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To: Homeless Service Providers in Hartford, CT
From: Liany E. Arroyo, Director
CC: Thea Montañez, COO; Vasishth Srivastava, Chief of Staff; Tung Nguyen, Epidemiologist; Reginald Freeman, Emergency Management Director
Date: April 24, 2020
Re: Homeless Service Provider Interim COVID-19 Response Plan 2020

This guidance replaces the guidance issued on March 13, 2020.

This document provides guidance to homeless shelter providers during an outbreak of COVID-19 in our community. If this guidance is modified again, it will be provided to Journey Home via email. Please ensure that the City of Hartford's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has the contact information of at least three individuals in your agency to whom revised guidance should be sent to. Names, titles, emails, and cell phone numbers of those three individuals should be sent to Tung Nguyen at tnghuyen@hartford.gov.

For Shelters that still have their Facility Open

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the City of Hartford's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is encouraging shelters to do the following:

- Post signage throughout the facility with information on handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes.
- Have staff verbally remind residents to wash hands, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- Provide staff and residents increased access to tissues and hand sanitizer. If hand sanitizer is not available, ensure that bathrooms are adequately stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Clean using the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) using approved cleaners which can be found on their website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

Staff Guidance

- Encourage sick staff and volunteers to stay home (or be sent home if they develop symptoms while at the facility), to prevent transmitting any illnesses to others.
- Plan your staffing to minimize the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with clients with respiratory symptoms.
- For staff interacting with a lot of clients with unknown infection status (i.e. front desk staff):
 - Put in a sneeze guard or separate clients by a big table (to increase distance)
 - Use gloves if staff are handling IDs or other client items.
 - Keep in mind, when using gloves:
 - Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene
 - Clean your hands before putting on gloves
 - Clean your hands immediately after removing gloves
 - Do not touch your face while wearing gloves
 - Change gloves if gloves become damaged or visibly soiled

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

- Carefully remove gloves to prevent contaminating your hands

Identify an Isolation Area in Your Shelter

We recognize that isolating sick residents may be a challenge in most shelters. However, if an outbreak occurs in the City of Hartford, our hospital system and medical providers may be overwhelmed and may not accept or see individuals with mild symptoms, as most cases of COVID-19 present. To that end, we recommend that shelters take the following steps:

- Identify a location in your shelter that can be used to isolate individuals who may be sick.
- In shelters where there are private rooms, designate a room or rooms where individuals or families who are presenting two of the COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated in while testing can be arranged.
- If they can be safely isolated, the individuals should be confined to that room and staff can provide them meals in their room until they can be tested or show no signs of symptoms. Staff should follow the Centers for Disease Control guidance for caregivers in non-healthcare settings if this option is used. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html#precautions>

Determining if a Client Needs to be Isolated

In order to identify whether a person may need to be isolated, we recommend the following procedures:

- Conduct a screening at the entrance of the facility using the attached screening guide.
- If an individual presents with fever AND cough OR fever, cough, and KNOWN contact with a sick person, this person should be provided a mask (if available) and placed into the isolation area. If they are experiencing shortness of breath or are in respiratory distress, 911 should be called immediately.
- The same process applies if an individual becomes sick while in the shelter.
- If you are isolating an individual or call for transport to the hospital, please notify DHHS (Tung Nguyen tnguyen@hartford.gov).

If a Client CANNOT be Isolated Due to Lack of Space or a Designated Isolation Area

- If an individual is sick (experiencing symptoms or symptoms and known contact with a sick person) arrives at the shelter or becomes sick within the shelter, and cannot be isolated due to lack of space they should be provided a mask and kept as separated as possible from other residents. At minimum, they should not be allowed to enter the dormitory area.
- If the individual is in distress, they should call 911 so transport can be provided to the hospital.
- If the individual is not in distress, shelter staff should call either Tung (860-622-8187) or myself (860-539-8031).
- Tung and I will then determine what facility the individual will be sent to until such time he or she can be tested.
- Transportation for the individual will be provided by M7 Taxi. Once Tung or Liany approve the movement of the resident from the shelter to our isolation or quarantine facility, M7 Taxi should be called at 203-444-4444. Account number XXX must be provided.
- The individual should be provided a mask or face covering by the shelter and sit as far as possible in the vehicle transporting him or her to the quarantine or isolation facility.
- If the individual will have trouble doing this because they are experiencing a crisis, then please call an ambulance or the mobile crisis at 860-297-0999. M7 will not transport anyone to the facility if it cannot be done safely.
- The facility will be staffed two Recreation staff member and at times, an EMT and/or CNA, as we are able to. DHHS staff will conduct regular visits to the facility to coordinate the testing of the sick individual and provide comfort items to the individual.
- Once testing for the sick individual is arranged and COVID-19 is ruled out, the individual will be returned to the shelter.
- If the individual is COVID-19 positive, they will stay at the isolation facility until they meet the CDC guidance for return back to the shelter.

