



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING AND SHELTER ALLIANCE

INITIATING SOLUTIONS TO END HOMELESSNESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2007

Contact: Joe Finn, Executive Director
617-367-6447

The Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (MHSA) has been awarded a grant of \$25,000 by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation (BCBSMA) for an initiative to expand health care access for chronically homeless individuals in Massachusetts, Joe Finn, Executive Director of MHSA, said today.

The grant, entitled *Home and Healthy for Good: A Health Care Access and Policy Initiative for Homeless People*, will allow MHSA to advance policy change for more efficient and cost-effective use of health care resources by homeless individuals. MHSA will advocate for housing-based service delivery systems that produce long term improvement in health for service recipients (formerly homeless tenants) and savings in health care resources. Particularly in light of Massachusetts' implementation of universal health coverage, MHSA will use its ability to bring together stakeholders in the state administration and the provider community to focus on improved access to health care insurance and services for homeless persons. In addition, the BCBSMA Foundation grant will allow MHSA to strengthen efforts to support a Housing First model targeted toward improving the medical condition of chronically homeless adults with disabilities.

MHSA is committed to developing policy that will help the poorest citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, unaccompanied homeless adults, access health care. Said Dr. Jessie Gaeta of MHSA and Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program: "MHSA is the only statewide agency specifically addressing the access needs of this uninsured and low-income population failed by all other systems of care and especially the mainstream health care system within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We share BCBSMA Foundation's mission and interest in creating greater access to health care for citizens in Massachusetts by advocating for policy and practice linking homeless persons to appropriate resources. "

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. To learn more about the Foundation, visit www.bcbsmafoundation.org. For more information on MHSA visit www.mhsa.net.

###