

NATIONAL
HEALTH CARE
for the
HOMELESS
COUNCIL

COVID-19 TOWN HALL SERIES

Avoiding Civil Detention:
Responding to Clients Who Violate Isolation Orders

April 24, 2020

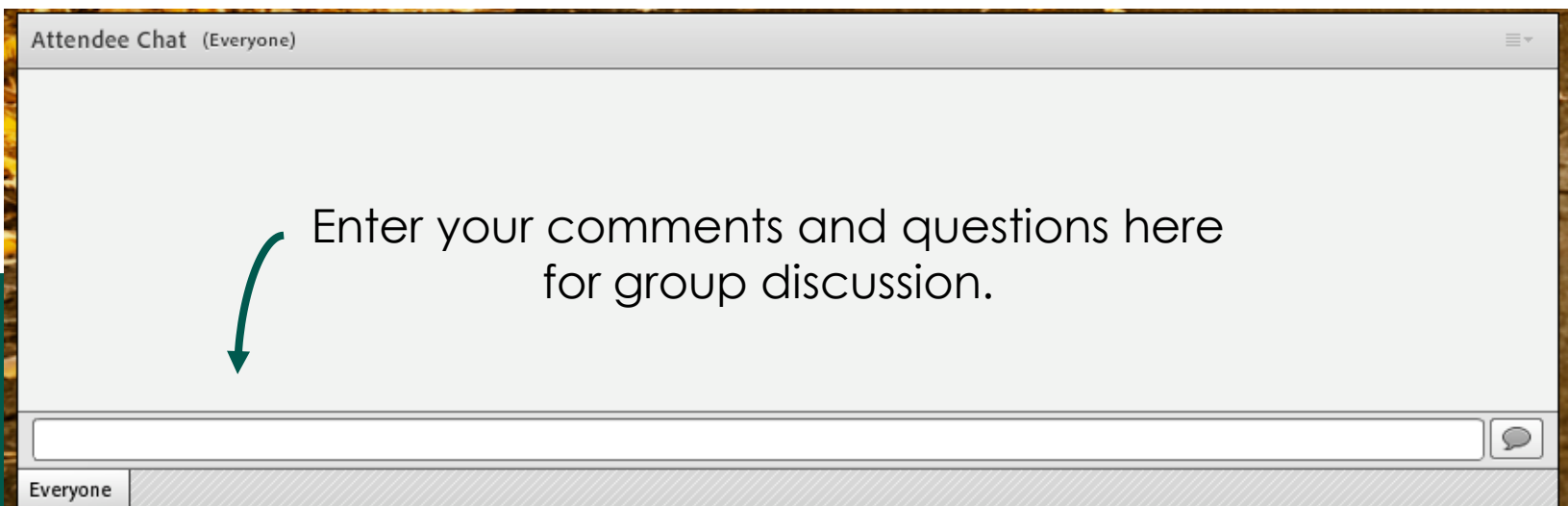
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EVOLVING ISSUE: SUPPORTING CLIENTS & AVOIDING CIVIL DETENTION

- Increasing number of alternative care sites in congregate & non-congregate settings for people who are homeless and need I&Q settings
- Varying levels of services and varying types of providers/workforce to deliver support
- Varying levels of admission criteria and program rules
- Challenging situations for everyone, especially for vulnerable people with complex health conditions now living in unfamiliar settings

GOALS FOR TODAY'S DISCUSSION

- Identify the current challenges we are all facing
- Hear how others are addressing this issue
- Provide strategies for responding to challenging clients in a manner that avoids civil detention (or other negative outcomes)
- Address your questions and comments



NEW ISSUE BRIEF: REDUCING HARM FOR PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

- Aimed at alternate care sites
- Describes why harm reduction saves lives
- Provides programmatic & policy strategies
- Links to additional resources



Reducing Harm for People Using Drugs & Alcohol During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

A Guide for Alternate Care Sites Programs

Issue Brief | April 2020

Many communities are quickly standing up COVID-19 [alternate care sites \(ACS\)](#), which can accommodate people experiencing homelessness who need a safe place to await test results, receive treatment, and/or be protected from the risk of COVID-19 infection. Because this population has high rates of chronic medical and behavioral health conditions—to include substance use disorders (SUD)—ACS must be prepared to address a full range of health care needs. Addiction doesn't stop because there's an infectious disease pandemic, but escalating behaviors can be a challenge for programs to manage. Simply barring people from ACS because they have an SUD is not an effective response during an infectious disease outbreak. If the primary goal is to prevent the spread of COVID-19, ACS should not penalize individuals for using substances and instead, support them using the approaches outlined in this brief.

This issue brief is intended to provide local government officials and ACS program managers with a framework for serving individuals with SUD in isolation and quarantine, and reducing possible harmful consequences. It outlines why 'harm reduction' is critical to saving lives, how to prepare an ACS space in a manner that will reduce harm, and tips for supporting vulnerable people while they are in isolation/quarantine.

Why Harm Reduction is a Life-Saving Approach

Simply put, 'harm reduction' is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing the negative consequences associated with drug use. In the haste to erect many ACS, people who are homeless may have been suddenly uprooted from their regular shelter or encampment location and been taken to these new spaces with limited understanding of where they are, how long they will be there, what to expect while they are there, and who else is around them. This understandably exacerbates an already tense environment, with fear, confusion, and stress serving as common triggers for increased levels of substance use and escalated behaviors.

