

Homelessness in CT during COVID-19

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COVID-19 & Homelessness

CDC has named homeless persons as a “vulnerable population” during COVID-19

Individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely than the general population to have serious infection, hospitalization and death if infected with COVID-19

In Connecticut, about 5% of the homeless population are over 65 years old (High Risk population)

Black/African Americans are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 (2.5 times more infections than White Americans). About 37% of the homeless population in CT identifies as Black/African American.

Sheltering Homeless Individuals

Shelters have to lower census to provide for recommended guidelines for physical distancing

Homeless individuals who have been moved to hotels cannot return to congregate settings and need to be rapidly housed

Shelters need additional resources to adhere to the strict disinfection guidelines mandated by the CDC & ongoing on-site testing of sheltered individuals

Policy Recommendations

Maintaining shelters at a safe capacity by aggressively and rapidly housing:

Individuals residing in hotels & current shelter residents (starting with the most high-risk) to allow for the inevitable influx of new clients

Urgently providing shelters sufficient support to adhere to resource heavy CDC guidelines or optimizing infection control. This includes, but is not limited to frequent and universal COVID-19 testing; bed spacing; adequate disinfection, masks and PPE; prompt isolation of COVID positive clients. Closed shelters should only reopen when they are positioned to do so safely

What's next?

DOH has dedicated about \$200K CARES Act Funding in direct service dollars to rehousing homeless individuals (RRH & Rapid Exit)

DOH is ramping up services for housing location and inspections

DOH, with HUD's permission has waived many document requirements to expedite application processes and mitigate the challenges of providers working remotely

Homeless individuals will still need to call 2-11 and have a CAN appointment to be considered for any shelter or RRH program.