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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHES HOUSING FIRST ERIE TO ADDRESS CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

Erie, Pennsylvania, April 2024 - To address the increasingly complex needs around homelessness, a robust collection of community leaders joined together to launch Housing First Erie. This public-private partnership is dedicated to addressing chronic homelessness in Erie County by:

- Developing housing for the 150 people experiencing chronic homelessness in Erie County, including developing a new single-site building with 50 units and acquiring/rehabbing 100 scattered-site units across the county.
- Launch an Integrated Care Team of behavioral health specialists and case managers to serve the 150 people by addressing their health and social service needs.
- Raise \$20M in private and public support to fundraise the budget needs of this initiative.

Each year, the good work of the Erie Home Team, City, and County house around 400 households. But still there are roughly 150 people that are not being housed annually. A majority of those left out are experiencing ‘chronic homelessness’, spending at least a year being homeless and having deep clinical needs for supportive services.

“We are focused on a very meaningful and tangible outcome: giving a permanent home to 150 of our most vulnerable neighbors,” shared Karen Bilowith of Erie Community Foundation.

Housing First Erie is supported by a governing board, co-chaired by Karen Bilowith, President & CEO of Erie Community Foundation and Charles “Boo” Hagerty, President of Hamot Health Foundation. Other members of the board include representatives from Erie County, City of Erie, Housing Authority of the City of Erie, Erie Home Team, Highmark

Health and Allegheny Health Network, Erie County Care Management, HANDS, and Gannon University. Housing First Erie is a branch of Infinite Erie, a community-wide investment strategy to attract public and private sector funding for transformative projects.

“This initiative is values driven and data informed by the evidence-based work of Housing First,” Boo Hagerty of Hamot Health Foundation said, “It’s a model that has been battle-tested nationally and one that we are eager to scale in Erie.” Housing First, a nationally recognized model, believes people best achieve stability when rapidly connected with stable, permanent housing and intensive supportive services. Housing First has been seriously studied and is considered the most effective model to end homelessness.

Housing First Erie is proud to announce that two partners will develop the 150 units. CHN Housing Partners is working on developing a 50-unit apartment building. And the newly formed BUILD Community Development Corporation will focus on developing 100 units across the county.

Housing is health care. It takes a personal and trauma-informed approach to keep someone in stable housing. Housing First Erie is partnering with UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor to provide behavioral health, medical, and case management services for each of the residents.

Housing First Erie will continue to communicate its progress to the public as milestones are achieved.

Those who are interested in learning more about Housing First Erie and either donating or partnering with the effort, should reach out to the Erie Community Foundation.