will increase our ability to identify homeless individuals on the street from Canal Street to 145th Street and in other hot spots, and deploy outreach resources where they are needed most. This canvass will involve 60 field and analytic staff who will gather and report real-time data and track outcomes.

Dashboards will report on aggregate outcomes, conditions and performance. And as long requested by this body, as part of HOME STAT, we will be conducting comprehensive quarterly nighttime counts to provide a more complete and real-time understanding of our street homeless population in the City.

The rapid response capacity built into this initiative will ensure more timely responses to 311 calls and information gathered from our canvasses. With HOME STAT the contracted homeless outreach staff will grow from 195 to approximately 385. Additionally, the NYPD will redeploy 40 officers to its 70-officer Homeless Outreach Unit to respond to calls concerning street homeless persons, encampments, large hot spots and those individuals experiencing emotional disturbances or exhibiting erratic behavior.

Finally, the creation of a citywide case management tool will provide case managers with information to ensure City service integration, continuous monitoring and outreach, and rapid response to individual problems. All HOME STAT agencies will play a role in this effort, including DHS, NYPD and other human services agencies and NYC SAFE.

ENDING THE USE OF CLUSTERS

An essential tool for reducing homelessness in New York City is maintaining and increasing the City's affordable housing stock, as well as ensuring that New Yorkers have access to rental subsidies, transitional programming and aftercare. For 16 years, through multiple

administrations, this City has utilized clusters as homeless shelters, a failed approach to housing our homeless population that is expensive, lacks real services to transition homeless families and individuals to stable housing, and includes some of the worst shelter conditions. Further, utilizing these units removes them from the affordable rental market.

In January 2016, the Mayor announced a three-year plan for ending utilization of “cluster” shelter units for families. At that time, there were more than 3,000 units being used. As the first step in the plan, we are on target to close approximately 260 cluster units by June 30, 2016. The remaining units will be closed by December 2018 with those that are appropriate returned to the permanent housing stock, including through rental assistance programs for homeless families and adults.

In addition, where needed, the City will replace shelter capacity using a revised open-ended RFP process to include new models, which combines affordable permanent housing, flexible shelter space and community space in the same building. Under this model, shelter residents will receive essential supportive services, including rapid rehousing help. From experience we know that households with subsidized rental assistance are more successful in finding housing if they have support in their search. We all know the difficulty of finding housing in New York. By working with providers to navigate a challenging rental market, we are able to more quickly move clients to permanent affordable housing.

IMPLEMENTING SHELTER REPAIR SCORECARD AND SQUAD TO ADDRESS CONDITIONS

The de Blasio Administration is committed to being transparent about the problems in shelters and accountable for the efforts to improve them. That’s why we created the Shelter Repair Scorecard, which lists every building violation and condition at every shelter, and the Shelter Repair Squad to fix the problems.

The Scorecard was released on February 1 with data as of December 31, 2015. It showed that the clusters had most of the violations and that many of the shelters operated by non-profit providers were in relatively good condition. Meanwhile, literally on January 1, the enhanced Shelter Repair Squad began a new round of thorough inspections of the non-cluster shelters and a new round of repairs, including staff from HRA, DHS, DOB, HPD, DOHMH, DDC, DCAS, Parks and FDNY. In just two months, working under the direction of the Mayor’s Office of Operations and HRA, they achieved an amazing amount of work.

Earlier this month, we issued the second scorecard, with data through February 29. It showed that the Squad conducted 2,660 inspections, almost a third of the 8,665 conducted in all of 2015. Those inspections identified 11,125 new violations and conditions.

During those same two months, the City and shelter providers made 12,026 repairs at homeless shelters — almost as many as the 12,934 repairs made in all of 2015.

We still have more work to do. At the end of February, even after the new round of inspections, there were 6,486 outstanding violations in non-cluster shelters, compared to 6,983 violations on December 31, 2015. And working with our non-profit shelter provider partners, we are determined to keep pushing that number down.

