

Nassau County DSS, NQP Exploring “Health-Related” Homeless Shelters

NQP and the Nassau County Department of Social Services (DSS) are collaborating to address the medical and behavioral health needs of individuals in shelters who were recently discharged from hospitals. Both organizations are exploring funding options that will help DSS hire medical professionals to support efforts to reduce avoidable hospitalizations and readmissions within homeless shelters, essentially creating a “health-related” shelter.

Currently, Nassau County has a large shelter system in place for the growing homeless population (nearly 2,000 people), but in many cases the shelters are not equipped to handle medical and behavioral health conditions, often leading to hospitalization.

Typically, when someone in a shelter experiences a behavioral health-related-issue or any other sign of illness, they are rushed back to the hospital. Data indicates that because the homeless population often lives in unhealthy conditions, there’s an increased chance they will be readmitted to the hospital days or weeks after treatment.

“We consistently review each DSS program to assess the effectiveness, quality, and relatability to our constituents,” says John E. Imhof, PhD, Commissioner of the Nassau County Department of Social Services. “The development of health-related shelters is just one more way we’re partnering with our community to offer quality services.”