Increasing Access to COVID-19 Vaccines Among Homeless Populations: Successful Partnership Series
Washington, DC

April 7, 2021
Acknowledgement

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Today’s Discussion Panelists

- **Catherine Crosland, MD**: Director of Homeless Outreach Development at Unity Health Care and the Medical Director for Emergency Response Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- **Collette R. Harris, MD**: Family Physician at Health Care for the Homeless Program within Unity and Homeless Outreach

- **Dena Haslan**: Director of Policy and Program Support at the DC Department of Human Services

- **William Kuennen**: Program Manager at the DC Department of Human Services

- **Moderator: Katie League, LCSW-C**: COVID-19 Project Manager, National Health Care for the Homeless Council
Agenda for Today’s Discussion

• Learn about the collaboration between Unity Health Care and Washington, DC’s Department of Human Services that began at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

• Hear from health care providers who implemented COVID-19 vaccine education and administration events to people experiencing homelessness

• Highlight vaccine data

• Discuss lessons learned and strategies for long-term housing solutions

• Address as many of your questions/comments as possible!
Screening for COVID symptoms at low barrier shelters early in the pandemic before universal testing was available. Anyone with positive symptoms was referred to Isolation and Quarantine.
COVID-19 Symptoms Screening
Unity Health Care and DHS staff outside Isolation and Quarantine (ISAQ) hotel
Sitewide COVID testing at PEPV hotels
Vaccine Table inside Protective Hotels (PEPV)
Timer for post-vaccination monitoring
Dr. Crosland getting vaccinated!
Isolation & Quarantine (ISAQ)

For persons with positive COVID-19 diagnosis, in extended close contact with a positive case or arriving to DC from an area with high COVID-19 prevalence— who can’t safely isolate in a private residence

- Single occupancy
- Daily medical wellness checks
- Clients stay ~10-14 days
- All Sites
  - Onsite medical & behavioral services
  - 3 meals/day & snacks

Pandemic Emergency Program for Medically Vulnerable Individuals (PEP-V)

For persons experiencing homelessness thought to be a greatest risk of severe health complications, or death, from COVID-19

- Double occupancy
- Housing case management
- Clients stay ~ 160 days

Using Proactive and Reactive Approaches to Protect Homeless Persons During Public Health Emergency
PEP-V Overview

• The Pandemic Emergency Program for Medically Vulnerable Individuals (PEP-V) provides hotel room accommodation for individuals experiencing homelessness thought to be at the greatest risk for severe complications and/or death if they contract COVID-19.

• Established pursuant to the Mayor’s emergency powers under DC Official Code §7-2304 under the Agency’s Mass Care Emergency Support Function of the Mayor’s emergency powers. The sites shelters are not related to a Continuum of Care shelters established under the HSRA.

• Primary goal: Reduce exposure to COVID-19 of elderly & medically vulnerable individuals residing in congregate shelters and unsheltered where risk of infection is high due to inability to quarantine.
PEP-V Overview (cont.)

• **Negative COVID test before placement**: Unity Health Care administers a rapid COVID-19 test on each person before they are placed in a PEP-V room. Individuals with a positive COVID test result are transported to an Isolation and Quarantine (ISAQ) site.

• **Onsite services**, include medical (Unity Healthcare), behavioral health (MBI).

• **Not a substitute** for low barrier shelter, respite care, long-term health care, or a community residential facility.
DHS Vaccine Distribution Data

• Total Doses as of 4/1: 3544
  – 1\textsuperscript{st} Dose Only: 791
  – Fully vaccinated: 1440
  – Everyone who has received at least 1\textsuperscript{st} dose: 2231
  – Of clients who have received at least one dose:
    • 66\% of Doses to clients and 34\% to staff
• Individuals who received their 1\textsuperscript{st} in February:
  – 89\% of individuals returned for their 2\textsuperscript{nd} dose
    • 86\% of clients
    • 96\% of staff
DHS Vaccine Distribution Data

- Approximately 300 doses distributed to our unsheltered population thus far
- Demographics (self reported)
  - African American/Black: 57%
  - White: 4%
  - Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native: 1%
  - Unknown: 37%
- No wasted vaccine
- 2 reported negative side effects
# Timeline for vaccine rollout

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<th>Month of February</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Doses at our PEP-V sites, Low Barrier Shelters, Hypothermia Shelters and some of our adult/youth transitional programs</th>
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| Month of March    | 2<sup>nd</sup> Doses at our PEP-V sites, Low Barrier Shelters, Hypothermia Shelters and some of our adult/youth transitional programs  
1<sup>st</sup> Doses for previous programs as well as youth, family, transitional, and DV programs |
| Month of April    | Rollout to unsheltered individuals (weeks of 3/29 and 4/5)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Doses for all programs who received 1<sup>st</sup> dose |
| Months of April and May | Single location to capture any new individuals and complete 2<sup>nd</sup> doses |
Vaccine Engagement Efforts

Town halls
• Client education and pre-registration

Provider Calls
• Sharing vaccine information
• Addressing vaccine misconceptions
• Preparing for vaccine events
• Discussing provider roles

Peer Educators
• Credible messengers to support communication efforts
• Conducted focus groups to better understand client needs/concerns

Posters/Flyers/Reminders
• Available for shelters to post, distribute, and share
Questions for our Panel
Events and Resources

• This webinar is the first of a 3-part series featuring **health centers collaborating with their local jurisdictions**
  • April 13\textsuperscript{th} 2pm CT - Minnesota
  • April 29\textsuperscript{th} 1pm CT – Chicago, IL
  https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_l5mzLFeHQEOkQr_ILdcI6A

• 2-part series on **Trust and Trustworthiness**
  • April 21\textsuperscript{st} 1pm CT
  • April 28\textsuperscript{th} 1pm CT
  https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_slMbonjRQ7GjaNwJ-0L71g
Events and Resources

• Sign-up to receive our bi-weekly Flash Blast

• Join us on Monday, April 19th at 12pm CT for a Community Discussion about opportunities with HRSA new funding

• NHCHC Conference & Policy Symposium, May 10-14
  https://nhchc.org/trainings/conferences/hch2021/
Follow us on social media!

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Institute for Medical Respite Care