

Steve Lurie's letter to the editor, published on Sunday July 4, 2010

Re: Housing or just castles in the sky, Opinion, July 2

Carol Goar's article is correct in saying that the Ontario government has underperformed when it comes to housing. For people living with mental illness in Toronto, the government has failed to build on success.

In 1999, the Ministry of Health began to use rent supplements to bring supportive housing on-stream, coupled with funding for support services. This strategy worked even in a tight rental market. However, since 2006 there has been no more funding for rent supplements, which cost about \$7,200 per year per person (less than one admission to hospital).

Supportive housing providers have developed a coordinated access program with one waiting list. As of last October, there were 700 people on the list. Now there are 2,000. As Health Minister Deb Matthews develops her 10-year plan to transform mental health and addiction services, she would do well to start by funding more supportive housing.

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