

For Immediate Release
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The Supportive Housing Network of New York issued the following statement in response to Mayor Eric Adams' recent announcement of a host of policy changes to address homelessness in the City – including the involuntary hospitalization of those deemed to be in “psychiatric crisis.”

As the City looks to address increased mental health crises on its streets, involuntary hospitalization of those who do not pose a threat to themselves, or others is not the solution. The resources dedicated to this ill-conceived approach would be far better spent on expanding supportive services, programs, and permanent affordable and supportive housing – all proven tools to reduce chronic homelessness.

The use of law enforcement to interact with individuals experiencing homelessness and mental health crises will lead to escalation, injury, and death. Alternatives involving social workers and peers have proven far more successful and less harmful, and as such, we strongly urge the administration to adopt the CCIT-NYC model - a peer-led health response - for working with those in crisis.

In the era following deinstitutionalization, New York has made the largest investment in unlicensed supportive housing in the country, which we heartily applaud. However, the state stopped creating residential settings that provide a higher level of care, such as onsite psychiatric services and medication management, more than a decade ago.

As a result, individuals in desperate need of this care – including two homeless New Yorkers with mental health disorders who were involved in recent deadly attacks - are too often repeatedly turned away when they seek it, to disastrous results.

New York's mental health system is clearly broken. It is beyond troubling to see the City turn yet again to law enforcement while slashing services that actually help people in need.

A smarter and more humane approach would include expanding access to supportive housing and psychiatric services and paying those who provide them – mostly women of color, who have not received a raise in a decade – a living wage to ensure help is available when and where it's needed.