



Revised March 25, 2020

## **Action Steps: Supporting King County residents experiencing homelessness**

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Three agencies are closely coordinating efforts for King County:

- Public Health-Seattle & King County (PHSKC) and its Healthcare for the Homeless Network (HCHN) and Environment Health Division
- King County through the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Facilities Management Division (FMD), and METRO
- City of Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD).

### Focus Areas:

1. Support existing homeless services providers to maintain capacity and care for people experiencing homelessness.
2. Support hygiene and sanitation efforts system-wide to prevent or slow the spread of the virus, including provider training and centralized supply purchasing and distribution.
3. Create and implement a response plan for assistance for people who become sick with COVID-19 who cannot care for themselves in home settings, or who have no home.
4. Site and staff facilities for quarantine, isolation and recovery—for all who cannot care for themselves in home settings, including people experiencing homelessness, to slow the spread of illness in the community and preserve hospital beds for the most acutely ill.

### Actions taken to date:

#### **Educating and Preparing the Regional Homeless Shelter and Services Provider Network**

Up to 200+ shelter and homeless services providers, housing developers and owners, health care providers, city planners, coalitions, faith community members and more join a conference call at least once weekly hosted by King County, City of Seattle and PHSKC. The most up-to-date information on the status of COVID-19 in the community is presented along with updated services guidelines, and participants have the opportunity to ask questions and voice needs.

#### **Homeless Shelter and Services Sanitation and Hygiene Training and Cleaning Support**

Web-based training offered by PHSKC launched on 3/6/20 focused on approved sanitation and hygiene guides. Training, technical assistance, and Q&A opportunities have been offered multiple times to staff of homeless service agencies. Training is updated as needed to keep current with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. High-traffic day centers are receiving County-funded cleaning services to allow day center staff to focus on clients.

#### **Mobile Medicine/Mobile Outreach Maintained**

Healthcare for the Homelessness Network is maintaining the Mobile Medical Van and the Street Medicine Outreach teams to reach and help those in shelters, and in sanctioned and unsanctioned encampments countywide.

### **Assessment of Program Capacity**

A countywide assessment of encampments, shelters, day centers, and housing programs was completed to identify gaps in our ability to respond and to ensure providers receive the resources and supplies needed.

### **Shelter “De-intensification”**

Seattle and King County are working to create space for shelter “de-intensification.”

- King County opened additional space in the King County Administration Building and the King County 4<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson Building to help both onsite shelters achieve social distancing.
- King County dedicated space in the King County International Airport 24/7 to offer to one of the county’s largest shelter operators to spread out their clients to achieve social distancing.
- As a prevention move, King County provided funding for 60 hotel vouchers for people in the largest shelters who are in the highest risk categories for age and underlying health issues.
- King County is working with the City of Bellevue to support one of the largest Eastside shelter operators to spread out concentrations of shelter guests to achieve social distancing with additional space and placement of pallet units.
- King County is providing space at the Harbor Island warehouse.
- Seattle opened the Seattle Center Exhibition Hall and the Fisher Pavilion to move about 300 individuals from the largest Seattle shelter operators to achieve social distancing, and is implementing additional de-intensification efforts at multiple sites city-wide. The city is also opening 95 additional shelter beds and tiny homes.

### **Centralized Supply “Store” Opens**

King County, City of Seattle and United Way of King County pooled their resources of bleach, masks, wipes, gloves, hand sanitizer and other essential supplies in one warehouse. Homeless shelter and day center providers received an order form and as requests for supplies come in, they are filled by this warehouse. Bulk purchases continue to funnel to this warehouse.

### **Homeless Health Field Assessment, Support and Technical (FAST) Teams**

FAST teams are active now to provide onsite assessment, support and technical assistance to homeless and supportive housing programs responding to COVID-19, including meeting sanitation and infection control guidelines, supply needs, and procedures for handling suspected cases. Teams may include a nurse, behavioral health specialist, environmental health specialist and/or an outreach worker. The team is providing proactive preventative supports to providers.

### **Ensuring Behavioral Health Service Continuation**

King County is working very closely with its behavioral health provider network, both to ensure continuation of services to people with mental health and substance use disorders, including those who are homeless, and ensure the provider network is supported to keep their programs operating (albeit in different forms) and working to ensure that they are paid to provide those services. These efforts include continuation of alternate forms of behavioral health counseling, including telemedicine, adjustments to dosing protocols for methadone and buprenorphine to support recovery, and other actions. Planning and staffing of isolation, quarantine and recovery sites include consideration of behavioral health needs.

## COVID Isolation and Quarantine

To slow the spread of the virus and ensure hospital beds are preserved for the most acutely ill, King County moved quickly to identify sites and facilities across the county that could offer temporary lodging for people who cannot safely self-isolate or quarantine in their own home, or do not have a home. Sites will provide health and basic behavioral health care, food and other basic needs. Public Health will approve referral to isolation and quarantine, and approve discharge.

- **Quarantine** is for people who are not currently showing symptoms, but are at increased risk for having been exposed to an infectious disease.
- **Isolation** is used for people who are currently ill and able to spread the disease and who need to stay away from others in order to avoid infecting them.

King County has identified the following sites for isolation and quarantine (others may be added):

- Kent Central Avenue Motel: 1233 Central Avenue North, Kent (79) Open.
- Aurora: 1132 N. 128<sup>th</sup> Street, Seattle (23)
- White Center: 206 SW 112th St., Seattle (31)
- Issaquah Hotel: 1801 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Issaquah (99)
- Harborview Hall: 326 Ninth Avenue, Seattle (45) Operated by Harborview Medical Center

## COVID Assessment Centers/Recovery Centers (AC/RC)

King County is identifying sites and facilities across the region to offer Assessment Centers/Recovery Centers. AC/RC refers to a congregate care facility that will provide Public Health-supervised care to symptomatic or COVID positive adults who are not able to follow public health guidance for isolation, quarantine or recovery in their own home, or do not have a home. Examples include symptomatic or COVID-positive people who are unable to isolate from a medically fragile or high-risk individual in the home, or people who are homeless. AC/RC's can provide flex space for hospitals to discharge non-emergency COVID cases, freeing hospital beds for more acute patients.

In addition to providing testing for high-risk populations, each facility will provide separate isolation spaces for people awaiting test results and for those who test positive. These facilities will provide food, shelter and basic care. Basic care includes monitoring of some chronic conditions as well as COVID-19 clinical status to determine if further medical evaluation is warranted, transfer to higher levels of care when indicated, access to chronic medications, and basic behavioral health services.

King County has identified the following sites for AC/RC assistance (others may be added):

- Shoreline: 19030 – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE, Shoreline (140-150)
- Eastgate: 13620 Eastgate Way, Bellevue (140-150)
- Interbay: 601 Elliott Avenue West, Seattle (72)
- SoDo: 1039 Sixth Ave. S., Seattle (240 spaces)

## Harborview Hall Repurposed for Harborview Medical Center

King County joined with Harborview Medical Center (HMC) to repurpose Harborview Hall, located at 326 Ninth Avenue, from a 24/7 shelter to an isolation and recovery center for people who do not have a home to recover and who may have other health needs. This may include a person awaiting the result of their COVID-19 test result or a COVID-19 patient with symptoms that don't require hospitalization. Onsite clinical support will be provided by HMC, located across the street. King County moved the Salvation Army enhanced shelter to a temporary location at 1215 E. Fir Street.