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Advocates: housing will bring mentally ill out of homelessness

Some 1,500 people came to Albany today to urge lawmakers to include \$100 million in the state budget—due out next week—to preserve and develop supportive housing for people with mental illness.

Steve Coe, chairman of the New York State Campaign for Mental Health Housing, pointed out the following:

—More than 10,000 people with mental illness live on the streets in the state.

—More than 1,500 youth transition out of foster care and become homeless each year.

—Thousands of people with mental illness await discharge from hospitals and jails with nowhere to go.

Developing housing is more cost-effective than emergency assistance for people with mental illness, who may be shuffled between hospitals and shelters and homelessness at a cost of \$250,000 or more a year, according to Coe.

Advocates said the \$100 million would go toward preserving services in 30,000 units, reforming existing programs and developing at least 35,000 new units in the next decade.

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