



Detroit Health Department (DHD) Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Homeless Shelters

March 20, 2020

This guidance is designed to provide you with simple ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The situation is rapidly evolving and The Detroit Health Department in partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and neighboring health departments in Michigan are taking steps to prepare.

Shelters play a key role in slowing the spread of COVID-19, and to protect some of Detroit's most vulnerable residents. The Detroit Health Department is recommending that shelters take the steps below now, so that they are prepared if community transmission of this virus were to occur. These steps can help slow the spread of the virus and protect the city of Detroit, while still maintaining the vital services that you provide.

Below are some tips for reducing the potential spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in your facility.

Encourage employees to stay at home when sick:

- Provide employees with COVID-19 information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) available at (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>).
- Consider mandatory sick leave for employees with fever or respiratory symptoms.
- Develop flexible policies for employees who need to stay home when they or their family members are sick, educate employees about Family and Medical Leave Act.
- Consider suspending policies requiring physicians' notes for extended sick leave.
- Be prepared to take steps to reduce employee interaction with each other and clients if the outbreak becomes widespread in Michigan.
- Be prepared to cancel large meetings or events.
- Limit or cancel non-essential travel and avoid areas with active COVID-19 transmission.

Considerations for Infection Control to Keep Clients Safe:

- ***If you have on-site health care professionals*** (either full time or part time) contact the Detroit Health Department at dhdoutbreak@detroitmi.gov to receive additional screening guidance and protocols.
- Establish infection control measures in regard to environmental cleanliness:
 - Provide hand sanitizer or sanitizer wipes (at least 60-95% alcohol) and place in common areas of the facility.
 - Provide access to handwashing facilities and educate residents and staff on the importance of washing hands frequently.
 - Clean and sanitize all common facilities and surfaces (e.g., dining areas, bathrooms, door handles) several times during the operating day, routinely and effectively.



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- Provide residents with napkins or tissues to use when they cough or sneeze, and educate them to cough into the crook of their elbow.
- Provide gloves to cleaning staff for picking up tissues and emptying waste baskets.
- Identify ways to keep physical 5-6' of space between clients in all areas of your operation (e.g. lines, dining, activities, common areas)

Detecting, Managing and Isolating Suspected Cases:

- Consider daily temperature and symptom checks of residents, and monitor for new fever and/or respiratory illness.
- Screen new persons being admitted or re-admitted for recent respiratory illness.
- Instruct residents and staff to report recent symptoms of fever, cough or shortness of breath to the appropriate personnel at the first sign of illness.
- Identify a room or an area with a door within the shelter that may be used to isolate suspected cases
- For suspected cases:
 - Ensure staff know where and how to report persons with fever and respiratory illness.
 - Ensure access to hand washing stations and or alcohol-based sanitizers and facemasks where available for ill persons to wear to prevent further spread.
 - Isolate residents with fever or acute respiratory symptoms to their room or to an identified area where they will be separated from others by at least 6 feet, until transport to a quarantine facility.
 - Doors to this room or area should be kept closed except for entry or exit.
 - Arrange to have a separate bathroom from others in the facility who are not displaying symptoms.
 - Contact a medical provider or facility to determine guidance for testing. Inform the medical provider or facility of all symptoms.
 - Notify other facilities prior to transferring a resident with an acute respiratory illness, including suspected COVID-19, to another facility or higher level of care.

Develop or review a Continuity of Operations Plan:

- Identify and cross-train employees to perform essential roles in the case of severe staffing shortages, and consider which employees would most likely be absent if schools close.
- Plan how to communicate and coordinate with employees, customers/clients, and suppliers during emergencies.
- Ensure the availability of essential technology and supplies.
- Work with IT to support continued communications (e.g., email, remote access, conference calls, webinars, etc.).
- Identify supply needs for 2-5 week periods, and consider stockpiling infection control supplies and business essentials like handwashing products and tissues, and paper, printer ink, toner.

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Considerations in the event of a bodily fluid event (i.e. sneezing or coughing):

- Ensure the employee who is cleaning up the area is using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including disposable gloves and a face mask.
- Segregate the area that has been contaminated
- Dispose of any food that has been exposed
- Ensure any utensils that might have been exposed are cleaned and sanitized
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize the area to include the floor, walls and any other objects contaminated by the incident
- Properly dispose any of the equipment that was used to clean up the area

The Detroit Health Department continues to encourage protection from all viral illnesses. **There is no vaccine for COVID-19.** Influenza is one such viral illness which has impacted many across Detroit, Michigan, and the U.S. this year, and we are in peak season. Encourage shelter staff to get the flu shot if they have not already received it. The flu shot is available for those ages 6 months and older via family doctor or by calling the Detroit Health Department Immunizations Clinic at (313) 876-4667.

If you or someone you know is experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath, with possible exposure to someone who has traveled or potentially been exposed to COVID-19, please contact the Detroit Health Department for guidance at **(313) 876-4000**. For general questions about the outbreak, please email the Detroit Health Department at dhdoutbreak@detroitmi.gov. If you need medical care, please call your doctor or the hospital in advance so that they may take the necessary precautions to protect others.

This is a rapidly evolving situation, for the most up-to-date information please visit the CDC's website at (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>). For a link to printable resources for general communication, posters and handouts, visit (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>).

Be assured that the Detroit Health Department is following the outbreak closely and prioritizing the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure your safety.

Sincerely,

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