



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

INITIATING SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

For Immediate Release

October 29, 2009

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Governor Patrick's 9C Cuts Decimate Homeless Programs

Governor balances budget on backs of poorest citizens of Massachusetts by slashing homeless assistance

BOSTON – Today, the only successful outcome of Governor Patrick's Five Year Plan to End Homelessness - a reduction in the numbers of unaccompanied homeless adults around the Commonwealth – **was called into peril by the Governor's reckless decision to drastically cut the Homeless Individuals Assistance line item (7004-0102) by \$2,700,000 (approximately 7.4 percent).**

Governor Patrick reduced 265 state budget line items as part of his recently released 9C cuts. Of these 265 line items, only 19 face a deeper cut than the Homeless Individuals Assistance line item. The reduction to 7004-0102 represents **93 percent** of the reduction faced by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The cut to homeless providers most likely will not take place until January 1, 2010, which means it will actually be closer to a **15 percent reduction to line item 7004-0102 for the remainder of the fiscal year.**

Lyndia Downie, President and Executive Director of Pine Street Inn, expressed shock. According to Downie, "I don't understand how this Governor, given his values, could make such a disproportionate cut to homeless men and women, the poorest in the Commonwealth. We are reeling here and fully expect this will mean more homeless people on the streets of Massachusetts."

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) considers these cuts, which balance the budget on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable citizens of Massachusetts, both unconscionable and bad policy.

Homeless programs funded through 7004-0102 have led the way in providing new and effective solutions to reduce the state's reliance on expensive emergency resources for unaccompanied homeless adults, generating documented savings across all systems of care. It is MHSA's belief that Governor Patrick is plunging our Commonwealth deeper into fiscal crisis by cutting programs that have proven to use state resources in an efficient and cost-effective manner, saving taxpayers millions of dollars in the process.

According to Joe Finn, President & Executive Director of MHSA, "It's as if Governor Patrick is snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. The Homeless Individuals Assistance line item was already underfunded, yet even so we have been successful in reducing the numbers of homeless individuals across the Commonwealth, documented significant reductions in Medicaid costs of these individuals and forwarded new and innovative housing programs with high retention rates and dramatic cost savings. Yet all of this progress is now in danger of being decimated by these cuts. Frankly, I'm astonished by the Governor's actions."

For more information contact Patrick Walsh at MHSA at (617) 367 – 6447 ext. 18 or pwalsh@mhsa.net.

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About Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA), 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 90 community-based agencies operating more than 250 programs 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.