

How Denver Health Partners to Address Homelessness

August 20, 2025
Safety Committee

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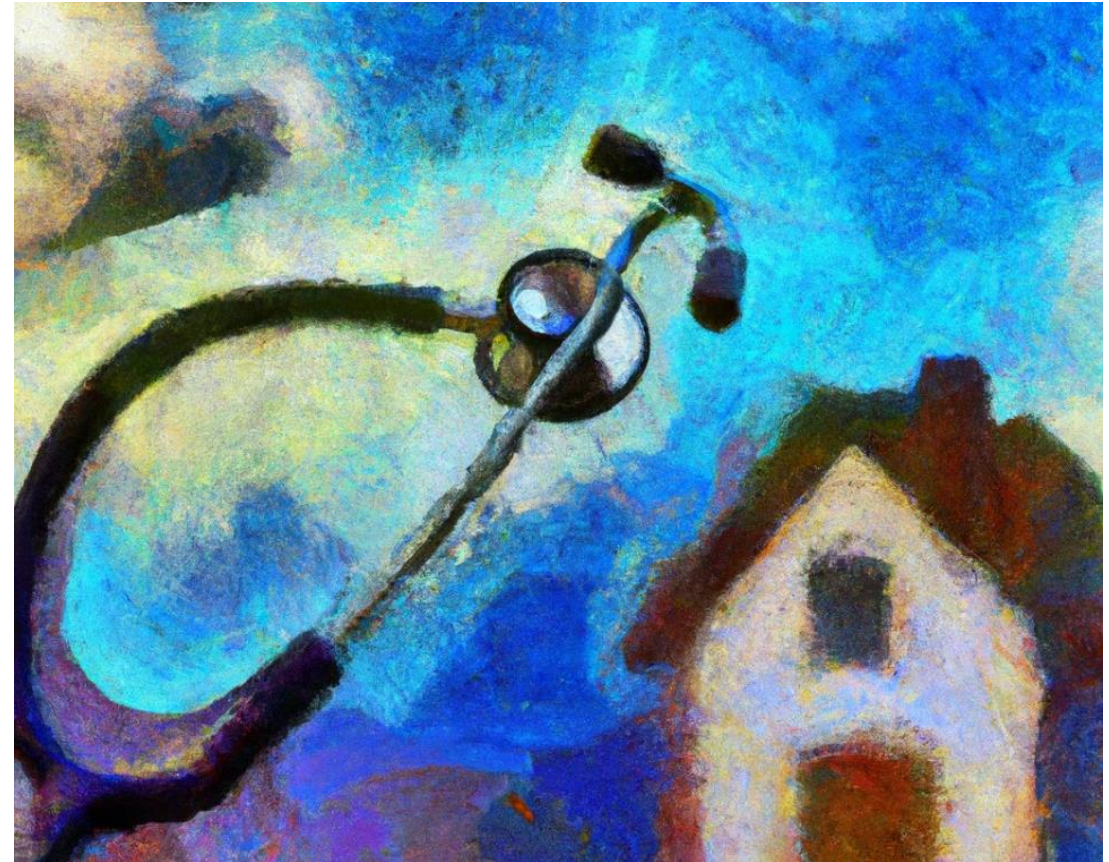
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My Why

“I just keep falling
through the cracks.”



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Denver Health's Safety Net

In 2024, Denver Health cared for approximately...

16,000 patients experiencing homelessness who had 78,000 visits

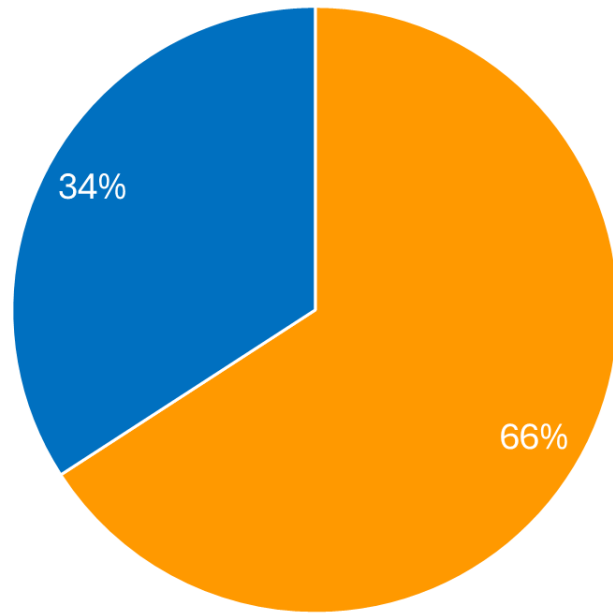
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- “We see a group of people who never darken the doors of a homeless service organization, but they come to the hospital”
-
- -Denver Health Social Worker
-
-
-
-