While no sub-standard conditions are acceptable, many shelters have relatively few violations. Family shelters (excluding clusters) have an average of about half a violation per apartment, the same as the average for all buildings in New York City. It's important to recognize that many of those conditions are the result of years of insufficient investment and some of the problems will require capital projects to fix. Which is why as part of the review, we are looking at ensuring that going forward the resources are provided for both maintenance and capital repairs.

To address this critical need, \$6.5 million in FY16, growing to \$7.6 million in FY17 will be used to improve the maintenance of directly run shelters through facility managers, on-staff painters, and fire safety directors. In addition, the FY16 September Capital Plan added \$54.2 million for the four-year period of Fiscal Year 2016 through Fiscal Year 2019 to address more significant facility needs, bringing the total FY16 plan for facility projects to \$32.1 million. Overall, the four-year capital plan for shelters allocates \$119.5 million. Likewise, the Fiscal Year 2016 shelter maintenance and repair budget totals \$54 million, of which \$17 million has been added in the baseline since the beginning of the de Blasio administration.

The Scorecard is also a way to follow up on the City's commitment to stop using clusters over three years. The Scorecard currently lists units within 26 cluster buildings designated for elimination as DHS units in this fiscal year. Also, 12 cluster buildings with 15 units have already been eliminated from DHS utilization.

LAUNCHING A NEW PROGRAM TO REDUCE VIOLENCE IN SHELTERS

Just yesterday, the Mayor announced a three-pronged program to reduce violence in homeless shelters. First, the NYPD will re-train all DHS security staff and a team from NYPD will be placed at DHS to develop an action plan to upgrade security at all shelters. Second, we are restoring a domestic violence program for family shelters that was cut in 2010. And third, we are implementing a new, more extensive reporting system for incidents that occur in shelters. The reforms respond to new data on violence in shelters that we developed as part of the 90-day review.

For many years, DHS mainly focused on incidents involving death or life threatening injury and individual staff exercised discretion to report as a priority individual incidents not rising to this level on a case-by-case basis. This resulted in lost opportunities to target services because cases not involving death or life threatening injuries were inconsistently categorized based on individual determinations. The review also showed that incidents that occurred off-site were also reported as critical incidents even though the incident did not occur at the shelter. We are reforming the process to broaden the criteria for critical incidents and will focus attention on the incidents that actually occurred in the shelters so that we can have a more complete picture of client service needs.

For example, our review showed that more needs to be done to address domestic violence for families that have been placed in shelter together so the Mayor has authorized a new in-reach program for family shelters that we will be including in the Executive Budget.

Retraining and Security Action Plan

The NYPD will assign a team to be placed at DHS to develop an action plan to upgrade security at all shelters. The NYPD will also be re-training all DHS security staff. Currently all non-cluster shelters have some level of security provided by either DHS peace officers or by private security guards. As part of the 90-day review, security has already been increased at mental health shelters and at commercial hotels.

The de Blasio Administration has already substantially increased spending for security at homeless shelters. Direct spending by DHS on DHS peace officers and FJC security guards has increased 63% from \$48 million in FY 2013 to \$78 million in FY 2016.

In addition, DHS reimburses shelter providers for their security costs. That was \$62 million in FY 16, for total of \$140 million in security costs.

Domestic Violence Programming In Shelter

The City will also re-establish a domestic violence program in DHS shelters that was ended in 2010. The new analysis of critical incident data found that violence within families is the most common form of violent incident in family shelters. In Families with Children shelters, domestic violence was 60% of the violent incidents, while it was 80% in Adult Family shelters.

HRA's NoVA (No Violence Again) Out-stationed Domestic Violence Services will be expanded to DHS Tier II family shelters to provide families with access to domestic violence services. Trained staff from HRA will go to a number of Tier II shelters to provide these services. Existing social services staff in Tier II shelters will participate in enhanced training that will provide them with the tools to identify and refer families and individuals to the NoVA team, a NYC Family Justice

Center or other community-based domestic violence providers. Families experiencing unhealthy relationships and conflict will be offered conflict resolution/mediation services to establish safe resolutions and teach family members effective tools to resolve conflicts. The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (MOCDV) will commit the resources necessary to implement system-wide training for DHS staff. A senior DHS official will be in charge of coordinating the delivery of domestic violence services.

