PATH Definitions

How does PATH define “literal Homelessness”?

According to the Public Health Services act, the legislation that authorizes PATH, “literal homelessness” is: an individual who lacks housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family), including an individual whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility that provides temporary living accommodations and an individual who is a resident in transitional housing.

How does PATH define “imminent risk of homelessness”?

According to the Public Health Services Act’s discussion of “imminent risk of homelessness”: “Definitions commonly include: doubled-up living arrangement where the individual’s name is not on the lease, living in a condemned building without a place to move, arrears in rent/utility payments, having received an eviction notice without a place to move, living in temporary or transitional housing that carries time limits, being discharged from a health care or criminal justice institution without a place to live.”

How does PATH define “serious mental illness (SMI)”?

There is no guidance in the Public Health Services Act regarding SMI. The PATH Administrative workgroup recommends the following definition:

- Symptoms of mental illness, AND
- Difficulty in functioning, AND
- History of mental illness services OR indication of a history of mental health concerns, AND
- Appropriate age for SMI diagnosis
- A formal diagnosis is not required
How does PATH define “co-occurring substance use”?

There is no guidance in the Public Health Services Act regarding co-occurring substance use. The PATH Administrative workgroup recommends the following definition: Designation occurs when individual is in active period of use affecting functioning OR recovery from substance use and continues to require support.

Individuals experiencing substance use disorders only are not eligible.

When are consumers enrolled in PATH?

There is no guidance in the Public Health Services Act regarding the definition of enrollment. The PATH Administrative workgroup recommends that a consumer be enrolled after the outreach worker:

- Determines that the individual is PATH Eligible",
- Establishes engagement with individual
- Opens in individual file that contains:
  - Demographic information,
  - Documentation of PATH eligibility,
  - Mutual agreement for the provision of services, and
  - Services provided, including:
    - Any service, assistance, or provision of resources that the individual is willing to accept
    - Mutual work that the individual identifies as important
    - Service plans are required if case management services are provided.

For more information visit http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov or contact PATH@samhsa.hhs.gov