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Homelessness Drives High-Cost Health Care Utilization

Top Highest Emergency Department Utilizers
(Discharged from ED) 6/1/24 - 5/31/25

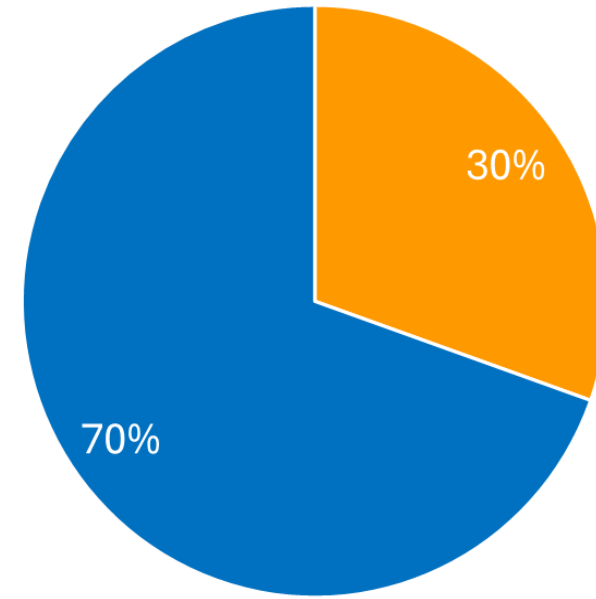


N=51

■ Homeless ■ Not homeless

All have
19+ ED
discharges
in one year

Top Highest Inpatient Hospital Utilizers (Adult Acute,
Critical Care and Psych) 6/1/24 - 5/31/25



