Office Hours:
COVID-19 Planning and Response

May 29, 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.
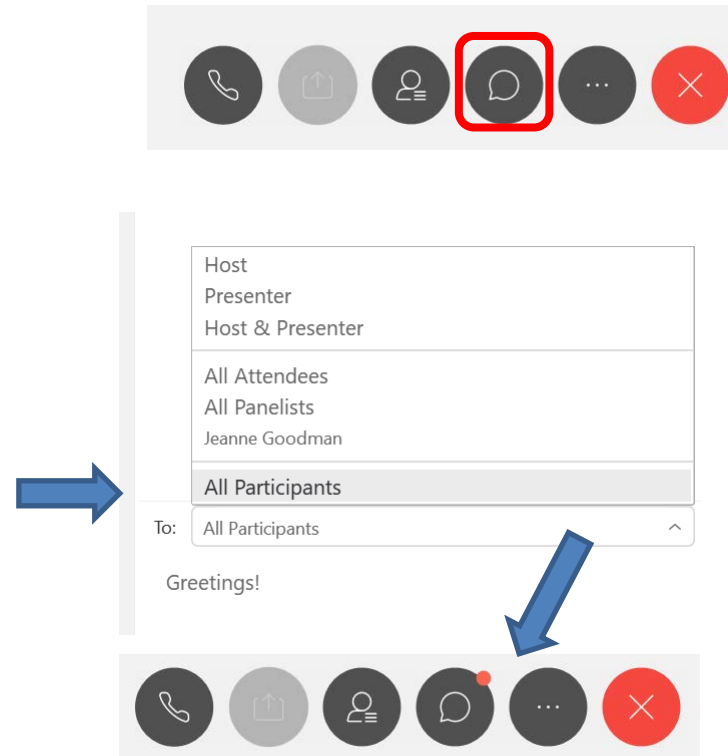
Speakers

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAPS)

- Norm Suchar
- Abby Miller
- Juanita Perry

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Emily Mosites, PhD MPH- COVID-19 At-Risk Population Task Force, Senior Advisor on Health and Homelessness
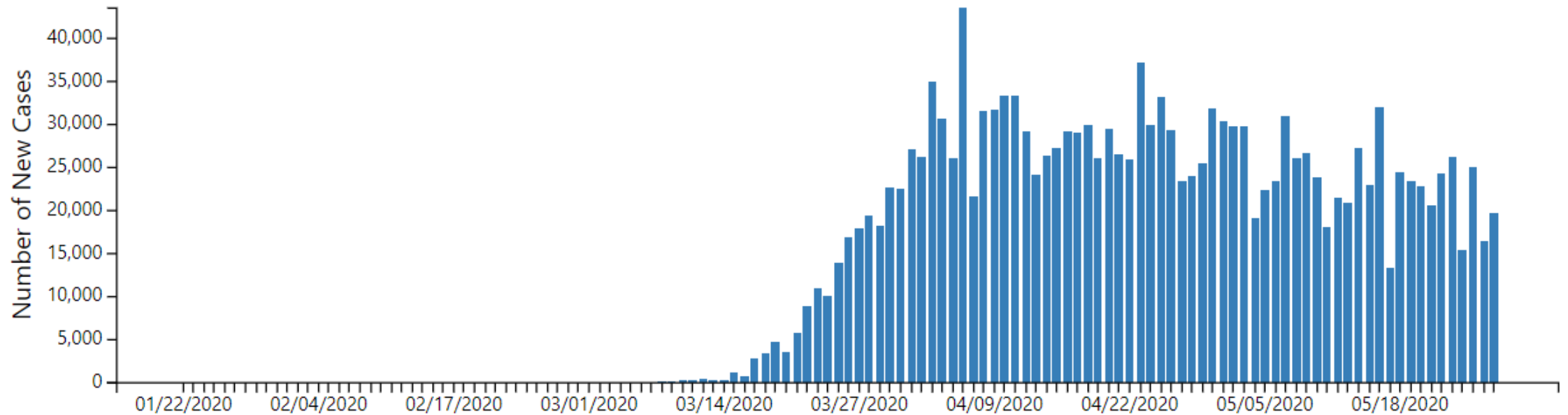
Department of Veterans Affairs

