

Event Recap



APRIL HOME FORUM RECAP

Housing as Healthcare
A look at key insights
shaping Ventura
County



Point-in-Time: Housing as Healthcare

The April HOME Forum brought together leaders from across Ventura County's housing, healthcare, and social service sectors for a comprehensive discussion centered on one critical theme: **housing is not just a social issue—it is a healthcare solution.**

From data-driven progress to policy shifts and real-world implementation challenges, the conversation highlighted both **meaningful momentum** and the **complex road ahead.**

Encouraging Progress: A Measurable Shift in Homelessness Trends

The forum opened with a strong and hopeful update from Ventura County's Housing and Homelessness Solutions team. Recent data from the annual Point-in-Time Count revealed:

- A **28% decrease in overall homelessness since 2023**
- An additional **11.8% decrease year-over-year (2025–2026)**
- A **34% reduction in unsheltered homelessness since 2023**

These are not abstract numbers—they represent real individuals finding stability. As emphasized during the presentation, every number represents a person with a unique story.

This progress is largely attributed to:

- Expansion of **permanent supportive housing (297 new units)**
- Increased **homelessness prevention efforts (such as rental assistance)**
- Targeted investments in **veteran and youth populations**
- Strong **cross-agency collaboration**

Notably, Ventura County has seen:

- A **69% decrease in unsheltered veteran homelessness**
- A **65% decrease among transitional-age youth**

These outcomes reinforce a clear takeaway: **when resources are aligned and partnerships are strong, measurable change is possible.**

The Core Shift: Integrating Housing and Healthcare

A central theme throughout the forum was the evolving integration between **housing systems and healthcare infrastructure.** With the rollout of **Proposition 1 (Behavioral Health Services Act – BHSA)**, California is fundamentally reshaping how funding is allocated:

- **30% of funding is now dedicated to housing interventions**
- Increased emphasis on **wraparound care and full-service partnerships**
- A shift toward addressing individuals with **co-occurring behavioral health and housing needs**

This marks a significant evolution—housing is no longer adjacent to care, but embedded within it. This shift, however, introduces new challenges:

- Housing funds cannot be used for clinical services
- Clinical funding pools are being reduced to accommodate housing allocations
- Long-term sustainability depends on **balancing infrastructure with ongoing care**

As one speaker noted, housing without support is temporary—true stability requires both.

New Tools in Action: CalAIM and the “Housing Trio”

The forum also highlighted how **CalAIM (California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal)** is operationalizing this integration. Through Medi-Cal, Ventura County is now delivering **non-traditional healthcare services**, including housing support.

- **Enhanced Care Management (ECM):** Personalized, high-touch care coordination focused on high-risk populations (homeless, justice-involved, high utilizers)
- **Community Supports:** Services addressing social drivers of health (food, transportation, housing)
- **The “Housing Trio” + Transitional Rent:** A coordinated set of housing-focused supports that include:
 - **Housing Navigation** – finding and securing housing
 - **Housing Deposits** – covering upfront costs
 - **Tenancy & Sustaining Services** – ongoing support
 - **Transitional Rent** – up to 6 months of rent coverage

While this model represents a major innovation—**healthcare dollars directly funding housing access**—it also introduces friction:

- Programs are **highly eligibility-specific**
 - **Landlord participation**, especially in the private sector, remains uncertain
 - Long-term sustainability hinges on **post-subsidy planning (“month seven”)**
-

Human Impact: Why This Work Matters

Beyond policy and funding, the forum grounded the conversation in human outcomes. Key insights included:

- Individuals experiencing homelessness with mental illness may face a **reduction in life expectancy of up to 30 years**
- They are significantly more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators
- Without stable housing, treatment outcomes decline significantly

The conclusion was clear: **housing is the foundation for recovery, stability, and long-term health.**

The Reality Check: Gaps, Risks, and System Strain

While the data shows progress and exciting new potential, the forum did not shy away from the challenges ahead.

1. Loss of Interim Housing Capacity

- Nearly **400 temporary shelter beds have been lost** as pandemic-era programs ended
- Immediate need for **bridge housing options** remains critical

2. Future Development Uncertainty

- Strong pipeline through 2027—but a **sharp decline is projected beyond 2027**
- Developers face:
 - Funding uncertainty
 - Rising operational costs
 - Hesitation around supportive housing models and the tax credits necessary to fund these units

3. Increasing System Complexity

- Multiple entry points (“no wrong door”) in theory
- In practice, **navigation is increasingly difficult for individuals in crisis**

4. Funding Instability

- Federal policy shifts
- Medicaid (Medi-Cal) enrollment reductions
- Reliance on **braided funding models** to sustain programs

As discussed throughout the forum, housing as healthcare is complex—and evolving rapidly.

Looking Ahead: A Call for Collaboration and Innovation

The April Forum underscored that while Ventura County is making meaningful progress, **the next phase will require deeper coordination, creativity, and commitment.** Moving forward, success will depend on:

- Strengthening **cross-sector partnerships**
- Expanding **interim and permanent housing solutions**
- Improving **system navigation for individuals**
- Securing **sustainable, multi-year funding strategies**

Perhaps most importantly, it will require maintaining a shared mindset:

There is no single solution—but together, the system can work.

Final Takeaway

Ventura County is emerging as a model for what’s possible when housing and healthcare align—but the work is far from finished.

The April HOME Forum made one thing clear: **progress is real, but so is the urgency to keep building.**