N=46

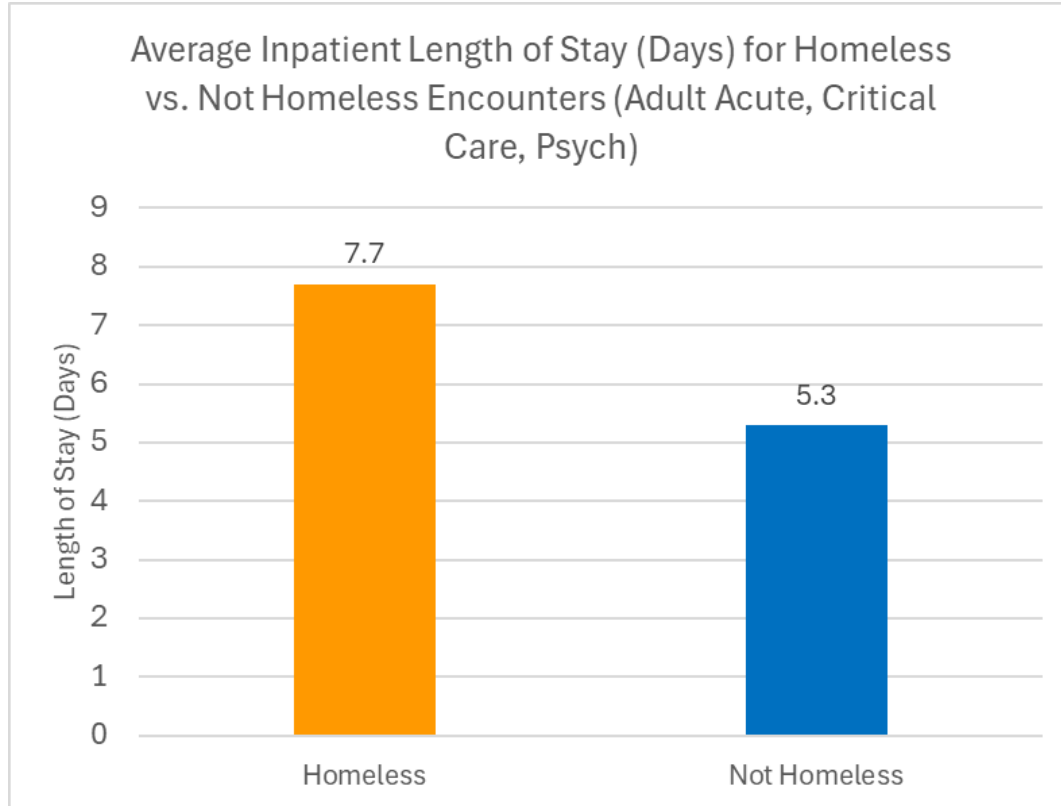
■ Homeless ■ Not homeless

All have 7+
Inpatient
discharges
in one year



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Impact on Length of Stay and Readmissions



30 Day Readmission Rate

Patients Experiencing Homelessness: 17.8%

Housed patients: 11.3%

Individuals experiencing homelessness stay on average 2.4 days longer than the general population

Readmission data: Jan 2022 - May 2025

Length of stay data: June 2024 - May 2025



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Building Connective Tissue for Hospital-Housing Partnerships

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COLORADO
Department of Health Care
Policy & Financing



2018-2019

- Joint Strategic Planning and data exchange

2020

- COVID-19 response
- DH Medicaid Housing Pilot
- HCPF Collaboration

2021

- Statewide Supportive Housing Expansion pilot
- Research initiatives on housing & health

2022

- SIPPRA Housing to Health
- Data/care integration with CCH
- Safe Outdoor Space at Denver Health
- Hospital Point in Time count

2023

- 655 Broadway Transitional Housing
- Stout Street Recuperative Care Center beds leased
- Denver Health Homeless Registry

2024- present

- Expanded partnerships
- Housing Outreach Partnership & Engagement (HOPE)
- Roads to Recovery



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Using hospitalization as an opportunity for connection

Right Data



Identify



Right Team



Outreach



Right Partners



Connect

This model has been successful for programs, such as:

- SIPPRA Housing to Health
- Statewide Supportive Housing Expansion pilot
- Housing Outreach Partnership & Engagement (HOPE)
- Roads to Recovery



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Patient Story

Patient “Joel” arrived in the ED due to a complication of unmanaged Type 1 Diabetes and a history of stimulant use disorder. Joel was on a priority list for the Roads to Recovery program and the DHHA HOPE Team was **notified by an alert** in our electronic health records. HOPE outreached the patient, obtained consent, and arranged for a **City case manager to connect with him in the hospital**. Joel enrolled in the program and **entered housing following discharge**. During the initial connection, Joel said to the HOPE team “I’m ready to accept some help and get my life on track.”

Note: Patient names have been changed for privacy



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Testimonials

“It was really hard when, if we located someone and we couldn’t get them in a bridge [housing placement], and sometimes they would go back [to the street] and just be a leaf in the wind... but then we’d get a call from Denver Health.”

—Supportive housing staff member, SIPPRA Housing to Health

“It is hard to describe how grateful and ecstatic he was about his housing connection. And that joy was contagious. We regularly took a moment for a brief ‘hooray’ during rounds in the days leading up to his discharge. We gave him a big high five on day of discharge!”

—Physician, Denver Health



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Denver Health Invests in Lifesaving Transitional Housing and Recuperative Care

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It is better for us to invest in supportive and recuperative care units than to house people in the hospital



655 Broadway

14 units for Denver Health Patients
96 total dedicated to low-income older adult.



