

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & HOMELESSNESS
STATEWIDE UNIFIED RESPONSE GROUP
(BHHSURG)**

COVID-19 UPDATE

MONDAY | 3.23.20 | 11AM-12PM

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Behavioral Health and Homelessness Statewide Unified Response Group

- DOH/BHA, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH), DHS/HPO, and Counties
- Aimed at linking and syncing COVID-19 response related to
 - Response efforts
 - Response policies
 - Response services
 - Response resources
 - Response messaging and information.
- In a crisis, coordinated effort and coordinated communication is **KEY**

Call Topics and Focus

- Set operational tempo for Behavioral Health and Homelessness services coordination across the state
- Address administrative, contractual and other related issues as unilaterally as possible across the three state oversight entities (MedQUEST may be added) and county coordinators
- Continued and enhanced operations in a COVID-19 environment

Operational Tempo

- Weekly calls (Mondays: 11:00am – 12:00pm)
- Central website
 - Repository of information and resources
 - Link: <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/bhhsurg-covid19-guidance/>
 - Ability to submit questions and get answers daily
 - Direct email also available: DOH.BHA.BHHcovid19response@doh.hawaii.gov
 - Linked to **hawaiicovid19.com** and **homelessness.hawaii.gov**
 - Possibility for email updates (sign up to be notified via the website)
- Ongoing coordination of tasks, efforts, and resources

Administrative, Contractual, and Regulatory Issues

- Address administrative, contractual and other related issues as unilaterally as possible across the three state oversight entities (MedQUEST may be added) and county coordinators
 - Contracts and payment
 - Regulatory issues
 - Staffing ratios
 - Continuity of care

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Continuity of Care

- Behavioral health and homeless services should continue uninterrupted and we should expect an increase in demand due to the current pandemic.
- Federal Guidance:
 - CDC Interim guidance for homeless shelters released March 9, 2020
 - CDC Interim guidance for unsheltered populations released March 22, 2020
- State-level guidance:
 - DOH/DHS/Office of the Governor's Coordinator on Homeless will release joint guidance on March 23, 2020
 - DOH released interim guidance on 3/18 for homeless shelter providers
 - GCH released interim guidance on 3/9 to homeless shelter providers
 - DHS released interim guidance on 3/6 for HPO providers
- Providers/programs should send their current continuation of operations plan (COOP) for disasters, emergencies, and/or pandemics.
 - Send to: DOH.BHA.BHHcovid19response@doh.hawaii.gov
 - Label email subject “COOP for [Name of your organization]”

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Essential Services

- All behavioral health and homelessness services are ESSENTIAL.
- SAMSHA reports that the need for behavioral health services during and after a disaster is between 4 to 50 times greater than the need for medical services.
- If not in your COOP, please send how you have identified "essential" vs. "non-essential" services.

SOURCE: SAMHSA. Disaster Planning Handbook for Behavioral Health Treatment Programs. 2013.

Guidance Persons Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

- CDC released guidance on March 22, 2020 for unsheltered homeless populations
- Unless individual housing units are available, **refrain from clearing encampments during community spread of COVID-19.**
- Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers.
- This increases the spread for infectious disease. All populations should be encouraged to shelter in place in locations with adequate ventilation and maximum physical distancing.

Guidance Persons Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness

- Encourage people staying in encampments to set up their tents/sleeping quarters with at least 12 feet x 12 feet of space per individual.
- 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, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people.

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Remote vs. Face-to-Face Services

- Given current CDC recommendations on infection control and social distancing, telehealth is the best option for services.
- We are currently developing processes for what services can be done remotely and what needs to be done face-to-face.
- Examining factors including:
 - Safety
 - Clients with no or little access to compatible technology
- Looking into innovative strategies
 - King County green/red placards for encampments and unsheltered persons

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Infection Control

- You are (or should) already be practicing infection control every day.
- Please send any developed infection control policies such as for seasonal flu, pandemic flu

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – PPE Supply Chains

- Everyone should take current stock of PPE (facemasks, gloves, 60% or greater hand sanitizer, tissues, soap, etc.)
- An assessment will be disseminated to all to better understand current inventory and needs (results will not be shared broadly or used to reallocate)

SOURCE: CDC

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Alternative PPE

- Alternative PPE solutions:
 - **In the absence of hand sanitizer:**
 - Soap and water is sufficient
 - **Cleaning supplies:**
 - 1 to 10 diluted bleach solutions, alcohol-based sanitizer, and other EPA disinfectant products
 - **Absence of facemasks:**
 - Daily washed handkerchiefs, bandanas, and other clothing can be used as a last resort if properly covering both the mouth and nose.
 - **Physical barriers**
 - Plastic and other material can be used to create physical barriers between people
 - Sleeping arrangements of head-to-toe

SOURCE: CDC

Operations in a COVID-19 Environment – Quarantine vs. Isolation

- **Quarantine:** Persons exposed or potentially exposed
- **Isolation:** Persons exhibiting symptoms (does not have to be confirmed COVID-19 infection)
- Inpatient and housing programs need to have isolation and quarantine measures in place
 - Refer to joint guidance released by DOH, DHS, and Office of the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness on March 23rd, 2020
- Triage procedures are being developed for testing and admittance to hospitals or medical care

Next Steps

- **Submit Requested Information to:** DOH.BHA.BHHcovid19response@doh.hawaii.gov
 - Continuity of Operations Plans
 - Infection Control Plans
 - Identified essential vs. Non-essential functions
- **Check out our new website LIVE TODAY**
 - <https://health.hawaii.gov/camhd/bhhsurg-covid19-guidance/>
 - Still being updated and will be continuously updated
- **Next Meeting**
 - March 30th, 2020: 11:00am – 12:00pm