



Alaska Common Ground **Opportunities and Solutions**

Dick Mandsager MD

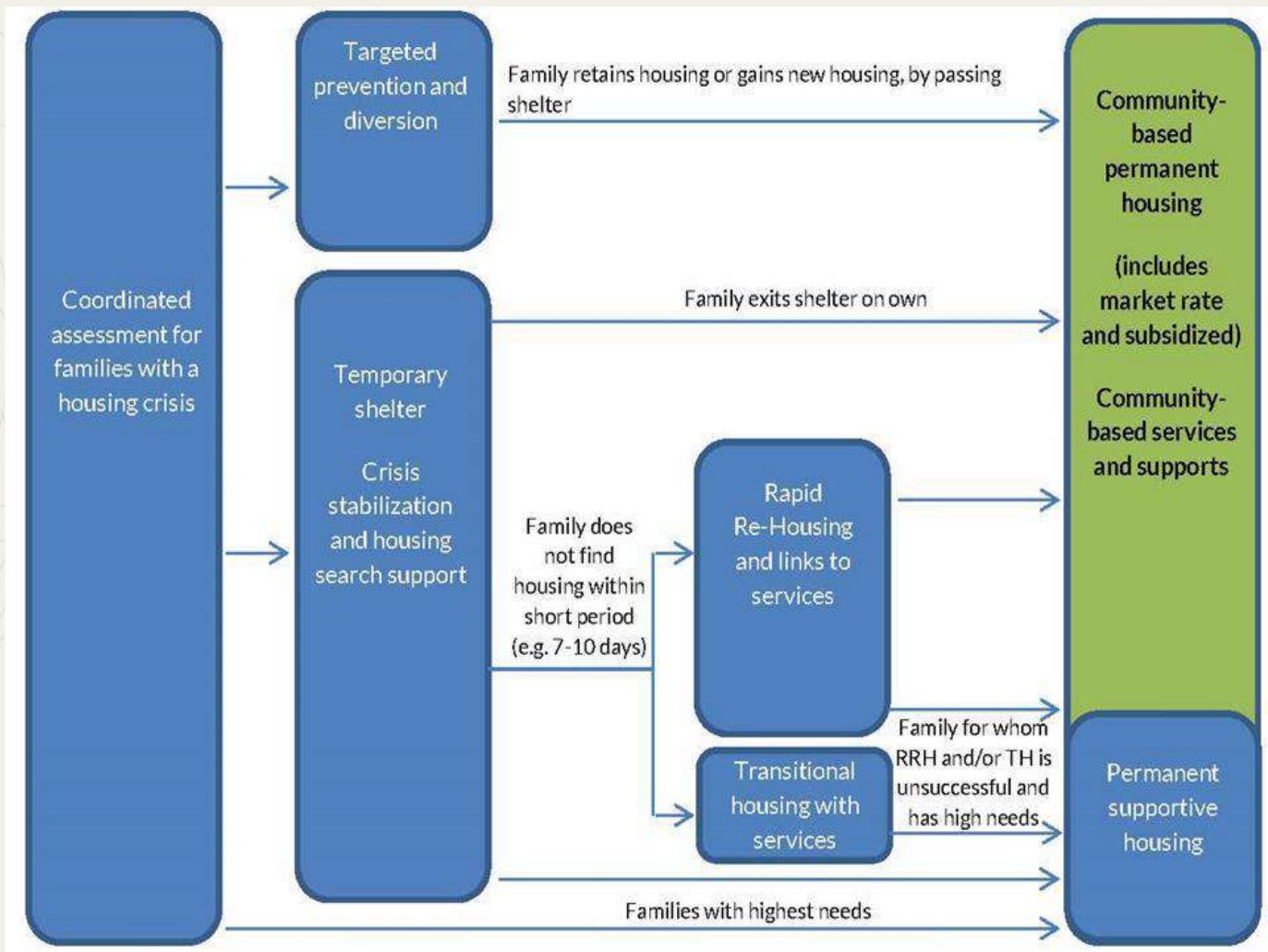
April 1, 2019

*Working as a catalyst to
promote a better life for Alaskans.*

Many causes of homelessness; these include:

- **Educational failure**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Mental health illness**
- **Substance abuse disorders**
- **Ending of personal relationships**
- **Job loss**
- **Incarceration**
- **A high ACE score (adverse childhood events)**
- **Housing affordability**

Coordinated Crisis Response System



(source: Urban Institute, 2015)

