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## Homelessness and Behavioral Health Care Coordination Act of 2023

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, more than 582,000 people experience homelessness on a single night. The data also shows that about one in five individuals experiencing homelessness in America has a severe mental health disorder and about one in six has a substance use disorder.

While the lack of affordable housing units is one of the primary drivers of homelessness in the U.S., behavioral health conditions, including substance use disorders, can cause and exacerbate homelessness. Further, these conditions can make it incredibly difficult for those experiencing homelessness to obtain and stay in housing.

Capacity-building is needed to create system-level linkages between agencies offering health services and homelessness services to better coordinate and ensure that all can have access to safe and dignified housing.

### What the bill would do:

- Establish a grant program through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that would award **5-year grants of up to \$500,000** to eligible entities to improve their capacity to coordinate culturally competent, trauma-informed substance use disorder and homelessness services. Grantees must provide annual reports to HHS to evaluate the efficacy of their programs no later than 6 years after receiving the grant.
- Activities can include appointing a coordinator to oversee the overlap in services, improving systems infrastructure, improving technologies, helping with Medicaid enrollment, increasing the availability of naloxone, and training of opioid antagonists.
- HHS is also directed to establish an interagency working group, with representatives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to advise on how to carry out the program. The working group is tasked to coordinate with existing relevant working groups and to develop materials to facilitate understanding between agencies offering health services and homelessness services.

Previous Endorsing organizations: *National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), National Low-Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), and the American Psychological Association, the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, Clinical Social Worker Association, National Council for Mental Wellbeing, the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors (NACBHDD), the National Association of Addiction Professionals (NAADAC), American Mental Health Counselors Association.*