- Dr. Roger Casey, Director of Education and Dissemination, National Center on Homelessness among Veterans

Emily Mosites, PhD MPH

COVID-19 Response

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19 and Homelessness

For more information: **www.cdc.gov/COVID19**
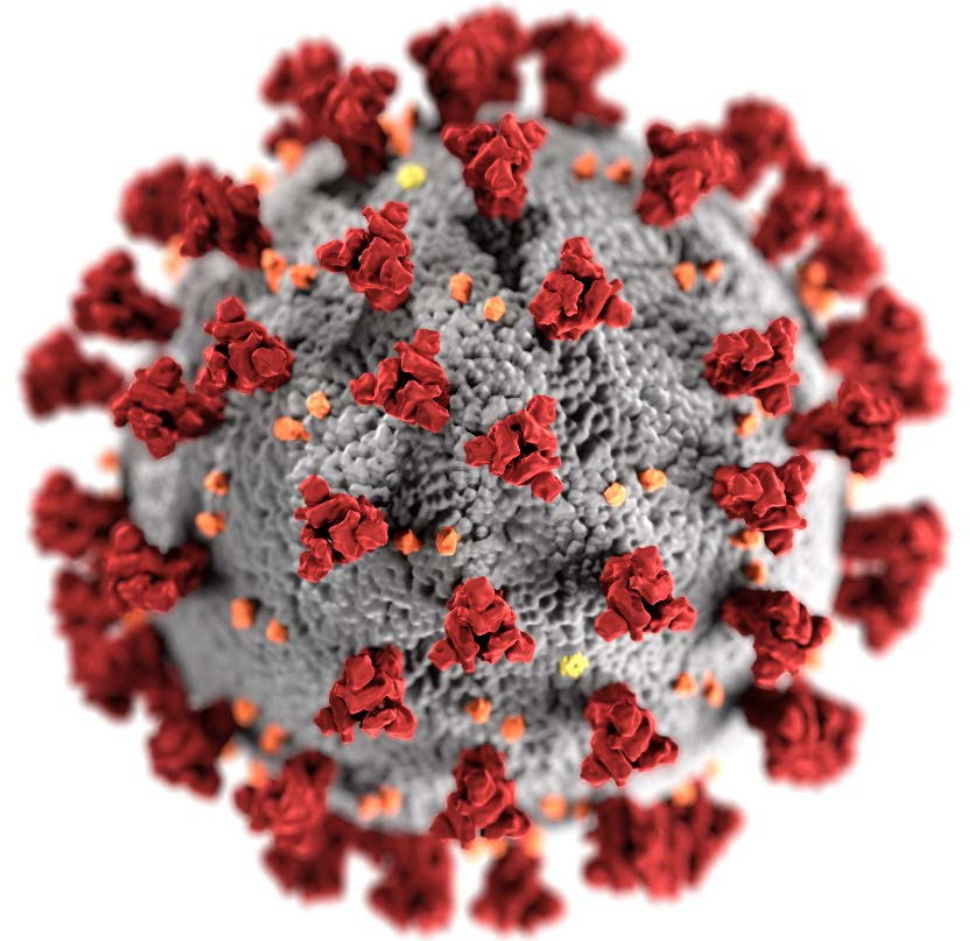
Almost 1.7 million cases reported in the United States*

