



## King County

### Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division (MHCADSD) 2013 Briefing Paper

## **Include ADATSA Clients in Eligibility for Housing and Essential Needs Program**

### **BACKGROUND:**

During the 2010 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature decided to end the Disability Lifeline (DL) cash grant. Effectively, people who were receiving financial assistance through the Disability Lifeline program no longer receive cash assistance. To replace the DL cash grant the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program was established. At the same time, the living stipend for Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Treatment and Support Act (ADATSA) clients was eliminated. Through an oversight, ADATSA clients were excluded from eligibility for the HEN program. When individuals trying to recover from substance use disorders are not offered limited financial assistance for housing, such as the HEN program provides, they are much less likely to enter into and succeed in treatment. Eligibility criteria for the HEN program should be amended to include ADATSA clients.

### **ISSUES/CHALLENGES:**

Recovery is defined as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. The four major dimensions that support a life in recovery are health, **home**, purpose and community. It is challenging for those in early recovery to focus on and build sobriety and relapse prevention skills when they are discharged from residential treatment to live on the streets. As one might expect, survival instincts kick in and the focus on recovery is replaced with “where am I going to sleep tonight.” The ADATSA program has successful history of returning those in early recovery to full employment. Elimination of all financial assistance jeopardizes the outcomes of this program and undermines wise investments that the state has made in treatment services.

### **DATA:**

Utilization of the ADATSA program has decreased significantly since the ADATSA living stipend was eliminated. King County has seen over a 40% decrease in the utilization of ADATSA funded treatment that coincides with the elimination of the stipend. Making ADATSA clients eligible for the limited housing assistance provided through the HEN program will increase the number of people who enter and succeed in treatment and who find and maintain stable housing.

### **ACTION NEEDED:**

ADATSA recipients meet other HEN requirements such as homeless or risk of homelessness and they are recipients of Medical Care Services. We ask that you amend the eligibility requirements for the HEN program so that ADATSA clients are provided critical support in early recovery.