Additional Transparency on Critical Incident Reporting

Based on the findings from the 90-day review, the Administration has also instituted new, more comprehensive and accurate reporting of critical incidents in shelters, including for the first time separately reporting violent incidents. For many years, DHS reported "critical incidents" in the Mayor's Management Report, which included some but not all violent incidents. In addition, data was not systematically collected to identify problems.

"Critical Incident" definitions were unclear and inconsistently reported across agency divisions. Overly broad categories limit the agency's ability to identify trends and quantify specific types of incidents. Existing categories include both violent and non-violent incidents within the same category, limiting the ability to quantify the volume of violent incidents.

The problem was not at the level of the shelters. Shelter staff has been reporting incidents to DHS. The problem was the way these reports were categorized at DHS.

New reporting categories have been created and applied retroactively to all 2015 incidents reported to DHS. Under the old definitions, there were 620 critical incidents. The new analysis defined 1,687 incidents as critical, of which 826 were categorized as violent.

To ensure that problems are identified, violence is now defined much more broadly than, for example, the FBI crime reports. For the shelter critical incidents, violent incidents include broad definitions of domestic violence, assault, and both child abuse and neglect, even if there was no violence against the child. The Administration is implementing thorough reforms to ensure that all critical incidents and especially violent incidents are appropriately categorized and that there is appropriate follow-up.

NYC Safe

The announcement of these new initiatives today builds on prior security enhancements in the shelters. Since NYC Safe's launch, DHS increased security at 11 single adult mental health shelters and enhanced security at 12 of the adult shelters considered high needs. This includes \$10.5 million in FY16 to hire 175 staff and \$7.4 Million in FY17 added in the January Plan. Subsequent to this and in the wake of several recent tragedies, additional security measures

were put in place and we added more mental health professionals to increase safety at shelters and support homeless New Yorkers with mental health needs. For example:

- We implemented a 24/7 communication process between NYC Health + Hospitals and DHS ensuring better case management and allowing shelter operators to better support clients.
- We deployed new mental health teams to DHS shelter intake centers
- We completed a security assessment of all 29 mental health shelters
- We deployed additional peace officers to provide 24/7 coverage at all mental health shelters
- We deployed DHS contracted security guards to provide additional security at commercial hotels used by DHS.

ENHANCING ADULT SHELTER PROGRAMMING

DHS recognizes that its responsibility to clients goes further than simply providing shelter. To truly engage clients and move them to stable housing and self-sufficiency, we assist them during the day in attaining additional skills and training.

Not only have we affirmatively reiterated a long-standing policy concerning permitting daytime shelter access, but we've also expanded funding for programming. We have committed to expanding daytime jobs training and vocational programming at shelters to serve almost 20,000 individuals.

We added \$8.9 Million in FY16, growing to \$16.9 Million in FY17 in the January Plan to provide onsite shelter programming at 40 single adult shelter locations. These locations are at our shelters where there have been limited on-site activities. Contract providers have submitted plans that were approved for services, including literacy, recreation, employment, and other supports. Directly operated shelter programming plans are also being developed.

IMPLEMENTING VETERANS' INITIATIVES

The de Blasio Administration is extremely proud to have been recognized by the federal government for our successful effort in ending chronic Veterans homelessness. In addition we have also significantly reduced the number of homeless veterans in our system and the Veterans Administration's system from 4,677 in 2011 to 467 as of March 14, 2016. For example, in December and January alone, we moved 527 veterans from shelters to permanent housing and we are well on our way to meeting the level of veterans homelessness considered to be functionally zero by the federal government's definition.

To support these efforts, in FY16 the January plan added \$1.6 million for staff, rapid rehousing services, and a bonus for shelter providers that increased permanent housing placements for

veterans. In FY17, we will allocate \$0.7 million to continue this work and to make sure that any veteran who enters our system can be rapidly rehoused and connected to services and supports as needed.