The ability to move an individual to a quarantine or isolation facility will only be provided to those still residing in congregate care settings. Moving individuals out of the hotels will be done on a case-by-case basis.

Evacuating a Homeless Shelter

- Evacuation of a shelter will only happen in extenuating circumstances.
- If an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 is found to have entered a shelter in the City of Hartford, those who were in the closest proximity (less than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) will be asked to quarantine in place, if practical. If this isn't practical, we will move individuals into our quarantine facility.
- If the number of individuals who came into contact with the individual who tested positive is greater than the number of spaces available at the quarantine location, the shelter may be asked to move to a shelter in place model where residents quarantine in the shelter. DHHS will then move those that are symptomatic out to an isolation facility and order a cleaning of the facility.
- If an evacuation is ordered, it is the expectation that shelter staff will continue to staff the alternate location unless they are presenting symptoms. Only those individuals not presenting symptoms will be quarantined. Anyone experiencing symptoms will be sent to another facility until testing can be arranged.
- After the quarantine time period is up, everyone will be moved back to the shelter.

Shelter Residents in Hotels

Individuals who test positive or are exhibiting symptoms should stay in their respective hotels and isolate or quarantine in their room or a room designated by shelter staff. If this is not possible, shelter staff should contact me and we will make arrangements to transport the individual to the isolation facility using M7 and following the steps for those individuals residing in shelter facilities. However, every attempt should be made to have the individual stay at the hotel as it would be the most appropriate location as they would be in a private room. Our isolation and quarantine spaces are not private rooms.

If individuals are not cooperative with isolation or quarantine in the hotel, DHHS will work with you to achieve compliance. We will not issue quarantine orders if an individual is awaiting test results and will only issue an isolation order if we have exhausted all other powers of persuasion.

Access to Testing No Matter Location

The City of Hartford has worked with both hospital systems to increase access to testing for individuals in our community that are homeless.

To ensure that no one testing site is overwhelmed, we have divided the shelters into two groups. Group A will call the Hartford Health Care COVID-19 hotline and Group B will call the Trinity Healthcare of New England COVID-19 hotline.

Group A

Open Hearth
YMCA
Marshall House
Milner Warming Center

Group B

McKinney
South Park Inn
East Hartford Family Shelter
Enfield Warming Center

Group A (Hartford Health Care) will call 860-972-8100.

Group B (Trinity Healthcare of New England) will call 888-786-2790 and press 3 to speak directly to someone who can assist.

Both groups should state that the individual calling is homeless and is symptomatic. The resident does not need to have a provider as both can provide orders for testing if the resident does not have a regular source of care. Additionally, Hartford Health Care requires an order from one of their doctors so it is better to connect with their Hotline directly rather than getting an order from a personal physician.

If testing is ordered and an appointment is made through the vehicle testing site, you can arrange transportation through the City. To access transportation, you should send an email to Liany.Arroyo@hartford.gov with a CC to Carmen Chaparro at CHAPC001@hartford.gov with the following information:

- Name of Resident
- Name of Individual Making Appointment
- Shelter They Reside In (If from hotel, shelter through which they are being case managed from)

- Date of Appointment
- Location of Testing

After you send the email, please call M7 at 203-444-4444. This is the only number that can be used for COVID-related transportation calls. To make your appointment, you will provide the following account number: XXXT and the account password is 'XXXXX.' This is the account for wait and return testing trip. You do not need a response from me to make the call but do need to send the information to me before you make the call. M7 will also ask the name of the individual making the call, the organization they are calling from, and who is being transported.

All residents of shelters or the hotels being transported will need to have a mask and gloves on. My office will provide a starter supply to each shelter for ONLY this purpose. If you run out, we will make every attempt to provide more to you.