



# Office Hours: COVID-19 Planning and Response

May 15, 2020



# Housekeeping

- A recording of today's session, along with the slide deck and a copy of the Chat and Q&A content will be posted to the HUD Exchange within 2-3 business days
- Event information for upcoming Office Hours, along with copies of all materials can be found here:

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/diseases/#covid-19-webinars-and-office-hours>

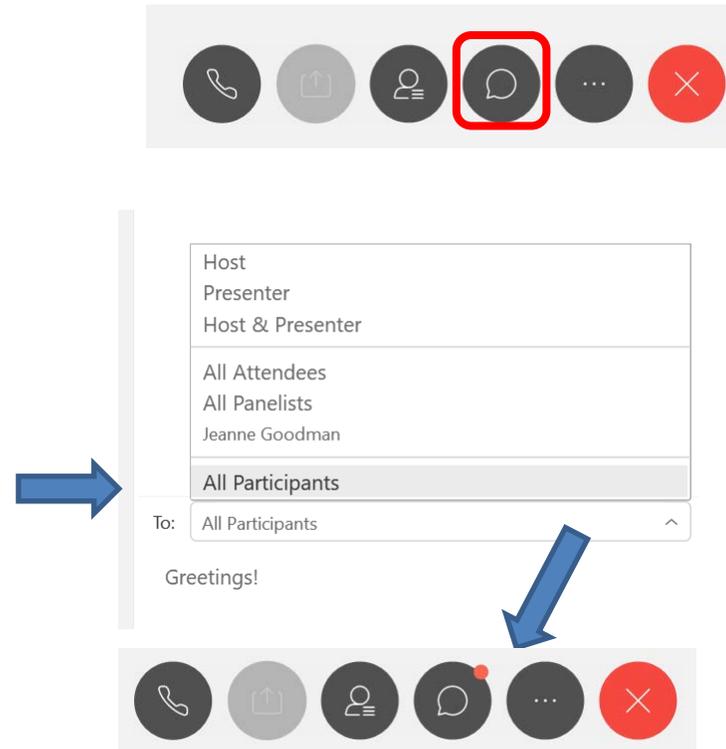
- To join the webinar via the phone, please call in using:  
1-855-797-9485      Access code: 610 976 677

# Chat Feature

Select the Chat icon to make a comment or ask a question.

Be certain the To field is set to **All Participants**

An orange dot on the Chat icon indicates that you have unread messages.



# Speakers

## Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Norm Suchar, Director, Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS)
- Lisa Coffman, Senior Program Specialist, SNAPS
- April Mitchell, Special Needs Assistance Programs Specialist, SNAPS

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Emily Mosites, PhD MPH- COVID-19 At-Risk Population Task Force, Senior Advisor on Health and Homelessness
- Erin Thomas, PhD, Health Scientist, CDC COVID-19, Community Interventions and At-Risk Task Force, Minority Health/Rural Health Team



