**Three County CoC –MA 507**

**Guidance for Housing Providers**

**Responding to COVID-19**

**HUD’s Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers**

Source: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Interim-Guidance-for-Homeless-Service-Providers-to-Plan-and-Respond-to-COVID-19.pdf>

\*The information below is a summary of HUD’s Interim Guidance, please visit the link above for the full guidance.

**Planning for COVID-19 Outbreak**

* Establish ongoing communication with your local public health department to facilitate access to relevant information before and during an outbreak.
* Connect to community-wide planning.
* Develop or update your [emergency operations/contingency plan,](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf).
* Address key prevention strategies in your emergency operations plan.
  + Promote the practices of [everyday preventative actions.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fprevention-treatment.html)
  + Provide prevention supplies. Including: soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and disposable facemasks.
  + Plan for staff and volunteer absences.
  + If possible, identify space that can be used to accommodate clients with mild respiratory symptoms and separate from others.
  + Identify clients who could be at [high risk for complications](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html) from COVID-19.
* Communicate about COVID-19 and everyday preventative actions
  + Create a communication plan for distributing timely and accurate information.
  + Identify and address potential [language, cultural, and disability barriers](https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/Audience/index.html) associated with communicating COVID-19 information to workers, volunteers, and those you serve.
  + Help counter [stigma and discrimination](https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/Audience/index.html) in your community.
  + People experiencing homelessness may be at increased risk of adverse [mental health outcomes](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html) particularly during outbreaks of infectious diseases.
* Get input and support for your emergency operations and communication plans.

**Responding to COVID-19 Outbreak**

*If cases or clusters of COVID-19 are reported in your community, put your emergency plan into action, to protect your clients, staff, and guests.*

* Put your emergency operations and communication plans into action.
  + Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.
  + Implement everyday preventative actions and provide [instructions to your workers](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf).
  + Communicate with your local health department.
  + Download [COVID-19 posters and CDC Fact Sheets](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html) to keep your clients and guests informed about public health recommendations to prevent disease spread and about changes to services that might be related to the outbreak.
  + Minimize number of staff who have face-to-face interactions with clients with symptoms.
  + Staff and volunteers at high risk of severe COVID-19 should not be designated as caregivers for sick clients who are staying in the shelter or housing projects.
  + If staff are handling client belongings, they should use [disposable gloves properly.](https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/campaign/provider-infographic-6.html)
  + Limit visitors to the facility.
* Ensure that clients receive [assistance in preventing disease spread](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html) and accessing care, as needed
  + In general, in sleeping areas (for those who are not experiencing symptoms), ensure that beds/mats are at least 3 feet apart, and request that all clients sleep head-to-toe.
  + Provide access to fluids, tissues, and plastic bags for the proper disposal of used tissues.
  + Ensure bathrooms/sinks are consistently stocked with soap and drying materials for handwashing.
  + At check-in, provide any client with respiratory symptoms (cough, fever) with a surgical mask.
  + Monitor clients who could be at high risk for complications
  + Confine clients with mild respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection to individual rooms, if possible, have them avoid common areas. Decisions about whether clients with mild illness due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should remain in shelter or be directed to alternative housing sites should be made in coordination with local health authorities.
  + If you identify a client with severe symptoms, notify your public health department and arrange for the client to receive immediate medical care. Severe symptoms include:
    - Extremely difficult breathing (not being able to speak without gasping for air);
    - Bluish lips or face
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - Severe persistent dizziness or lightheadedness
    - New confusion, or inability to arouse
    - New seizures or seizures that won’t stop
  + Ensure that all common areas within the facility follow good practices for [environmental cleaning.](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

**COVID-19 Readiness Resources**

* Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19> for the latest information and resources
* COVID 2019 Situation Summary
* Prevention and Treatment <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fprevention-treatment.html>
* What to Do If You Are Sick <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>
* Pregnant Women and COVID FAQs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>
* Stigma Related to COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html>
* Mental Health and coping during COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/coping.html>
* Handwashing: A Family Activity <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html>
* Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
* Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html>

