



March 9, 2020

Action Steps: Supporting King County residents experiencing homelessness

Three agencies are closely coordinating efforts: 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; and the City of Seattle's Human Services Department (HSD). The overall strategy includes these focus areas.

- Supporting existing homeless services providers to maintain capacity and care for people experiencing homelessness
- Hygiene and sanitation to prevent or slow the spread of the virus, including provider training and centralized supply purchasing and distribution
- Response plan for assistance for people who become sick with COVID-19 who cannot care for themselves in home settings
- Siting and staffing facilities for quarantine, isolation and congregate recovery—for all who cannot care for themselves in home settings, including people experiencing homelessness.

Actions taken to date:

Educating and Preparing the Homeless Shelter and Services Provider Network

More than 200 shelter and homeless services providers, housing developers and owners, health care providers, city planners, coalitions, faith community members and more are participating in conference calls at least once weekly hosted by King County, Seattle and Public Health. 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 any questions.

Homeless Shelter and Services Webinars/Web-based Sanitation and Hygiene Guide Training

Web-based training offered by PHSKC launched on 3/6/20 focused on sanitation and hygiene guides. Training and Q&A opportunities are open to all staff of homeless service agencies on several upcoming dates. Training will be updated as needed to keep current with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

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. We are currently developing guidance specific to outreach staff working with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Assessment of Program Capacity

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

Supporting Shelter Operators to Meet CDC Guidelines/Shelter Deintensification Sites

Public Health-Seattle & King County, Seattle HSD and King County DCHS are providing training and direct assistance to all shelter and services providers on guidelines provided by the CDC for operations of homeless shelters and day centers. This includes training, assisting with supply needs (see below), and creating additional space for shelter “deintensification.” City of Seattle is opening Seattle Center Exhibition Hall as the first site, where one of the largest local shelter operators, DESC, can move 100 current shelter stayers and reduce concentrations in their larger shelters. Other efforts include King County funding hotel vouchers for people in the shelters in the highest risk categories for age and underlying health issues to move them into safer settings before they get ill with COVID-19. Additional locations for shelter deintensification are being identified.

Online Supply Order Form Created; Supply “Store” Opens

King County, City of Seattle and United Way of King County pooled their resources of bleach, wipes, gloves and other sanitation supplies in one warehouse. United Way volunteers joined city and county staff in opening boxes and shelving supplies. Homeless shelter and services providers received an order form and as requests for supplies come in, they will be filled by this warehouse.

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 in partnership with PHSKC to offer lodging for people who need a place to go for isolation and quarantine who cannot do so in their own home, or do not have a home.

- **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 is placing modular units at two sites, one in North Seattle and one in White Center, and has purchased a motel in Kent for isolation and quarantine. A fourth site has been identified in Interbay. King County is continuing to explore additional locations. Capacity for the first four sites is about 213 people. Locations:

- Central Motel: 1233 Central Avenue North, Kent. An 85-room motel, with separate HVAC in each unit.
- Aurora: 1132 N. 128th Street, Seattle. Capacity for 6 modular units, with 4 separate rooms with a bathroom in each unit.
- White Center/Top Hat: 206 SW 112th St., Seattle. Capacity for 8 modular units, with 4 separate rooms with a bathroom in each unit.
- Elliott: 531 Elliott Avenue West, Seattle. Capacity for up to 72 people.

Individuals can only be placed into these sites after Public Health has determined that they need isolation or quarantine. Every person prioritized for placement will receive an assignment to a specific location and receive transportation to the site, where they will receive individual medical and behavioral health monitoring and all meals and basic needs will be met for the duration of their stay. Some sites may have enhanced medical capacity, and individuals with high needs will be prioritized to those sites.