# Speakers

## National Healthcare for the Homeless Council

- Barbara DiPietro, PhD, Senior Director of Policy

## Department of Veterans Affairs

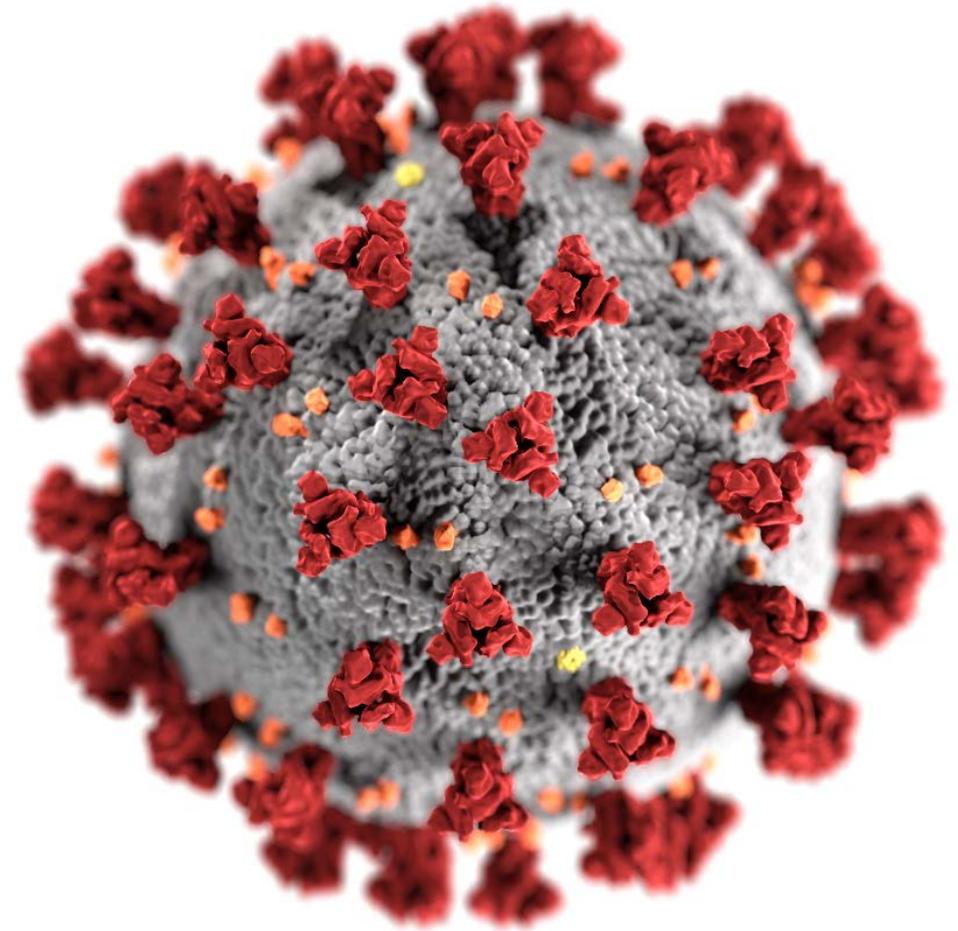
- Eileen Devine, Director of VACO HPO Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program
- Keith Harris, Director of Clinical Operations, VA Central Office Homeless Program Office

# Agenda

- Updates and Highlights of Racial Equity Initiatives
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Dept of Housing and Urban Development
  - Healthcare for the Homeless Council
- Dept of Veterans Affairs – Updates

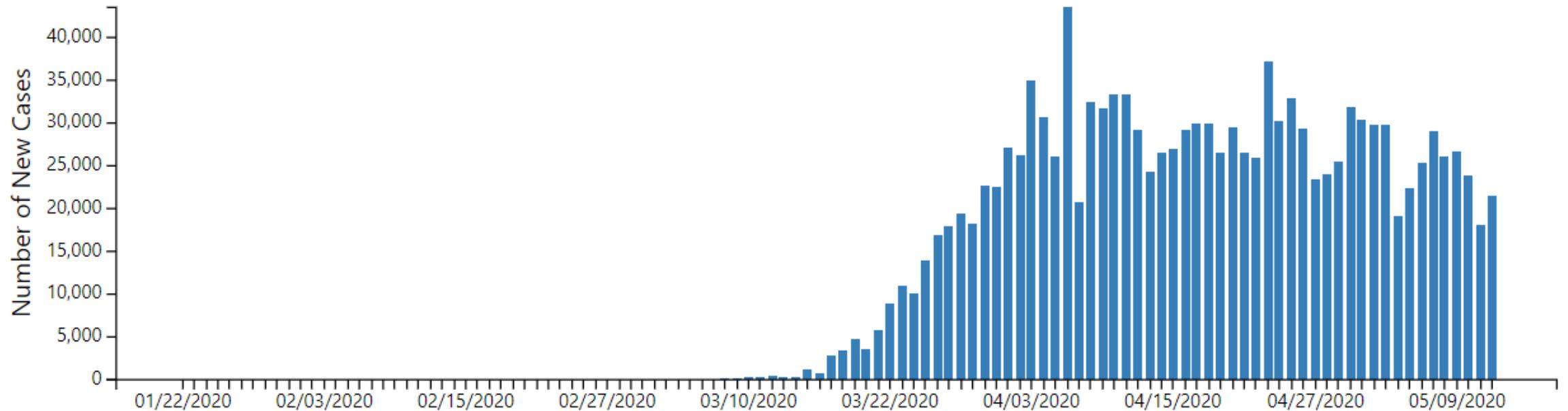
**Emily Mosites, PhD MPH**  
**COVID-19 Response**  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

## **COVID-19 and Homelessness**



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

# Over 1.4 million cases reported in the United States\*



\*as of May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020



# CDC guidance related to homelessness

On CDC COVID-19 site under “Schools, workplaces, and community locations”

