

Infection Control and Winter Planning – Module 2 Script

Hello and welcome to the second of five modules to assist you in your winter planning and infection control measures. The goal of module #2 is to explore guidance on developing a communications strategy to educate staff and residents about infectious disease.

Please share these modules with your staff and teams to increase awareness and elevate resources as you prepare for winter planning.

The PowerPoint presentations and videos of all the modules in this series are available on the HUD landing page. Should you need more in-depth technical assistance related to infection control and prevention in congregate facilities like emergency shelters and day centers, or in your non-congregate shelters, please visit the HUD Exchange at www.HUDExchange.info. In the “Program Support” dropdown at the top of the homepage, select “Request In-Depth Assistance” and follow the instructions on the next page.

Module #2 will help shelters and CoC lead agencies develop effective communication strategies to keep staff and residents safe during winter months. This includes onboarding information and messaging for residents as well as how to access awareness materials and collaborate with public health organizations.

Let’s start with communication protocols.

As you prepare for winter, review your communications protocols for staff and residents. Don’t reinvent the wheel! Begin by reviewing the communications material your community developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, as your existing resources may help you prepare for general infectious disease outreach and information sharing this winter. It is important to be fact-based when educating staff and residents about the symptoms, spread, and isolation related to infectious diseases. Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication for more details.

Make sure your communication strategies and information are current:

- Delegate a point person to speak with residents and staff about new information related to testing, vaccines, and safety at your facility, and to engage information ambassadors to promote testing and vaccination.
- Establish protocols for how information is communicated in case of a new infection or larger outbreak.
- Communicate any changes to services and space availability to other organizations and agencies. Information sharing and timely communication with key stakeholders and other agencies such as other housing programs, public health service providers, and victim service providers will be critical as you manage outbreaks and employ mitigation strategies.

When new residents arrive, provide current information about infectious diseases and shelter protocols.

- Offer infectious disease mitigation handouts that include signs and symptoms that they

can share with their children and other family members who may be with them in the shelter. Review your facility's language access plan to ensure the materials you provide are accessible for all residents.

- Inform residents about access to testing and where to go to obtain vaccines for themselves and their families.
- If there is a current outbreak in the facility, explain the situation clearly and honestly and provide information about temporary isolation policies, signs and symptoms, and how shelter staff will support residents during their time in the shelter. Next, explain what the facility requires to keep everyone safe in the event of an outbreak.

The CDC's COVID-19 and mpox landing pages have flyers and outreach materials that you can access and share online and in your facility. The CDC also has information on other infectious diseases such as norovirus, RSV, and the flu. **Flyers, sample communications plans, and posts on Twitter, Instagram, or other social media sites** are a great way to share information with your stakeholders and the larger community.

You can **post** these materials in bathrooms, common areas, and other spaces. Posting flyers in **languages spoken by shelter residents** will ensure accessibility to this information to reduce the spread of infectious disease. You can also distribute these materials during **resident and staff meetings**.

Your local health department will also have resources about testing and vaccine clinics. Reaching out to them for their materials is another way to access free resources for residents.

As we mentioned earlier, communication with partners and public health officials is a critical part of winter planning. Proactively engage with other organizations, services, and public health officials to:

- Set up vaccine and testing appointments at your facility or offsite; utilize information ambassadors to share resources about testing and vaccines.
- Partner with organizations or businesses that can assist with transportation for testing and vaccine appointments.
- Check with local providers about mobile health advocacy units and their availability.
- Bring local health officials onsite during programs or resident meetings to discuss vaccines and testing to increase vaccine confidence.
- Ask other agencies and organizations to share your social media posts and post flyers in their facilities as well.

Thank you for joining us today. Before you go, save the resources we have provided that offer additional information about communication strategies and infectious disease mitigation. Be sure to check out the next episode in this series, which will focus on personal protective equipment, cleaning, and disinfecting shelter facilities.