Prevention and Diversion

- **This component in our continuum of services is underdeveloped and under resourced.**
- **We expect to complete soon an analysis of the current need and best practices.**
- **Our aim, as a community, should be to support people before they experience homelessness**

Emergency Shelter

- **This is a necessary component to the continuum of services.**
- **We don't have enough emergency shelter capacity at present**
- **Current shelter capacity would decrease if the current Governor's budget were enacted.**
- **Current emergency shelters include services for homeless adults (men and women), families, youth, women and children leaving abusive relationships.**
- **Our community goal should be to decrease the need for emergency shelter.**

Rapid Rehousing

- **“Housing First” practice has demonstrated the best results for assisting people out of crisis back to independence.**
- **Several projects are underway here in Anchorage.**
- **Path to Independence**
- **Housing for families (United Way and Catholic Social Services are lead agencies)**
- **More investment is needed and will be needed every year because crises in peoples’ lives continue to happen.**
- **There is also evidence that substance abuse treatment is more successful when the individual has stable housing and a home.**
- **Partners for Progress provides transitional housing and job skills support for people coming out of prison. Recidivism is much less and the programs should be expanded.**

PERMANENT Supportive Housing: An Evidence-Based Intervention

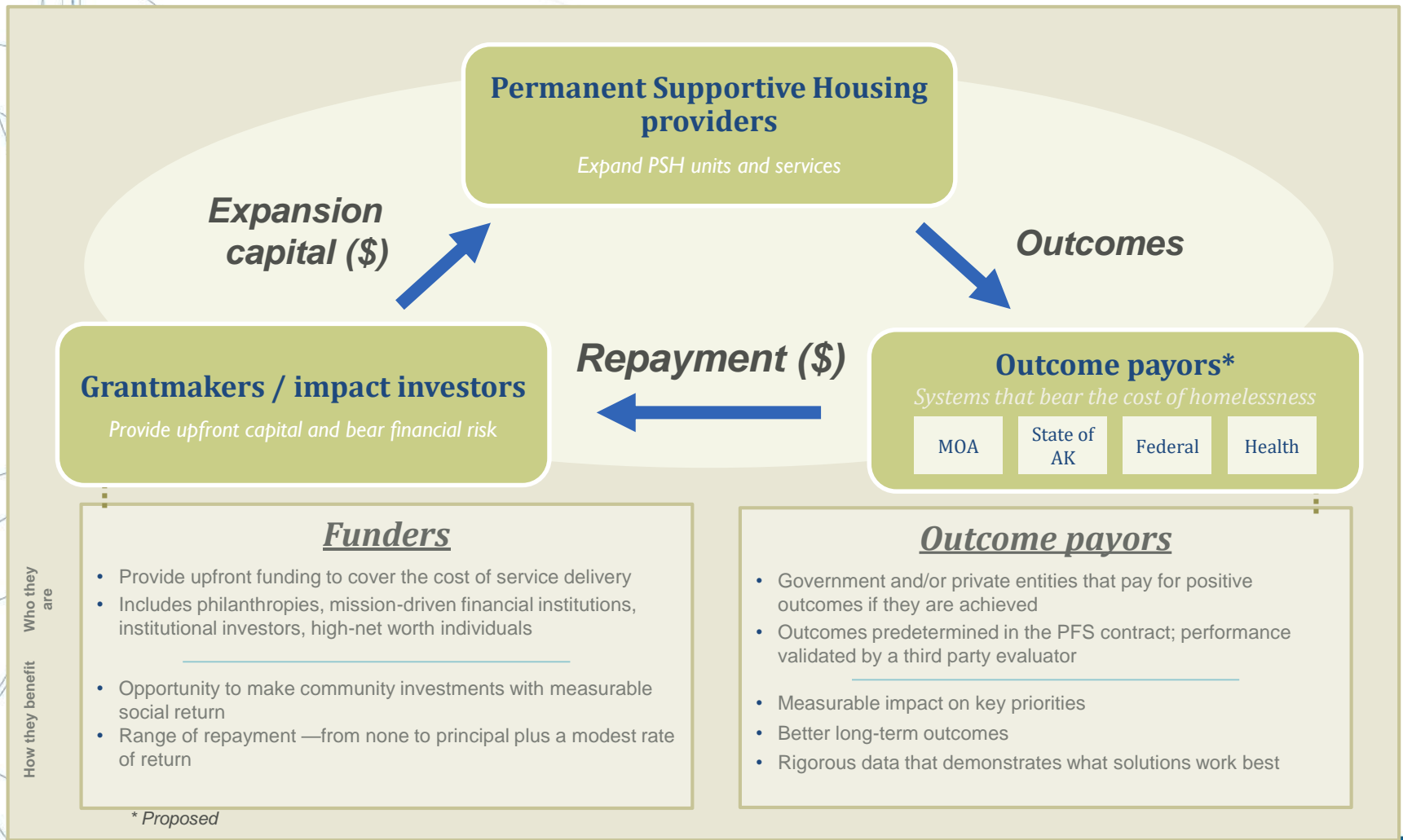
For:

