



# MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

INITIATING SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

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***Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance Receives Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation Grant to Continue Housing First Efforts to End Homelessness in the Commonwealth***

**BOSTON** – The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) is pleased to announce that despite the difficult fiscal climate, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation (BCBSMA Foundation) remains committed to expanding health care access for our poorest and most vulnerable neighbors, chronically homeless individuals. **MHSA has been awarded a \$30,000 2008 *Strengthening the Voice for Access* grant for its *Home & Healthy for Good* initiative, an increase of \$5,000 from BCBSMA Foundation’s most recent awards to MHSA.**

*Home & Healthy for Good*, the statewide Housing First initiative overseen by MHSA, is funded in part by a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. Created in 2001, the mission of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation is to expand access to health care in Massachusetts through grantmaking and policy initiatives. Since its launch in 2006, *Home & Healthy for Good* has provided permanent housing with supportive services to **more than 300 chronically homeless individuals**. The December 2008 *Home & Healthy for Good* report indicates an average **annual savings to the Commonwealth of \$7,224 per tenant**, largely because once tenants are stably housed their health improves and they visit the emergency room and hospital far less frequently.

With the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation grant, MHSA will:

- Advocate for and develop policy and practice to increase health care access for the state’s poorest citizens: unaccompanied homeless adults
- Oversee the *Home & Healthy for Good* initiative, which produces long term improvements in participant health and documented savings in health care resources
- Document, analyze and disseminate research on the cost-benefits associated with housing long-term chronically homeless people
- Develop strategies to aid in formerly homeless individuals’ transition from the use of emergency-based health care to community-based resources while in housing
- Work to strengthen the involvement of the medical community in Housing First efforts

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**About Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance**

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) public policy advocacy organization, was established in 1988 by Greater Boston homeless providers and citizens seeking to create a coordinated strategy to end homelessness. MHSA represents 88 community-based agencies statewide that serve more than 98 percent of all homeless individuals in Massachusetts. Through strategic partnerships formed with government, private philanthropy, service providers, homeless individuals and business, MHSA works to ensure that homelessness does not become a permanent part of the social landscape. For more information visit [www.mhsa.net](http://www.mhsa.net).