



Human Resources Administration
Department of Social Services
Steven Banks, *Commissioner*

HRA's Craig Retchless Wins Supportive Housing Network's Unsung Hero Award

Each year, the Supportive Housing Network of New York presents awards to government and private sector individuals who have gone above and beyond to advance the cause of housing New York's most vulnerable residents. This year, the Tim O'Hanlon Unsung Hero of the Year Award went to Craig Retchless, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Clinical and Service Systems Integration, part of HRA's Customized Assistance Services.

"I'm honored that the Supportive Housing Network of New York has chosen Craig Retchless as the Tim O'Hanlon Unsung Hero of the Year," said HRA Commissioner Steven Banks. "Every day, Craig and his team at the Office of Clinical and Service Systems Integration help some of New York City's most vulnerable residents find the care and housing they need, working closely with many agencies and organizations to improve clients' quality of life. I couldn't be more proud of the accomplishments of Craig and his colleagues."

"The Network is delighted to honor HRA's Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Customized Assistance Services, Craig Retchless, for his tireless work connecting New York's most vulnerable to supportive housing," said Supportive Housing Network of New York Executive Director Laura Mascuch. "Mr. Retchless brings both intelligence and a human touch to a complex system—for the Network, for our providers and for the people they serve. He is the very epitome of an unsung hero."

In his role at Customized Assistance Services, Mr. Retchless collaborates with a wide variety of City, State and Federal agencies and non-profit groups to help some of New York City's most vulnerable residents get the help they need. The Office of Clinical and Service Systems Integration (OCSSI) works to help New Yorkers with disabilities connect to the Federal disability benefits they qualify for, and to place chronically homeless individuals with mental health and substance use challenges into supportive housing environments, where they can get the services they need to achieve productive lives in the community. OCSSI also helps implement initiatives to care for New Yorkers on public assistance who have clinical issues that affect their independence so they can achieve a better quality of life.

"Supportive housing is the cornerstone of helping the most vulnerable people with health, mental health, and substance use challenges to lead fulfilling lives in our communities," said Mr. Retchless. "Having a home with supports is an essential first step to a person's well-being, recovery and autonomy."

Mr. Retchless was also honored in 2014 for his work on the New York City Veterans' Task Force, which brought a number of government agencies and community-based organizations together to place New York City homeless veterans in supportive housing and connect them to other vital assistance. In 2014, New York City was honored by the National Alliance to End Homelessness for reducing the number of homeless veterans in the city by 64%.

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The Supportive Housing Network of New York's Unsung Hero Award was created to recognize individuals who have made critical contributions to supportive housing out of the spotlight. It is named after Timothy O'Hanlon, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) former longtime Assistant Commissioner for Special Needs Housing, who embodied a lifelong commitment to creating superior housing for vulnerable New Yorkers.