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Concord homeless coalition to hold forum on Housing First

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The Concord Coalition to End Homelessness is holding a community forum next week on Housing First, an alternative intervention program that has gained attention in several cities and states.

Cullen Ryan, executive director of Community Housing of Maine, will speak about his experience implementing the program in Portland. Coalition Director Ellen Groh will also be on hand to give an update on the group's efforts to relocate their resource center, and to find an interim emergency shelter for next winter.

Under the Housing First model, homeless people are placed in permanent housing and then afforded services like substance abuse counseling and mental health treatment. The theory is they are more likely to address underlying issues in a stable environment, rather than out on the street. Groh and the coalition want to use a similar approach here.

The forum will be Feb. 19, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Two Delta Drive, Concord. Light refreshments will be served. If Concord schools are canceled, it will be rescheduled. Questions can be directed to Groh at ccehdirector@gmail.com or 290-3375.