HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS AND COVID

Bobby Watts, CEO

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Grounded in human rights and social justice, the NHCHC mission is to build a high-quality, equitable health care system through training, research and advocacy in the movement to end homelessness.
Working to End Homelessness by Ensuring Health Care and Housing for All

The Council is a membership organization uniting thousands of health care professionals, people with lived experience of homelessness, and advocates in homeless health care. Join us in working to improve care and to eliminate homelessness.

Learn More
300 HCH PROGRAMS NATIONALLY

- HRSA Health Center program – FQHCs serving a “special populations” group

- 330 HCH programs served ~1 million patients in 2018 (250K in California)

- Primary care, mental health, addiction treatment, dental, case management, outreach, health education, preventive care, etc.

Fact Sheet: The Health Care for the Homeless Program
HOMELESSNESS & HEALTH

- **Poor health** causes homelessness
- Homelessness causes **new health problems** & exacerbates existing ones
- The experience of homelessness makes it **harder to engage in care** and receive appropriate services
HOMELESSNESS AND COVID

- People Experiencing Homelessness (PEH) are at increased risk from COVID
- More likely to be exposed in shelters – harder to practice social distancing
- For those unsheltered in encampments, for many it’s harder to practice social distancing and much harder to practice hand-washing
- Challenge of Testing for a transient population
RESPONSES TO COVID

• Both CDC and HUD issued guidance for protecting PEH and reducing transmissions in congregate settings and for unsheltered PEH
• Use of Alternate Care Sites (ACS) for Isolation and Quarantine for PEH
• More humane approach to encampments, including recommended moratorium on ‘sweeps’ and deployment of handwashing stations and portable toilets.
ADDRESSING INEQUITIES

• Pandemic brought into sharp relief structural inequities and inadequacies of our health and social systems
• BIPOC are much more likely to be homeless due to public policies
• BIPOC are much more likely to be exposed to COVID – three times as likely to contract COVID and twice as likely to die from COVID
• The challenge is to address these inequities to bring about lasting change and more equity.
THANK YOU

Contact Information:

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COVID AND MEDICAL RESPITE RESOURCES

• A WEALTH of Material on COVID at www.nhchc.org/coronavirus
• Medical Respite Care Program Directory
• Respite Care Providers Network
• Policy brief: Medical Respite Care: Financing Approaches
• Policy brief: Medical Respite Care Programs & the IHI Triple Aim Framework
• Policy brief: Managed Care and Homeless Populations: Linking the HCH Community and HCH Partners
• Technical Assistance requests