March 31, 2022

Senator Patty Murray

We, the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, believe emergency shelter is a vital resource for people experiencing homelessness. While shelter alone does not lead to housing, it provides a safe, healthy environment to live in while reestablishing permanent housing.

Shelter is particularly important for individuals experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury on the streets but not sick enough to require hospitalization. Our shelter system struggles to support them, putting them in hospital settings that are expensive, prevent others from receiving care, and put the individual at risk of other illnesses because of their stay in the hospital. Medical respite programs meet those needs.

This funding will bring to fruition a multi-year effort involving the major hospital systems, health care providers, health department and homeless system in Pierce County. This medical respite project will allow our hospitals, emergency responders, shelters, and outreach workers to more effectively meet the needs in the community while improving outcomes for people experiencing homelessness.

We, the Tacoma Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness, look forward to this additional level of support from our federal partners.