# Fenway Health to Cease Non-Medical Services, Including Youth on Fire Program, to Focus on Healthcare Mission



Fenway Health, a community health center focused on LGBTQ care, will no longer provide certain non-medical services, including housing and legal support, previously managed under the AIDS Action Committee. These responsibilities will be transferred to specialized organizations effective July 1, due to ongoing contract negotiations. The services in question also include the "Youth on Fire" program in Cambridge, which assists homeless and at-risk youth with resources such as food, clothing, medical care, and HIV prevention education.

This adjustment is part of a broader strategy by Fenway Health to concentrate on its healthcare and research missions following financial challenges and high staff turnover. Additionally, changes include closing its Boomerangs thrift stores and outsourcing management of various administrative functions to the Community Care Cooperative.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has allocated funding for these services, which includes $1.26 million for housing programs, $463,000 for legal services, and $315,000 for the Youth on Fire program, supporting several individuals and handling numerous legal cases in fiscal 2022.

While Fenway Health’s shift reflects steps forward in general societal and medical attitudes towards HIV/AIDS, concerns persist regarding the ongoing stigma and specific needs of those living with HIV, particularly among marginalized groups. The transition aims to place these services with organizations that are both geographically and experientially better suited to handle them, ensuring that they remain accessible and tailored to the specific challenges faced by the community.