

One Year Later: Homeless Women Find Medical Respite in First-of-its-Kind Care in D.C.

D.C.'s First Medical Respite Program for Women Marks One Year of Transformative Impact

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, March 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- One year ago this month, [Hope Has A Home™](#) for Women opened its doors in Southeast D.C., becoming the first and only medical respite program in the District – and the second ever in the nation – dedicated exclusively to

women experiencing homelessness. The program, operated by Volunteers of America Chesapeake & Carolinas (VOA-CC), has since filled a critical gap in care for women who are too ill to recover on the streets but do not require hospitalization.



While there are three existing medical respite programs in D.C., all of them exclusively serve men. Hope Has A Home™ for Women is the first and only medical respite program in the District specifically for women.

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Medical respite care provides short-term housing and medical support for individuals discharged from hospitals who need a safe place to heal. Hope Has A Home™ goes beyond medical care, offering holistic support, including mental health services, substance use recovery, and trauma-informed care tailored specifically for women.

Women make up one-third of the homeless population across the United States. In Washington, D.C., approximately 1,600 women experience homelessness on

any given night, representing 32% of the city's homeless population. While there are three existing medical respite programs in D.C., all of them exclusively serve men. Hope Has A Home™ for Women is the first and only medical respite program in the District specifically for women.

"In just one year, we've seen firsthand how life-changing medical respite care can be for women experiencing homelessness," said Brandi Goss-Burchett, VOACC's Vice President of DC Programs.

"The need for gender-responsive care has never been greater. Hope Has A Home for Women is proving that when healthcare and housing intersect, lives are transformed. Our mission is clear: every woman deserves a safe place to heal and a pathway to a better future. In a time of uncertainty and crisis, Hope Has A Home for Women stands as a beacon of hope and renewal. We are witnessing firsthand that when women are given a place to heal, they not only recover but rebuild their lives. This model is not just a necessity for D.C.- it's a necessity for the nation."

The disparity extends beyond the nation's capital. Across the country, only two medical respite programs exist for unhoused women, compared to dozens that serve men. Stable housing alone is often not enough for those experiencing homelessness. Many are survivors of domestic violence, and more than half live with a mental illness, substance use disorder, or other serious health conditions. By addressing both housing and health-related needs, Hope Has A Home™ for Women addresses the urgent need for these services in the District but also sets a precedent for communities nationwide that comprehensive, gender-specific medical respite care can be a critical step in breaking the cycle of homelessness and improving long-term health outcomes for women.

One Year of Impact

Since its opening, Hope Has A Home™ has served 26 women in need of medical respite care. Among them, five women have been placed in stable housing—three were connected to permanent housing, while two others have pending move-in dates. Every woman in the program has received medical care, ensuring they have the necessary support to recover and regain stability.

In addition to medical treatment, 14 women have participated in substance use recovery (SUD) services, while four have accessed mental health services. The program is uniquely designed for women and operated by women, offering specialized medical services, including gynecological care, through a partnership with Unity Health Care. Women in the program also receive peer support from trained recovery specialists who have lived experience with substance use disorders, providing them with compassionate, firsthand guidance on their journey to healing.

Interview opportunities are available with VOA-CC leadership, program staff, and women who have benefited from Hope Has A Home™ for Women.

About Volunteers of America Chesapeake & Carolinas

VOA-CC is dedicated to transforming lives through housing, health care, and supportive services. With a commitment to serving the most vulnerable, VOA-CC operates a variety of programs that provide holistic, person-centered care to individuals and families in need. For more information, visit voachesapeake.org.

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