Audit Finds Problems With NYC's AIDS Housing Group HASA

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New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer

Improper housing contracts, lax oversight, poor recordkeeping and lack of required inspections were just a few of the problems discovered with agency that handles New York City's HIV services such as rental assistance and food stamps, according to an audit by the city comptroller's office.

As Gay City News reports, the audit found that in at least 32 cases the HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) did not require vendors to sign the proper contracts; instead, vendors signed a memorandum of understanding, but the MOUs were never reviewed and approved by the comptroller, as required.

The audit also uncovered that, because of poor recordkeeping, in a three-month period HASA paid rent for 23 clients who were dead.

"We uncovered a lot of lax oversight," said City Comptroller Scott Stringer. "Without critical input and checks and balances, [the Human Resources Administration, HRA] had no way of knowing if services were being delivered to the right people at the right time."

HASA services about 32,000 people living with AIDS along with 10,700 of their family members, according to Gay City News. HASA is a part of HRA and as such is overseen by HRA.

HRA's commissioner, Steven Banks, said he has already implemented changes for HASA, and the comptroller agreed.

The newspaper reports that proper housing is a vital part of the New York State's plan to end AIDS. Currently, people with HIV must have an AIDS diagnosis to qualify for HASA's help; proposed legislation would change that requirement.

For a press release from Comptroller Stringer on the HASA findings, including a link to the full audit, click here.

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