*as of 5/28/20

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

Reopening: checklist of considerations

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/homeless-service-providers.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
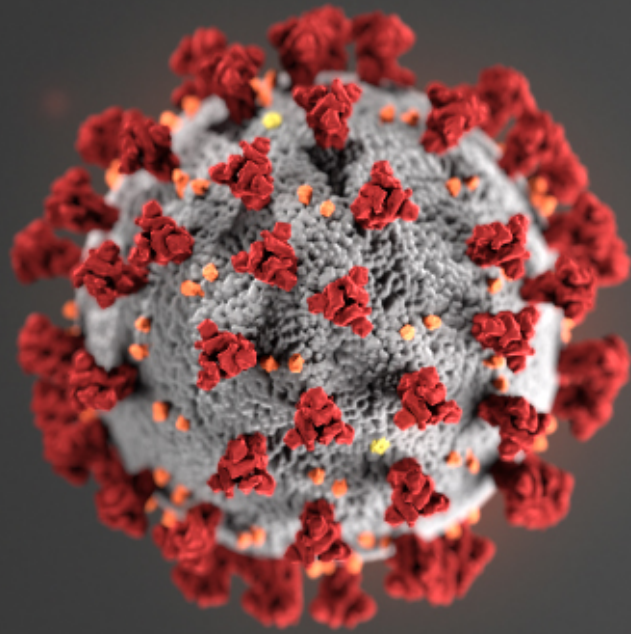
For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348   www.cdc.gov

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.

VA NATIONAL CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS

Research-driven solutions to prevent and end homelessness

Self-Care Podcast Series

May 2020

Overarching title: Self-Care for VA Homeless Program Staff

Description for series: Dr. Roger Casey, Director, Education & Dissemination, National Center on Homelessness among Veterans, talks with experts from across the VHA on balancing personal and professional life through wellness and self-care while working with Veterans experiencing homelessness

Self-care Podcast Series

- ❖ *Caring for yourself: Why it's important?* A discussion on the importance of caring for yourself during times of uncertainty and offers specific tools for individual use.
- ❖ *Self-care: Recognition of emotions:* The discussion focuses on impactful tools with recognition of reactions and associated emotions.
- ❖ *Mindfulness practices: A discussion:* This includes the efficacy of Tai Chi, Qi Gong, and mindfulness practices on health and wellness.
- ❖ *Are you making yourself a priority?* Discusses giving yourself the soothing gift of self-care, through the use of personal acknowledgement and informed tips associated with Acceptance Commitment Therapy.
- ❖ *Informed sleep tips to promote self-care:* The discussion includes specific tools as well as informed tips associated with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia.
- ❖ *Helping staff help themselves:* A discussion of virtual team-building activities to assist staff with feeling connected during uncertain times.
- ❖ *Finding camaraderie when working virtual:* Discussion includes tools to assist with finding a relaxing, calm state when faced with isolation, grief, and uncertainty.

Link to all Podcasts:

Spreaker:

https://www.spreaker.com/show/self-care-for-va-homeless-program-staff

Spotify:

https://open.spotify.com/show/50ScpnOR7mppwPZWI5MtXl?si=r5uZPyhbQAewYPwM_10IIA

Apple Podcasts:

https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/self-care-for-va-homeless-program-staff/id1511789829?uo=4

Google Podcasts:

https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuc3ByZWFrZXIuY29tL3Nob3cvNDM3NTc2MC9lcGlzb2Rlcy9mZWVk

Thank you.

For additional questions, please contact:
Roger Casey, PhD, LCSW
Director, Education &Dissemination,
National Center on Homelessness among Veterans
roger.casey@va.gov

HUD UPDATES

Planning for Community Re-opening

- As communities ease restrictions for businesses and recreation, continue to be aware of the local COVID-19 situation

- Maintain congregate shelter decompressing strategies and CDC social distancing requirements

- Be vigilant about hygiene measures like handwashing, face masks and cough etiquette

- Continue coordination with local health departments on outbreaks, sanitation measures and the best ways to protect people in encampments

Closing temporary shelters must be directly tied to Re-housing efforts

- Communities have successfully used a variety of temporary sheltering options including hotels and motels to respond to COVID-19 for positive, symptomatic and high risk people

- Planning to shut down temporary sites should be coordinated well in advance of the closure date with the local department of health and emergency management

- People who are homeless should not exit temporary shelters to the streets or encampments