**What Supportive Housing Providers Need to Know**

Source: <https://d155kunxf1aozz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-Disease-2019-COVID-19-1.pdf>

**For Your Residents**

* Educate Your Residents
  + Educating residents can be group, posting materials, or speaking to residents individually.
  + Residents who are at higher risk should be engaged individually and educated on what will keep them safe and what they should do if they believe they have been exposed.
  + Those most likely to become seriously ill from the virus includes people who are older, and who are managing chronic health conditions such as COPD, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or lung disease.
* Supplies
  + Your residents may also need supplies that they may or may not have access to.
* Health Insurance
  + All residents need to be covered via health insurance, if possible.
  + Your agency should track information regarding their health care coverage, their primary care physician, diagnoses, medications, and other key health related information.
  + Your case management staff should consider which residents are able to manage their own health and which ones will need extra support.

**For Your Staff**

* Educate Your Staff
  + Educate your staff about the virus and how to protect anyone against the spread.
  + Staff who can work from home, should be given the opportunity.
  + Staff who are exhibiting symptoms should be encouraged to stay home.
  + Staff patters and back up staff should be set up to expect a higher rate of call outs.
* Stay Updated

**For Your Agency**

* Connect with your CoC or public health department
  + Your agency needs to be in contact with your CoC or public health department for regular updates and how to respond as the situation evolves.
* Communications
  + As you share information and work to spread the knowledge and resources, consider your peer networks, your projects’ community leaders, and other strategies to align your message with your audience.
* Visitor Policies
  + Your agency already likely has policies around visitors for your residents. The polices should be reviewed and modified in light of this outbreak.
* Quarantine Preparedness
  + If any of your residents test positive, they will need to be quarantined for 14 days.
  + Make sure necessary supplies are available and prepare your agency by having medications, food, and activities to keep your residents busy.
* HUD Toolkit

**MIT Medical FAQ: COVID-19**

Source: <https://medical.mit.edu/faqs/COVID-19>

**What are the symptoms and signs of COVID-19?**

Initial symptoms of COVID-19 usually include fever greater than 100.4F, cough, and shortness of breath. However, not all affected individuals will exhibit all symptoms.

**If I were exposed to COVID-19, how long would it take for me to become sick?**

The CDC has estimated the incubation period for COVID-1 9 to be from 2-14 days.

**Prevention practices:**

Please continue to take personal preventative steps to stay healthy. Stay home if you feel sick, wash your hands frequently, and avoid touching your face whenever possible. You should follow the same strategies you would ordinarily use to protect yourself and others during cold and flu seasons.

**If exposed to person with COVID-19**

If you have been exposed to a person with COVID-19, it could take up to 14 days to know if you will get sick. During that time, it will be important for you to self-monitor for symptoms and practice social distancing to avoid infecting other people if you do have the virus. Here's how to do it:

* **Self-monitoring:**
  + Take your temperature twice a day - morning and night - and write it down in a log. Wait 30 minutes after eating, drinking, or exercising. Wait at least 6 hours after taking any medication that could lower your temperature, such as Ibuprofen or aspirin.
  + Be alert for any other symptoms of COVID-19, including cough or difficulty breathing.
  + Call your healthcare provider if you have a cough, trouble breathing, or a fever (temperature of 100.4F or 38C). **DO NOT go to an emergency room, urgent care clinic, or healthcare provider's office without calling ahead.**
* **Social distancing:**
  + Stay home as much as possible. If you go out...
    - Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-share.
    - Avoid crowded places, and limit your activities in public.
* **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**
  + If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

**If You Share a Living Space**

* Keep your distance from others.
* Wash your hands frequently, and ask others to do the same.
* Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently. This includes doorknobs, light switches, and all horizontal surfaces. Use a diluted household bleach solution, an alcohol solution with at least 70% alcohol, or an EPA-registered household disinfectant. Leave the surface wet with disinfectant for as many minutes as the product instructions require.
* Use a separate bathroom if possible, or disinfect surfaces when using a shared bathroom.
* Don’t share items such as dishes, drinking glasses, silverware, towels, phones, and remotes.
* Do your own laundry and, if you don't have a dishwasher, wash and dry your own dishes.