If ACS programs cannot find a way to accommodate the use of substances among very vulnerable people, clients may overdose or go into withdrawal (which can also be deadly if not medically monitored). Clients may also leave the program against medical advice, risking their own health and/or civil detention, as well as contributing to public health risk. Supporting people who use drugs and alcohol during this time will not only save lives, it will

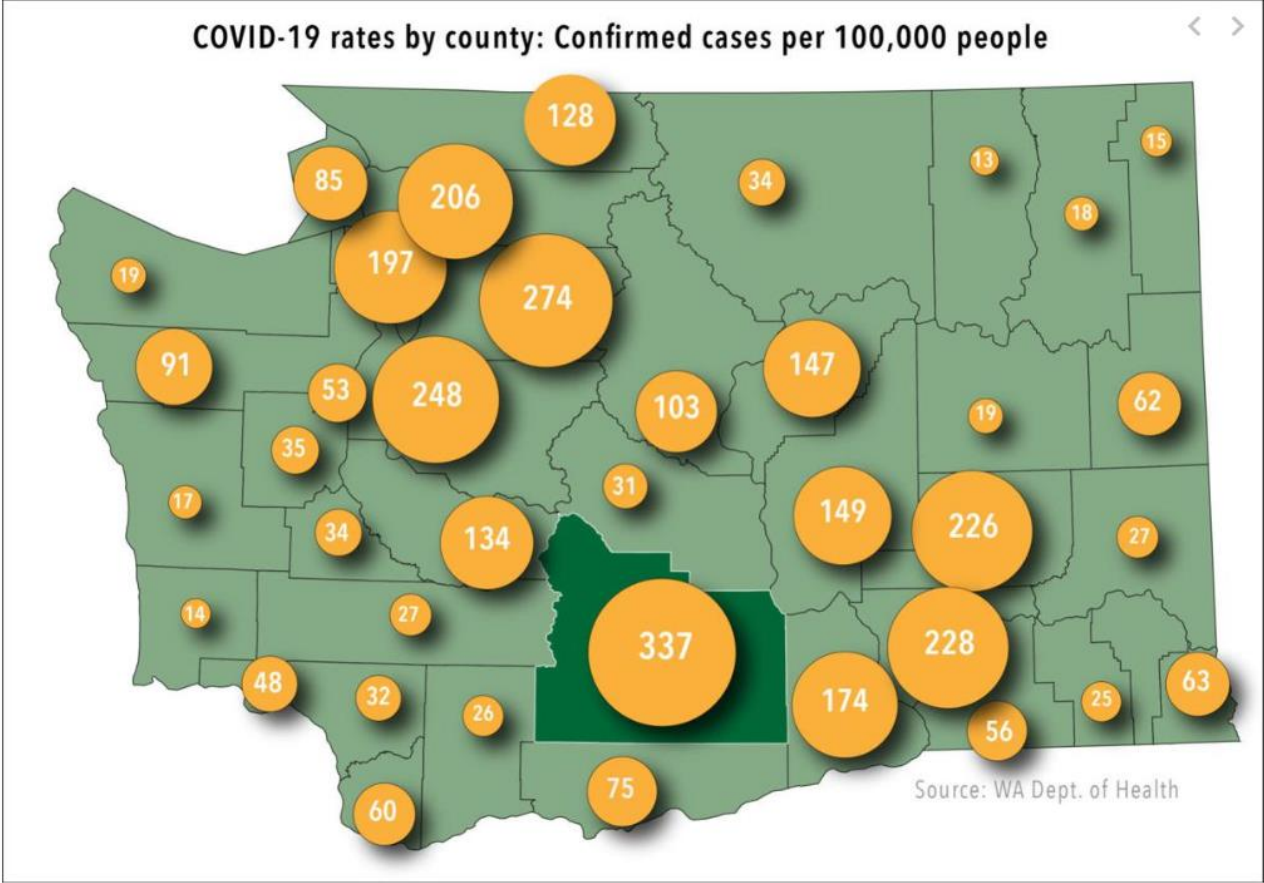
Failure to accommodate substance use disorders will likely mean increases in fatal overdoses/dangerous withdrawals, higher rates of vulnerable people leaving I&Q against medical advice, and compromised individual and public health.

TODAY'S DISCUSSION PANEL

- Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, Yakima, WA
 - **Rhonda Hauff**, Chief Operating Officer/Deputy CEO
 - **Annette Rodriguez**, Homeless Services Director
- Bethlehem Haven, Pittsburgh, PA
 - **Sharon R. Higginbothan**, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer
 - **John Strong**, Shelter and RSS Supervisor

Yakima County has highest rate of COVID-19 cases in Washington, double the state rate

JANELLE RETKA Yakima Herald-Republic Apr 23, 2020 Updated 1 hr ago



SCENES FROM YAKIMA



SCENES FROM BETHLEHEM HAVEN



Q&A & DISCUSSION



If you haven't already, please send us questions using the chat box at the bottom of your screen

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WEBINARS ON THE HORIZON

- **Tuesday, April 28, 1:00 EST:** Delivering Health Care in Isolation and Quarantine Facilities for People Experiencing Homelessness
- **Thursday, April 30, 2:00 EST:** Safer at Home? COVID-19 and Domestic Violence
- **Friday, May 1, 1:00 EST:** Testing in Homeless Shelters

[Registration links in the Resources Box below!](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

- Dedicated COVID-19 webpage:
 - www.nhchc.org/coronavirus
 - HUD, CDC, & HRSA materials, local policies & guidance, consumer-specific materials
- **Request:** Please send us your local guidance and protocols!
 - Send to Michael Durham, TA Manager, at mdurham@nhchc.org
- Weekly editions of *Solidarity* (Wednesdays)
- Upcoming issue of *Mobilizer* (April 30)