Stout Street Recuperative Care Center

20 Leased Beds for
Denver Health patients



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Results from Housing Connections and Investments



700+ patients discharged to CCH Recuperative Care Center since February 2023



34 patients housed at 655 Broadway, 22 of whom were connected to permanent housing



70 patients connected a total of 120 times to SIPPR H2H housing service providers via a warm handoff



60 patients connected to other housing programs



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Housing Outreach, Partnerships and Engagement (HOPE) Program

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- **Funding:** \$999,000 grant from Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, 2 years funding
- **Goal:** Improve housing-focused screening and care coordination for at-risk patients experiencing homelessness who are utilizing Denver Health's hospital system, including Roads to Recovery
- **Outputs**
 - Utilize internal/external data tools to identify patients eligible for housing opportunities & other community supports
 - Partnering with housing resolution agencies and the Roads to Recovery program to create workflows and support warm handoffs
 - Integrating DHHA within the homeless response system
 - Over 200 patients served to date



Housing-focused interdisciplinary team



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Safer Discharges and Improved Patient Flow

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DHHA has **decreased the length of stay** of patients experiencing homelessness, even while the number of **encounters have increased**.

Over the same period, our **readmission rate** for patients experiencing homelessness has **not increased**

Includes: Adult Acute, Critical Care and Psych homeless discharges

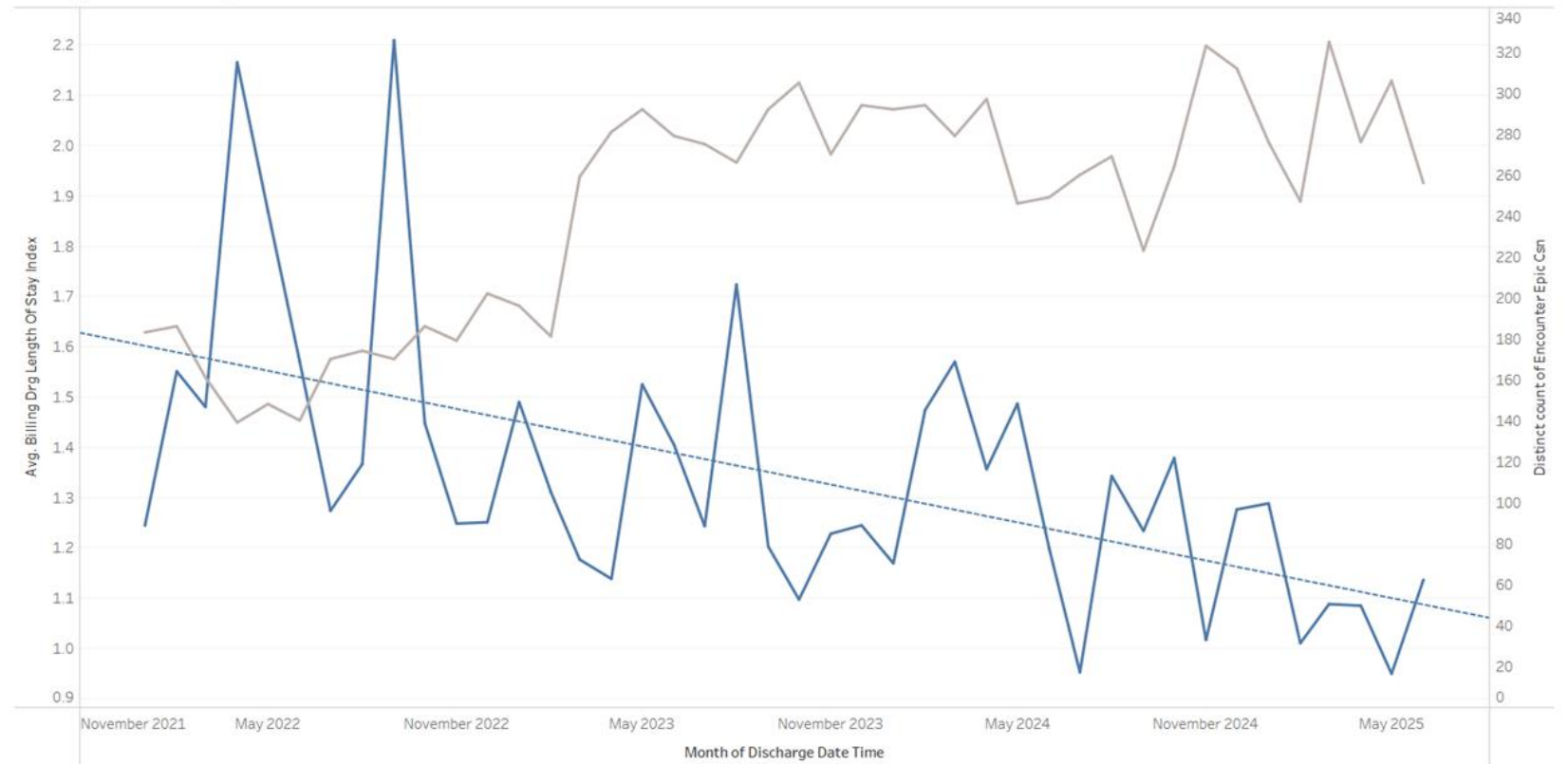
Excludes: Contracted long-stay psych patients