CREATED TASK FORCE TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN FOR 15,000 UNITS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

In January, Mayor de Blasio announced the formation of a Supportive Housing Task Force to help the City implement its plan to create 15,000 units of supportive housing to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

Supportive housing is affordable permanent housing with services, including case management, mental health and substance use disorder services, access to medical care, and other social and supportive services. Supportive housing has a proven record of helping stabilize people's lives and reducing reliance on homeless shelters, hospitals, mental health institutions and jail. For example, according to a 2014 study by the Urban Institute, 85% of people provided with supportive housing remained housed a year later.

The new Supportive Housing Task Force includes leaders and advocates. They will:

- Serve as an expert panel of advisors to the City, offering innovative ways to develop and deliver supportive housing by leveraging lessons learned from past supportive housing agreements and finding new, creative approaches for both development and service delivery.
- Help streamline processes for supportive housing to maximize efficiencies and eliminate bottlenecks among City agencies, developers, service providers, and clients.
- Develop strategies to better tailor services to the needs of various supportive housing populations.
- Act as an ongoing partner and counterweight, supporting and challenging the City to realize a higher quality, better-coordinated, supportive housing system.

To implement our plan to provide an unprecedented 15,000 new supportive housing units, we are bringing together people with the expertise and commitment to help us put together the most effective and cost-efficient supportive housing program possible. The better the program, the more people we can help.

COMMITTING TO DOUBLE DROP-IN CENTERS

Mayor Bill de Blasio also committed to doubling the number of City-funded Drop-In Centers designed to help bring homeless people off the streets and provide them with services that can help keep them off the streets permanently.

Drop-In Centers are an essential part of a continuum of care to address street homelessness that starts with HOME-STAT outreach workers connecting with New Yorkers on the streets and

gaining their trust; bringing them to a Drop-In Center for food, showers, case management services, and medical care; taking them to a Safe Haven to spend the night; and moving them into supportive housing where they can receive help to rebuild their lives.

Drop-In Centers provide an alternative to traditional shelter for street homeless individuals. They offer temporary respite where individuals can shower, eat a meal, see a doctor, and rest. Case management and housing placement services are also available for clients who wish to receive them. The Centers also offer a limited number of off-site overnight respite beds, but ultimately seek to place people in permanent housing.

The City has announced a new \$8.5 million annual commitment to double the number of Drop-In Centers it currently operates. The City will open three new Drop-In Centers and take over funding of the current HUD-funded Drop-In Center in the Bronx run by BronxWorks, as HUD looks to reinvest those dollars in permanent housing.

These four locations will be added to the four existing City-funded Drop-Ins: two in Manhattan, one in Staten Island and one in Brooklyn. In the past two fiscal years (FY14 and FY15), these Drop-In Centers served an average of 454 clients during the day, saw a daily average of 128 clients overnight, and made 1,238 housing placements.

The City previously had nine City-funded Drop-In Centers, but five were closed between 2008 and 2010.

New Centers will open in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. These Drop-In Centers will be expected to each serve approximately 75 clients at any given time.

Drop-In Centers will continue to focus on working collaboratively with the City's outreach teams on the placement of chronically street homeless individuals into housing, and provide housing placement services to non-chronically street homeless individuals. This includes working with clients to obtain identification, entitlements and housing. Drop-In Centers will also set up the front door of their programs to rapidly connect individuals to more appropriate systems of care, such as the emergency shelter system, residential drug treatment programs, family reunification, travel assistance, and other resources.

In addition, the City has reformed its policies to allow for individuals who have recently stayed in the City shelters to use the Drop-In Center services, reversing a policy preventing such use that had been in place since 2012.

COMMITTING TO TRIPLE THE NUMBER OF BEDS FOR RUNAWAY HOMELESS YOUTH

Also in January, the Mayor announced enhanced services including the addition of 300 beds for homeless youth over the next three years, deployment of additional staff to coordinate services

for youth entering Department of Homeless Services' shelters, and a pledge to work with the State to extend the length of stay for those in existing crisis beds regulated by the State.

