

**Testimony for the Housing Committee of the New York State Assembly
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Barrier Free Living Family of Companies**

Barrier Free Living is an agency that has been serving people with disabilities since its inception in 1981. It grew out of a Federally-funded Research and Demonstration project for newly disabled people where we documented that affordable, accessible housing was the key to an individual's rehabilitation.

In 1990, we opened the only licensed shelter for nursing home eligible people in the state of New York. It began to address the needs of homeless disabled people who came to the door of our storefront office looking for shelter. Between our shelter program and our outreach program, we have placed over 1,000 severely disabled people in permanent housing in New York City. Without the benefit of a housing subsidy, our residents have been able to move out at a pace that is a small percentage of what we could accomplish before.

- The report, Priced out in 2010, shows that an SSI recipient in New York City would have to pay 150.7% of their income for a studio apartment and 163% for a one-bedroom apartment.

Barrier Free Living is proposing a pilot project in which its nursing home eligible residents could be eligible for a Housing Subsidy Program by virtue of their membership in Independence Care System (ICS), our partner managed long term care agency. **A \$700,000 housing subsidy would place 50 nursing home eligible people into community living.**

- **The cost of a housing subsidy can be averaged at @ \$14,000 a year.**
- **The New York State Partnership for Long Term Care reports that the 2012 average cost of a Medicaid-funded nursing home bed in New York City was \$131,484 per annum**
- **Providing individuals with a housing subsidy would reduce the state's Medicaid contribution for care from \$59,168 (the State's share of the average NYC nursing home bed) to \$24,300 (the State's share of Independence Care System's average annual cost of care)**
- **This creates a net savings for the state of \$20,868 per person.**
- **The net savings from the state for the proposed pilot would be \$1,043,400**

- The latest US Health and Human Services nursing home report stated that 9,200 New York City nursing home residents would rather be living in the community. That represents \$1.2 billion of New York's Medicaid budget.
- **Barrier Free Living's program places more severely disabled New Yorkers in permanent housing than anyone else in the State of New York. Our recidivism rate is among the lowest in New York City's homeless system.**
- Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Housing Subsidy Program was put in the state budget to assist individuals who are nursing home eligible to move out of nursing homes or avoid moving into nursing homes. It is only available to individuals in the state's Medicaid Waiver Program.
- It takes at least a year to get someone approved for that program. BFL needs long term care services in place from Day 1 of a resident's stay.
- No individual can be enrolled in more than one Medicaid waiver program at a time, depriving our residents of a much needed housing subsidy.