Closing temporary shelters must be directly tied to Re-housing efforts

- Communities should act with urgency to re-house people in temporary locations and remove unnecessary process barriers
- Re-housing activity can be focused on temporary sheltering locations since the people served are already prioritized based on COVID-19 vulnerability
- ESG-CV resources should be used to directly support the community's COVID-19 homelessness re-housing strategies out of temporary shelters
- Other resources that can support homeless re-housing strategies include CDBG-CV
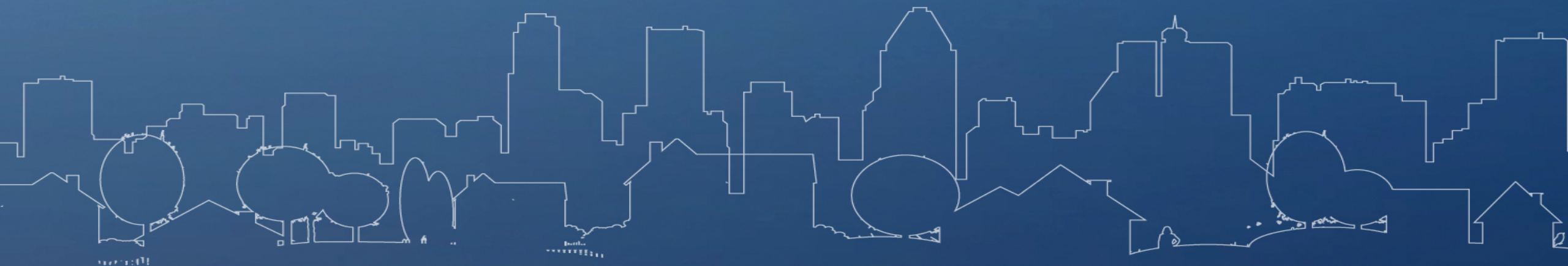
Set Goals for your System

- For people in sleeping in crowded areas or unsheltered, housing reduces their risk of contracting and transmitting COVID
- Take stock of what resources you have available
- Identify goals that are achievable with given resources. For example:
  - House 1/3 of people in congregate shelters to allow for shelter decompression
  - House anyone living in encampments of more than 10 people
  - House all people at high risk of poor outcomes from COVID, including people over 65 or with respiratory problems
  - House all people exiting non-congregate shelter

Adjust CE practices to meet goals

Prioritize people who are high-risk per CDC guidance

- Assess everyone for CDC high-risk factors. If you have the resources, anyone meeting the definition can be prioritized for immediate rehousing
- Assess for resources that are currently available
  - If the only intervention currently available for people is rapid rehousing, only assess whether somebody should be referred to rapid rehousing. Additional assessment can be done later as more resources become available
- Engage in housing problem-solving at all access points
  - Staff time can be billed under case management under any CoC or ESG Program funded project, including SSO-CE

Incorporate ESG-CV Funded Prevention in CE

- All ESG funded projects, including prevention, are required to participate in CE
- You can have separate access points and assessment approach for prevention
- Design CE prevention strategy to achieve prevention goals
  - E.g. if you want to reduce new episodes of homelessness and reduce COVID spread in homeless population, target resources to places where people at high risk of homelessness are being discharged from hospitals and other healthcare sites, prisons and jails, and other congregate settings
- Communities doing effective housing problem-solving have had a single organization administer both RRH and HP to be responsive to whatever situation a household is in

Rapidly Execute Changes in CE

Make temporary updates to CE Policies and Procedures. For example, add addendum to policies and procedures that says, "for next six months, we will do x, y and z"

- Use a similar process for CoC and ESG written standards

- Example: To support housing problem solving, adopt a policy that any household with an immediate alternative housing option identified may get up to 3 months of rental assistance (HP or RRH, whichever applies) without further assessment or prioritization.

Make CE work for the people it serves

Hire staff who people can trust:

- People who have experienced homelessness
- People who have experienced deep poverty
- People who have experience and skill working with ethnic and racial minority communities, e.g. Black and indigenous persons

- Invest resources, including ESG-CV, in areas where you see disparities. If people in a demographic category are disproportionately not getting homelessness assistance, invest in types of assistance they are scoring for

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; 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: vhahcigenerall@va.gov

Q & A