## Shelters and other homeless service providers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html>

## Providers serving people experiencing unsheltered homelessness

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>



# Other CDC materials on homelessness

## Resources landing page:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/index.html>

- FAQs
- Communications materials for people experiencing homelessness
- Symptom screening tool
- Youth-focused information



# Unsheltered homelessness interim guidance update

- Revisions to document organization for clarity
- Description of “whole community” approach
- Clarification of outreach staff guidance
- Clarification of encampment guidance

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>



# Considerations for encampments

- If individual housing options are not available, allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where they are.
  - Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>



# Considerations for encampment spacing

- Encourage those staying in encampments to set up their tents/sleeping quarters with at least 12 feet x 12 feet of space per individual.
  - If an encampment is not able to provide sufficient space for each person, allow people to remain where they are, but help decompress the encampment by linking those at higher risk for severe illness to individual rooms or safe shelter.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>



# Considerations for encampment hygiene and sanitation

- Work together with community coalition members to improve sanitation in encampments.
- Ensure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day.
- If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, assist with providing access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people. These facilities should be equipped with hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/unsheltered-homelessness.html>



# Youth-focused information

Page is available in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese



## Coronavirus Disease 2019

### Youth Experiencing Homelessness

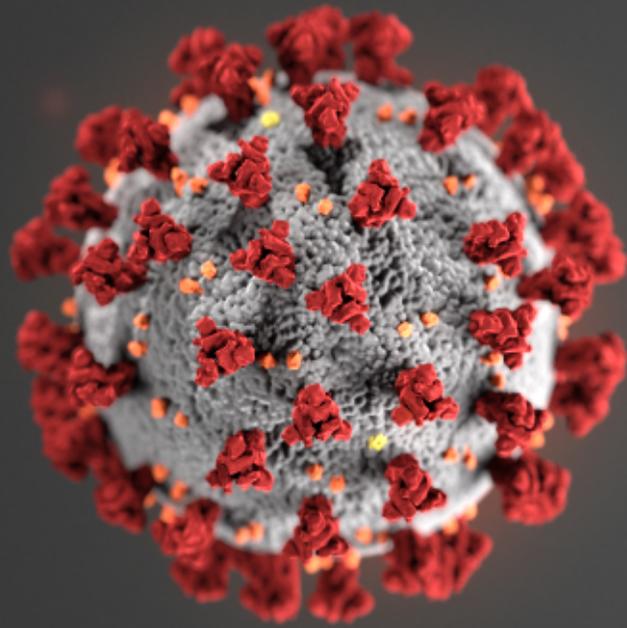
#### How to Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19

COVID-19 is the short name for “coronavirus disease 2019.” It is caused by a new virus that is mainly spread from person to person. Doctors and scientists are still learning about it. Recently, this virus has made many people sick. Here’s what you need to know to help protect yourself and people you care about from COVID-19.

- Stay in touch with your case workers, group home staff, or shelter staff. They can help you to know what’s happening with COVID-19 in your community.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/homeless-youth.html>





For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



# Maintain Infection Control Protocols

- Many communities are taking steps to reopen
- Shelter providers should keep infection control protocols in place
- Work closely with local Public Health Department before adjusting any health and safety protocols
- Coordinate thoughtfully about continued non-congregate shelter needs; do not prematurely close NCS sites without appropriate re-housing plans in place

# Racial Equity

**“Equity is not the absence of bad policies, but the presence of good ones.”**

*Mark Dones and Jeffrey Olivet – NAEH Blog April 11, 2018*



# Racial Equity

## Equality vs Equity

- Equality is about **sameness**; it focuses on making sure everyone gets the same thing.
- Equity is about fairness; it ensures that each person gets what the person/population needs. It addresses the **differences**.

## Racial Equity is realized when:

- Race can no longer be used to predict outcomes
- Outcomes for **all** groups are improved

# Racial Equity

## What should we consider in our planning?

- Data
- Leadership
- Training/Hiring
- Resources
- Assessment
- Policies
- Culture/Community

# Using a Racial Equity Lens in Your Re-Housing Strategies

- Look at your current data (disaggregated by race, by gender, and the intersection of race and gender). Determine where there are the greatest racial inequities. Allocate funds to address the inequities at both programmatic and systems level.
- When looking at data make sure people of color are also meaningfully involved in analyzing and interpreting the data.
- Collect data on placements, type of placement, type and length of assistance, geography of placement, and returns to homelessness and monitor it by race, gender and the intersection of race and gender. Use these elements to affect change in policies and procedures in the organization.