Experiencing Homelessness LOS Index (Billed DRG)

vs.

Encounters

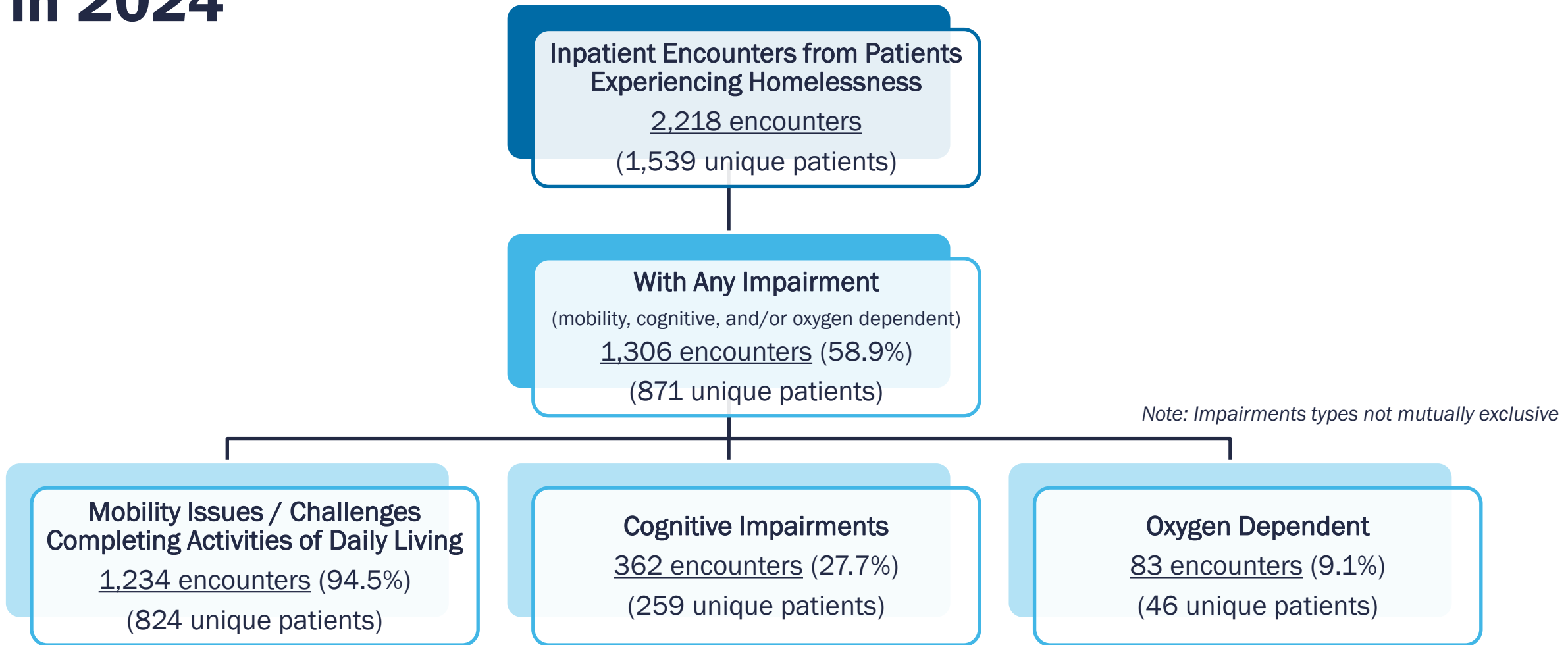
Excluding OBH contracted Psych encounters



