



*"If I didn't go to Patty's Place, I don't think I would have made it. That place really saved my life."
- Resident of Patty's Place*

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This study focused on analyzing the effectiveness of efforts to provide recovery housing at two locations for women in the Portland area who are struggling with addiction and related traumas. Patty's Place and Beacon House were developed by Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) and programming and tenant relations are managed by Amistad. Through surveys, interviews and secondary research we explored three layers that affect residents' quality of life and recovery process. The macro layer includes statewide collaborative networks and the policy and funding climate that they work within and influence. The meso layer includes neighborhood conditions and physical attributes of housing that affect resident experience. Lastly, the micro scale addresses the effects of on-site support services and the personal relationships which undergird them. We found that these layers collectively contributed towards measurable positive changes in residents' quality of life and led to behavioral changes that were consistent with their recovery goals.

This research was designed to better understand both the overall effectiveness of this specific housing model and whether the characteristics that make it unique are important for resident experience. Importantly, we found that those qualities that set Patty's Place and Beacon House apart are the most important factors producing a positive experience for residents.

METHODOLOGY

The research process involved a literature review, interviews with staff at CHOM and Amistad and surveys and interviews of residents at Patty's Place and Beacon House. This process produced the framework for the three layers of the "5 P's" model which created the structure for the project. All data in this report was collected via resident surveys.

FINDINGS

Recovering from drug addiction is not a linear path. It involves triumphs as well as setbacks. A person struggling with addiction and related traumas needs an environment that minimizes stress and maximizes their sense of safety. Community Housing of Maine and Amistad share the belief that in order for someone in recovery to be able to heal, they first need access to stable housing. Patty's Place and Beacon House provide that stability along with support programs, medical services and a community of peers. Amistad knows that their residents are the experts in their own recovery, and so they center trust and accountability in the houses' structure and expectations. The result is that women who pass through their doors are finding a renewed sense of safety. Below is a brief overview of the three layers that work in concert to make these outcomes possible.

The 5 P's Framework



Policy & Partnerships

Partnership-building and collaboration across the multiple sectors that serve the recovery community was the first step in making Patty's Place and Beacon House a reality. CHOM participated in collaborative efforts with diverse institutions through the Greater Portland Addiction Collaborative (GPAC). These institutions shared the common goal of addressing the root causes of substance use disorders and thereby shared an interest in making housing more accessible to people in recovery. Providing housing would help people in recovery avoid ricocheting through the various systems that the coalition represented, including emergency medical care institutions, the justice system, homeless service organizations and more. Once the need for housing was established, CHOM's partnership with Amistad became the crucial relationship that made these homes possible. CHOM and partners have introduced two pieces of legislation that are designed to institutionalize the successes that these collaborations have produced. These include LD 1523, which institutionalized funding for organizations providing recovery housing and LD 475, which builds a sustainable platform for cross-sector engagement via a statewide FUSE Collaborative.



Place

Both the design of recovery housing and the neighborhoods in which they are sited have an impact on the people who live there. Together, they form a "treatment ecology." The neighborhood surrounding Patty's Place and Beacon House has all of the amenities and services that the women need, such as food stores, pharmacies and access to reliable transportation and green spaces. The houses are well-placed in that they are a distance from the parts of town where the women had previously used drugs. The houses themselves blend in with the surrounding neighborhood and offer residents a comforting sense of anonymity that preserves their sense of safety within the homes and encourages them to build community with fellow residents.

Programs & People

Residents' ultimate ability to improve their quality of life and stay accountable to their goals hinges on the effectiveness of the house programs and expectations as well as the personal relationships that are developed on site. It was clear that it is vitally important for residents to feel like they can trust one another and trust staff, that they need not hide who they really are. With nothing to hide, they feel less stressed, more relaxed, and more able to invest in their own recovery process. It was clear that a few key factors set Patty's Place and Beacon House apart from other recovery residences.

*"You just get caught in that life if you're not prepared for it. You get taken away and it's very hard to get out once you're in it."
- Resident of Patty's Place*

Patty's Place and Beacon House are different from other recovery residences because they...

1. Provide housing to residents regardless of their stage of recovery and do not evict residents if they relapse
2. Provide housing to residents regardless of their ability to pay rent
3. Accept residents who are on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)
4. Have a structure and house expectations that are personalized and hold women accountable to their recovery goals
5. Connect residents with primary care physicians, mental health clinicians and a supportive community of peers

Do these factors make a difference?

When asked about the importance of various factors of life at Patty's Place and Beacon House, 100% of residents rated these factors as extremely or very important to their overall experience. These five factors were ranked by residents as being *the most* important features of their housing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Ultimately, this research is a powerful endorsement of CHOM and Amistad's partnership and the ways they are serving women in recovery.

- Patty's Place and Beacon House are contributing towards measurable quality of life and behavioral improvements for residents
- Housing and neighborhood conditions are well-suited to keep women in recovery accountable to their recovery goals
- The unique attributes of this model are the most important factors contributing to resident success

Changes in behavior and quality of life

Women who live at Patty's Place and Beacon House experience improvements in their quality of life across many different areas. Whether they have only been on site for two weeks or two years, there has been vast improvement in overall health, sense of safety and general well-being.

100%
Decreased
substance use

88%
Increased contact
with family

100%
Increased visits
with primary care
physician

67%
Had more
success finding
employment

78%
Improved
financial security

100%
Increased sense
of personal safety

78%
Improved life
skills and abilities

100%
Improved overall
health &
well-being

*"Beacon House gave me support, love, care, and validation that I was a real person."
- Former resident of Beacon House*