# Using a Racial Equity Lens in Your Re-Housing Strategies

- Include people with lived experience, Black people, people of color, young people and LGBTQ identified people on resource allocation and leadership/decision-making groups.
- Contract with organizations that are experts in reaching and engaging with underserved and marginalized populations (e.g. YWCAs, Urban Leagues, CDCs, local NAACP chapters, communities of faith, culturally specific organizations)

# Using a Racial Equity Lens in Your Re-Housing Strategies

- Conduct racial equity training for ALL staff in the organization that is serving the homeless population. Conversely, provide orientations, training and professional development for newly recruited staff.
- Reevaluate and adjust prioritization and/or assessment tools. Involve people of color in executing the needs assessment, data analysis and strategy building.

# Using a Racial Equity Lens in Your Re-Housing Strategies

- Examine policies and practices you employ to understand if there is a disparate impact on persons of color. For each policy, take the time to determine the probable impact of that policy on Black people, Indigenous people and people of color.
- Examine the culture and community in your organization to ensure your team is operating free from bias. Incorporate viewpoints from people of color and persons with lived experience.

# Contacts

For additional information or assistance, contact:  
Department of Housing and Urban Development:  
[HUD Exchange Ask-A-Question \(AAQ\) Portal](#)



NATIONAL  
HEALTH CARE  
*for the*  
HOMELESS  
COUNCIL

# COVID-19 AND THE HCH COMMUNITY

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## HUD OFFICE HOURS

Barbara DiPietro, Ph.D.

Senior Director of Policy

May 15, 2020

NATIONAL  
HEALTH CARE  
*for the*  
HOMELESS  
COUNCIL

# RE-ASSESS YOUR PROCESS

*“CE managers, access and assessment providers, current or former participants with lived expertise, working groups or other system-level committees, CoC and HMIS Lead agencies, and ESG recipients should be involved to implement and evaluate your prioritization strategy. This may require temporary changes to your governance or leadership structure and decision-making process.”*

## Considerations:

- Maximize partnerships with health care providers
- Leverage trusted client relationships with case managers, peer specialists, etc.
- Re-assess your assessment tool & train/support those administering it

# CONSIDER NEW ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*“For example, if resources allow large numbers of people in unsheltered locations, congregate shelters, or temporary non-congregate shelters to be moved into permanent housing, then sophisticated assessment and prioritization could be unnecessary.”*

## Considerations:

- Look at groups already placed in protective housing
- Realize efficiencies by taking a cohort approach (consider demographics of that cohort)
- Maximize services already being provided to vulnerable populations

# ANALYZE & RESPOND TO YOUR DATA

*“Although CoCs cannot set prioritization based solely on protected classes, CoCs can and should prioritize the vulnerabilities created by the compounding effect of other systems’ inequities that contribute to people of color experiencing homelessness and impacts of COVID-19 at higher rates.”*

## Considerations:

- Acknowledge disparities in access to health care—and subsequent poor health—as a contributing factor to vulnerability
- Actively work to **reduce** disparities by making policy/programmatic changes
- Make room for hard conversations about implicit bias

# TAKE SYSTEMS-WIDE APPROACH

*“Jails, prisons, hospitals, and other institutions have prioritized diverting or releasing individuals to reduce populations and protect public health. CoCs should collaborate closely with mainstream systems discharging individuals to ensure at-risk and vulnerable populations have identified housing resources or access to Coordinated Entry.”*

## Considerations:

- People at risk of homelessness are also disproportionately POC
- Leverage resources in health care, criminal justice & other sectors
- Need for community-wide structural change

# Key Websites

**HUD:** <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/diseases/infectious-disease-prevention-response/>

**CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/index.html>

**NHCHC:** <https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/>

**USICH:** <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/>

**VA:** <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp>

**HRSA:** <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/emergency-response/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions.html>

# Federal Partner Contacts

For additional information or assistance, contact:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19); 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636); TTY: 1-888-232-6348
- Department of Housing and Urban Development:  
[HUD Exchange Ask-A-Question \(AAQ\) Portal](#)
- Department of Veterans Affairs High Consequence Infection (HCI) Preparedness Program:  
[vhahcigeneral@va.gov](mailto:vhahcigeneral@va.gov)



# Q & A

QUESTION FOR PARTICIPANTS:  
WHAT TOPICS SHOULD WE COVER FOR FUTURE  
OFFICE HOURS?