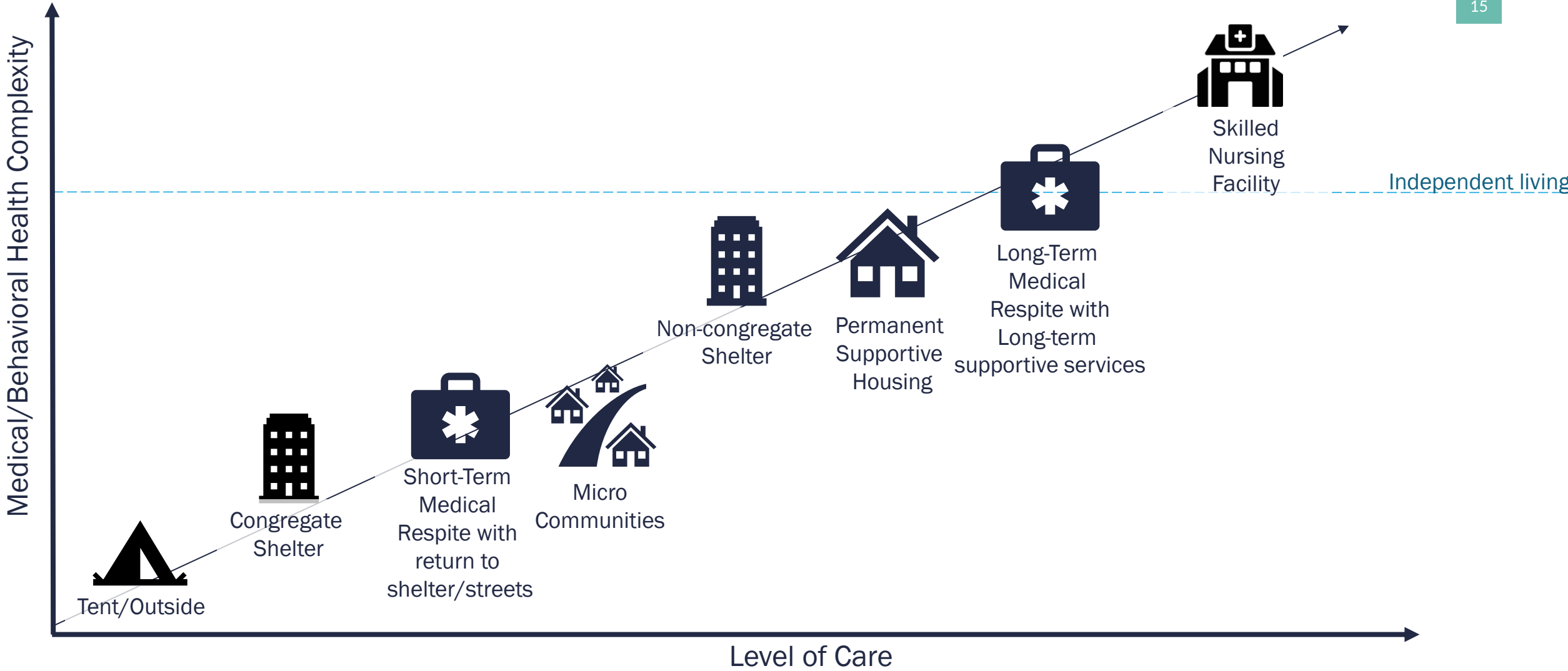
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Functional Needs for Homeless Hospital Discharges in 2024

