

CRAIN'S
Health Pulse

UnitedHealthcare funds housing on Long Island

UnitedHealthcare is providing money to cover rent for some of its members most at-risk for repeat trips to the emergency department through a partnership with Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling.

A \$200,000 grant will help the Long Island nonprofit pay rent for five two-bedroom housing units for United members selected for the program because they have multiple chronic illnesses or were homeless.

The apartments will accommodate 10 people for a year, during which time the nonprofit will look to connect them with permanent housing and provide support, such as employment services. Eight people already have been matched with the apartments, which are located in Copague, Farmingdale, Hicksville, Holbrook and Merrick.

"We're trying to use our resources to go beyond providing insurance," said Michael McGuire, CEO of UnitedHealthcare in New York. "What drives these people's costs are the social determinants of health, including housing."



Courtesy of UnitedHealthcare

Studies have shown that housing stability improves health outcomes and lowers costs. In a group of nearly 10,000 people in Oregon, providing them affordable housing resulted in a 12% decrease in Medicaid spending and an 18% drop in emergency department use, [according to a literature review](#) of health and housing research in Health Affairs.

UnitedHealthcare has pursued similar projects around the country, spending \$384 million on about 70 projects in 16 states since 2011.

In explaining the initially small scope of the Long Island project, McGuire said United is testing the concept before it makes a further commitment.

"We think it was a good investment to see if it works here on Long Island," he said. "We want to find good partners in the marketplace, like Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling. I hope we do more."