From counseling, to high school equivalency support, to youth-specific employment and training programs, youth shelters have the right services and environment for young people to stabilize their lives. With this major investment, we'll triple the total number of youth beds and ensure even more young people are connected to the resources they deserve to rebuild their lives.

The enhanced services provide for:

- 100 new beds a year for the next three years, totaling 300 by FY19 – with a \$14.7 million annual investment at full ramp up;
- Deployment of City staff at the entry points of the DHS shelter system to offer placements in youth beds for individuals between the ages of 16 and 21; and
- A pledge to work with the State to extend the length of stay in crisis beds.

The addition of 100 beds a year over the next three years builds on the 200 beds already added under Mayor de Blasio for homeless youth through the Department of Youth and Community Development.

In 2014, the City of New York requested that the State allow initial stays in crisis shelters to be extended from 30 days to 45 days, and that extensions be allowed up to 90 days. The City is now renewing this request, in order to provide additional time for services to young people who may need them.

Overview of the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS)

DHS is the City Agency responsible for providing services to all homeless New Yorkers, including both those who are street homeless and those seeking shelter. In addition, DHS works closely with HRA to prevent homelessness. With the Mayor's reintroduction of rental assistance in 2014 after the elimination of the Advantage rental assistance program in 2011 State budget, the two agencies work together in providing rental assistance so those in shelter can return to their communities and those at risk of homelessness can be kept in the community. I discussed the rental assistance and other prevention efforts in the HRA testimony so I will not repeat that discussion here.

As of March 13, 2016, in the DHS system, there are 57,705 individuals in the shelter system, comprised of:

- 22,841 children
- 34,864 adults

To provide prevention, outreach, shelter and rehousing services, the Department of Homeless Services has a 2,639 budgeted headcount in FY17 as of the January Plan, paid for with a combination of City, State, and federal funds.

From the FY16 Adopted budget to the FY17 January plan, the DHS agency headcount increased by 323. This is due to direct personnel and new programmatic initiatives, such as NYC Safe, to increased security, to treatment for those facing mental illness, and to HOME STAT, the nation's most comprehensive street homelessness outreach effort.

DHS staff members are dedicated public servants who want to help New Yorkers in need. This diverse workforce is comprised of 41% women and 59% men, and is 64% Black, 17% Hispanic, 13% White and 6% Asian. This unionized workforce includes members of 18 different unions.

DHS Budget Overview:

DHS' Fiscal Year 2017 operating budget is \$1.1 billion, of which \$578 million are City funds.

This \$1.1 billion budget allocates \$548 million to services for families, \$364 million to services for single adults, \$30 million for supportive administration services, and \$166 million to agency-wide personnel services, including staff for directly operated shelters and intake for homeless families and adults.

We continue to evaluate the impact of the new rental assistance and prevention efforts on the census, and will revisit the forecast and funding levels as we have typically done in the past. Additionally, \$25 million of the variance is due to grant funds in FY16 that will be added throughout the 2017 fiscal year. And projected savings that begin in FY17, including those related to supportive housing and the End the Epidemic initiative.

In the January Plan, DHS also received another \$31.6 million in FY16 (\$31.6 million City funds) and in FY17 there was an addition of \$37.1 million (\$37.1 million City funds) for non-capacity costs including:

- Shelter Repair Squad, Cleaning and Maintenance (\$7.7M total funding in FY17)
- NYC Safe and provider security (\$7.4M total funding in FY17)
- Adult Shelter Programming (\$16.9M total funding in FY17)
- Homeless Prevention for Single Adults (\$4.4M total funding in FY17)
- Veterans Initiatives (\$0.7M total funding)

The total budgeted headcount in FY16 increases to 2,639 with the addition of 279 in the January Plan. The January plan additions include:

- 81 HC for Adult Shelter Programming

- 175 HC for NYC Safe and Provider Security
- 20 HC for Shelter Repair and Maintenance
- 3 HC for Supporting Homeless Veterans