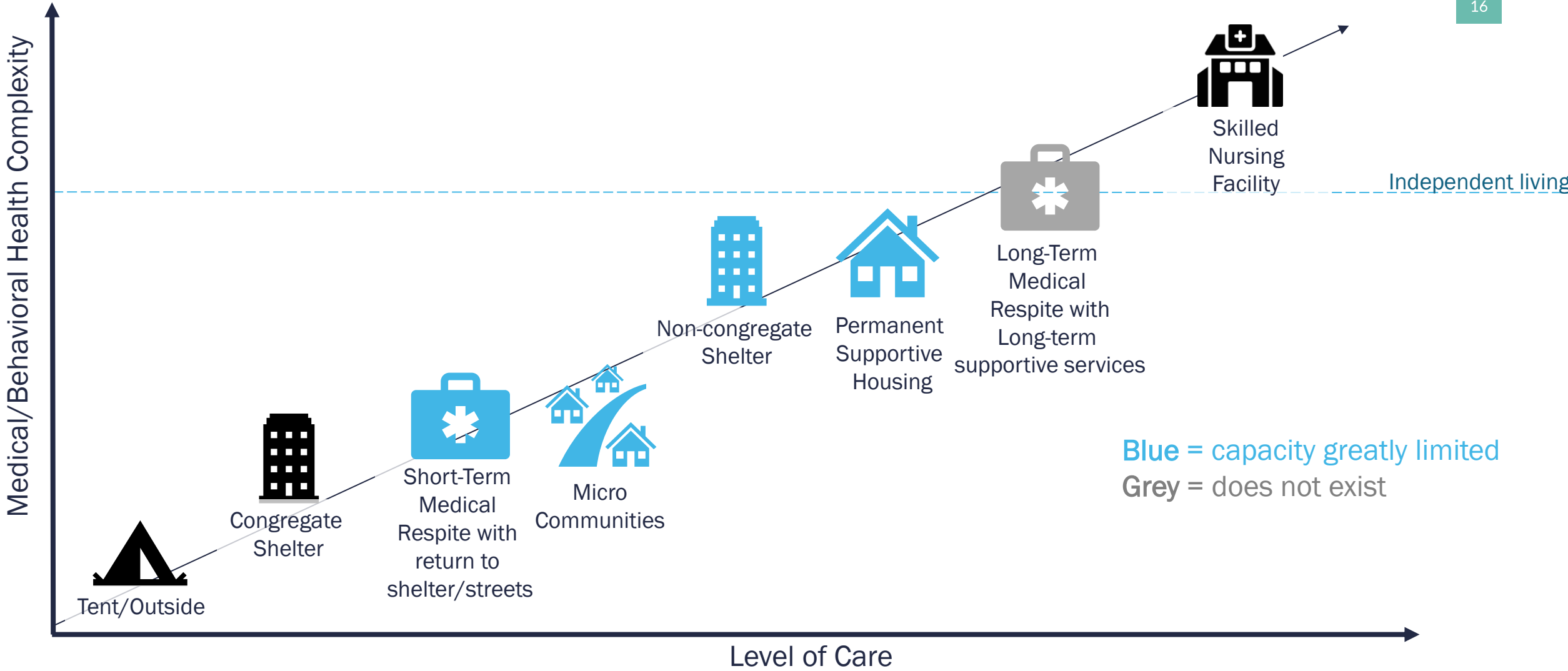
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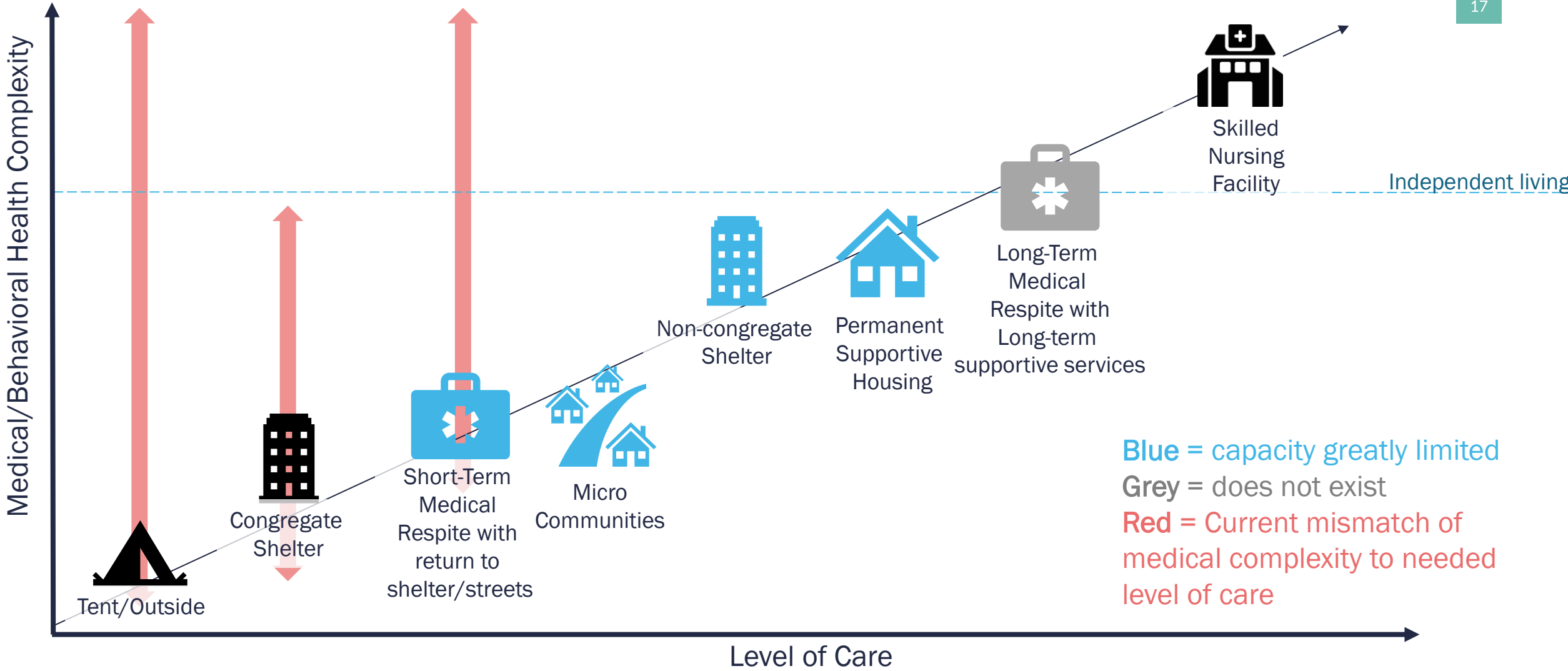
Housing Situations by Health Complexity and the Level of Care Provided



