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UNH State Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget & Policy Priorities **Housing Affordability**

Home Stability Support (HSS) – Home Stability Support (HSS) will be a new statewide rent supplement for families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance benefits and who are facing eviction, homelessness, or loss of housing due to domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. HSS will be 100% federally and state-funded, and will replace all existing optional rent supplements. The rent supplement will be a bridge between the current shelter allowance and 85% of the fair market rent determined by HUD. Local districts will have the option to further raise the supplement up to 100% of the fair market rent at local expense.

Challenge and Opportunity – New York is experiencing a housing shortage crisis exacerbated by rising housing costs. Over 60,000 people in New York City sleep in shelters every night, and thousands more sleep on the streets. These shelters cost taxpayers over \$1 billion per year. In New York State, more than 82,000 households living in private housing have rents over 1.5 times their shelter allowances. 21,000 of these have rents over 2.5 times their allowances.

When the shelter allowance was created in 1975, it was intended to cover the full cost of rent for households on public assistance. However, the allowance has failed to keep up with the rising costs of housing. While the average shelter receives between \$264 and \$447 per three person household from the shelter allowance, the actual cost of a two-bedroom household suitable for three people costs between \$658 and \$1,608. While rental subsidies were added in 2003, the majority of these subsidies are inadequate, and only 11 districts in addition to New York City provide them.

Benefits of HSS

Home Stability Support will replace all previous rent subsidies and help keep families off the streets and out of shelters at significantly less cost. For the average three-person family in New York City, HSS would provide a net savings of \$27,236 a year. These savings will come as a result of three main areas: reduced shelter utilization, reduced homeless service costs such as soup kitchens or emergency room visits, and prevention of future evictions, which can cost as much as \$251 million a year in New York City alone.

Eligibility

Roughly 80,000 households will be eligible for HSS. This includes:

- Those who are currently homeless, in a shelter, or staying in another shared household,
- 3,000 households fleeing from domestic violence or hazardous living conditions,
- 7,000 households on public assistance currently facing eviction, and
- Households currently receiving a rent supplement.

UNH Recommendation: Establish the Home Stability Support program in order to help close the gap between the current state shelter allowance and the true cost of housing in the State.

For more information, please contact Kevin Douglas at 917-484-9321 or kdouglas@unbny.org