171 positions were added in FY17, for a total of 2,427. This year-to-year decline in the headcount of 212 is primarily due to the fact that some positions were funded only in 2016, pending subsequent evaluation. Further, certain grant-funded staff lines are added on an annual basis. Subject to review, the FY16 only positions include:

- 59 grant funded
- 10 MOVA staff
- 16 Housing Specialists
- 19 Fraud Investigators
- 108 for NYC SAFE initiative

The DHS January Capital Plan for the four-year period of Fiscal Year 2016 through Fiscal Year 2019 is currently \$161.2 million. This amount is comprised of:

- \$76.2 million for capital projects for single adults;
- \$43.3 million for capital projects for homeless families;
- \$32.1 million for administrative supportive services;
- \$9.6 million is designated for City Council-funded projects.

The two pie charts in the power point provided show the current source of funds for the expense budget and a breakdown of budget allocation of these funds in FY17, please keep in mind that there are still some issues that will not be resolved until the Executive Budget.

In addition to funding shelter, as described in the HRA testimony, this Administration has invested over \$1 billion for new initiatives to prevent and reduce homelessness over the life of the financial plan. This includes:

- Rental assistance
- Housing inspections
- Legal services
- Homebase
- Aftercare
- Supportive Housing

Shelter Provider Bonus

\$1.6 million is included in FY16 for providing financial incentives to shelter providers to move families and individuals out of shelter and into permanent housing. Incentives will be awarded to providers who exceed existing housing targets.

Homeless Prevention for Single Adults

Homebase is the cornerstone of DHS' prevention efforts. Through our Homebase offices, and in close partnership with HRA, we assisted more than 100,000 individuals since we expanded the program in July 2014. The Preliminary Plan includes an additional \$4.4 Million to further expand and enhance Homebase services, bringing the total FY17 Homebase budget to \$46.1 million. This budget represents an 80% increase over our 2014 level of funding. The preliminary plan funding will double the number of at-risk single adults served at 23 Homebase locations across the five boroughs from 4,000 to close to 8,500 annually.

Funding will also be made available to continue to provide one-time and short-term grants to about 600 single adults seeking shelter to help make alternate arrangements viable. Since July 2015, 167 individuals have received grants and just five have entered shelter. The total HomeBase budget in FY17 will be \$46.1m at 23 locations and Homebase will be able to serve 25,000 cases annually.

Homebase not only provides financial assistance for clients but also encompasses

- Eviction prevention
- Financial counseling
- Assistance obtaining benefits
- Landlord and Family mediation
- Employment services/referrals

We advertise our Homebase services through a public awareness campaigns that includes ads on the radio, television, and on subways and buses.

Savings Initiatives

End the Epidemic Shelter Savings

Shelter savings are anticipated to begin in FY17 from the expansion of HASA services, including case management, rental assistance and nutrition and transportation benefits, to individuals with asymptomatic HIV. Shelter savings are projected as an estimated 800 single adults and 110 families currently in shelter but newly eligible for HASA benefits will be able to transition into independent housing.

Supportive Housing Shelter Savings

Shelter savings are anticipated from the placement of 15,000 individuals over 15 years in newly created supportive housing units. Research evaluating the impact of previous supportive housing initiatives suggests that individuals placed into supportive housing have reduced

utilization of various public benefits, including an average of about 160 fewer days of shelter over the two years following placement for certain populations. The 15,000 new units are expected to result in shelter census reduction of about 550 individuals by full implementation in FY20.

With respect to these savings initiatives, it is critical that the State includes these important jointly funded projects in its 2016/2017 budget. In the case of both New York City's HASA program and our Supportive Housing plan, these are clear examples of how providing safe, affordable and permanent housing results in positive outcomes for our clients but additionally saves taxpayer dollars.

As we proceed with the reform efforts described in this testimony following the 90-day review, we will continue to identify ways in which our programs to prevent and alleviate homelessness can be enhanced. While a lot has been accomplished during the past 90 days, we know there is much more to do.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify, and I welcome your questions.