Housing Situations by Health Complexity and the Level of Care Provided



Housing Situations by Health Complexity and the Level of Care Provided



Takeaways



Denver Health has an important role to play in the homelessness response system, particularly for people with **complex medical and behavioral needs**



Many patients we see are highly vulnerable but **not** engaging with community partners.



Improved methods of data sharing needed to improve timely outreach and enables housing providers participation in care coordination.



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Ongoing Investment is needed to support sustainability

- Investments
 - Recuperative Care Center bed lease: \$864,000/year
 - 655 Broadway lease: \$150,000/year
 - HOPE team: \$800,000/year
- Uncompensated Care
 - Hospital costs of excess days: \$8,421,400 (5375 excess days in 2024)
 - Without funding to integrate housing and healthcare, this cost increases

Right Data



Right Team



Right Partners



Denver Health is positioned to be a critical partner in the City's housing response and resolution



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Contact HOPE@dhha.org



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Denver Health's Homeless Registry

More comprehensively and inclusively identifies patients and populations experiencing homelessness

Sidebar Summary

PDMP Review

Index

IP Medication History

Orders Mgmt

More

Homeless Registry Su...

Current as of: 11/18/2024 10:52 AM

Homeless Identification Factors

This score compiles the different ways a patient is identified as homeless

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High Risk

Factor	Value
Homeless Address	Yes
Address = Homeless Shelter/Service	No
Homeless Registration Status in Last Year	No
Homeless Problem List or Visit Diagnosis in Last Year	Yes
IP RN Assessment 'Type of Residence' = 'Homeless' in Last Year	Yes
AHC/HRSN/SDH 'Living Situation' = 'Homeless' in Last Year	No

Stella SA et al. Improving Identification of Patients Experiencing Homelessness in the Electronic Health Record: A Curated Registry Approach. J Gen Intern Med. 2024 Dec;39(16):3113-3119. doi: 10.1007/s11606-024-08909-1



Roads to Recovery and Denver Health HOPE Referral Workflow

