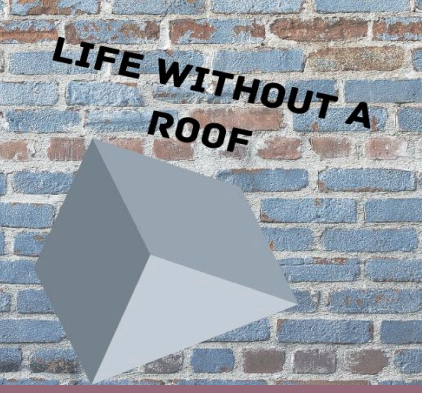


Hidden Truth: Life Without A Roof



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Introduction

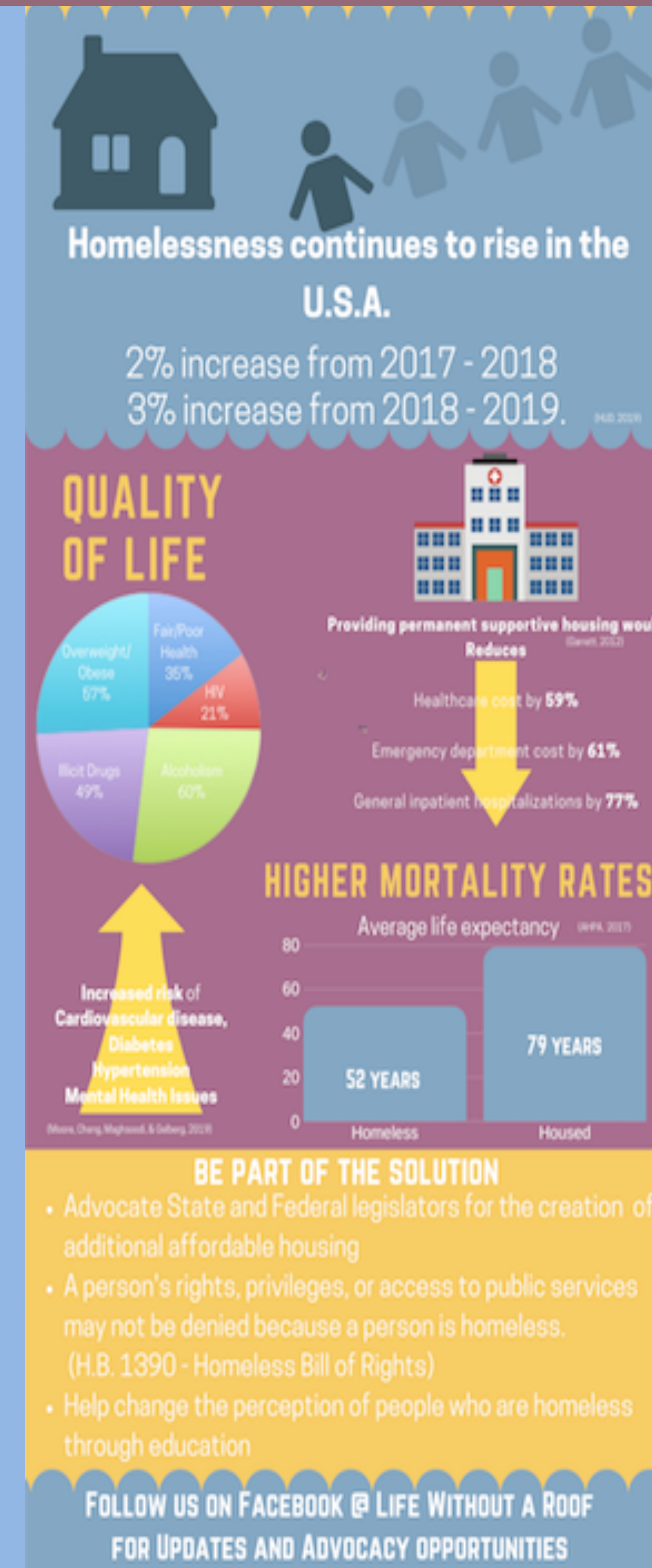
- Homelessness is a complex social issue with a variety of underlying causes such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, physical and mental health issues, addiction, community instability, and family structure breakdown.
- The United Nations declared housing as a fundamental right in 1991.
- The United States decreased homeless by 20% between 2005 – 2013, but in the past 2 years there has been an increase in the number of people who are homeless.

Statistical Data

- January 2019 found that an estimated 567,715 people were homeless during a point in time count.
- African Americans make up 36% of the homeless population.
- 35,038 unaccompanied youths are considered homeless, 20% identify as gay, lesbian, transgender, or questioning.
- Veterans make up 9.1% of the homeless population.
- 1/3 of the homeless population is families with children.

Public Perception

- Research has shown that people of all ages feel that it is a personal choice for someone to be homeless.
- Homelessness is a result of laziness, lack of motivation to earn enough money, or a result of irresponsible and reckless behavior.
- Many also feel that alcoholism, drug addiction and mental illness play a role as well.



References available upon request

Health Disparities

- People who are homeless have a higher risk of infectious diseases, being overweight/obese, malnourishment, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.
- Average life expectancy for a person who is homeless is 42 – 52 years of age.

Possible Solutions

- Prevention is always the best policy!
- Housing First Model – stable housing is essential to achieve sobriety, employment, etc..
- Decriminalizing activities of daily life for people who are homeless.
- Medical-Legal partnerships to reduce barriers to resources.

Call to Action

- Advocate State and Federal legislators for the creation of additional affordable housing.
- A person's rights, privileges, or access to public services may not be denied because a person is homeless. (H.B. 1390 – Homeless Bill of Rights).
- Help change the perception of people who are homeless through education.

Advocacy Efforts

- Participated in Affordable Housing Coalition monthly conference call.
- Created Facebook page Life Without A Roof to educate and inform on issues facing people who are homeless and ways to get involved.