- *People experiencing chronic homelessness*
- *People exiting prison with chronic health or mental health conditions*
- *People with disability health or mental health conditions with housing need*

Study after study demonstrates:

- *85-90% of participants achieve **housing stability** and avoid returns to homelessness*
- *Improved **mental health** outcomes, **addiction recovery***
- *Improvements in **chronic health conditions***
- *Fewer **emergency department visits** and inpatient **hospitalizations***
- *Cost offsets in **Medicaid** and other publicly funded services*
- *Reductions in **recidivism** to prison*

Pay for Success is a contracting and financing mechanism that helps governments link payment and performance



New Investments & Innovations

- Formation of Anchorage Homelessness Leadership Council
- Enrollment in national Built for Zero movement
- Federal award for AWAIC Rapid Rehousing for domestic violence victims
- Continued progress on federal demonstration projects:
 - Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project
 - Pay for Success Permanent Supportive Housing
- Continued progress on local pilot projects
 - Providence Foundation Rapid ReHousing Project
 - Path to Independence Rapid Rehousing Project
 - Catholic Social Services Medical Respite Project
 - Municipality Mobile Intervention Team

Private philanthropy investments, a partial list

- Rasmuson Foundation
- Providence Foundation
- Wells Fargo Foundation
- Weidner corporation
- Alaska Native corporations
- Many other businesses and corporations
- Private individuals
- Faith communities



Municipality alcohol tax proposal

If approved, the funds will be dedicated:

- **Funding of alcohol and substance misuse treatment program and facilities.**
- **Funding of public safety programs that deal with alcohol and substance misuse issues,**
such as an expansion in the Anchorage Safety Patrol (currently limited to Downtown, Midtown, Mountain View, and Fairview areas) and the Anchorage Safety Center.

Alcohol tax proposal, continued

- **Funding of homelessness services:**
 - *additional illegal camp abatement staff and resources (currently not enough staff to have robust program year-round);*
 - *Legally required storage for personal property seized in camp abatements;*
 - *Cold-weather sheltering or other emergency system needs (currently not enough capacity for the need).*
- **Funding for increased models for mental health support,**
such as the Mobile Intervention Team or other programs assisting with substance use and mental health services to relieve police and EMS contacts with people who have behavioral health needs.
- **Financing of more supportive housing and/or rapid rehousing**

Conclusions

Homelessness should be rare, brief and one-time

- *Alaska can be a community where this is our norm*
- *This requires partnership of government (federal, state, and local), private funders, local citizens and faith communities*
- *Everyone should have a home where that person feels safe*

With a home:

- *Educational success is better*
- *Growth and development for our kids is better*
- *Recidivism to prison is less*
- *Job success is better*
- *Community well-being is better (safer trails, etc.)*
- *Lower community costs for police, healthcare, EMS, prisons, etc.*

Conclusions continued

Why is reducing homelessness such an important priority?

- *We are at crisis level in most Alaska communities.*
- *Working as separate systems (healthcare, housing, police, corrections, etc.) isn't working well enough; we need a much more integrated and wholistic approach.*
- *Because of the many and varied root causes, virtually none of the challenges in our communities are solvable without addressing the homelessness component to that issue.*
- *Public health and safety is affected adversely by homelessness (trash, environmental degradation, poor sanitation, relationship to crime)*
- *Loss of sense of community and experience of less safety*

Recommendations

- **AHFC services and programs are essential and require even more funding than presently exists.**
- **More housing creation and maintenance is needed all over our state**
- **Mental health services and substance abuse disorder treatment are essential and more services and service locations are needed.**
- **Medicaid is a key structural component for mental health treatment, substance abuse disorder treatment and for some of the support services needed by the most vulnerable people; if we want to keep them housed. Medicaid coverage should not be reduced.**

Recommendations continued

- **We have an opportunity to test “pay for performance” in the “Pay for Success” pilot in Anchorage. Initial investment is coming; payor commitments are needed.**



**The experience of homelessness should be
“rare, brief and one-time”**

Thank you

Dr. Dick Mandsager
Richard.Mandsager@providence.org

