



As the World Burns...

HCH Responses to the Impacts of Extreme Weather and Climate Change

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Date and time: 5/15/24 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM MST

Location: Sonoran Sky Salon 6



As the World Burns... HCH Responses to the Impacts of Extreme Weather and Climate Change

Agenda

David Modersbach: Introduction & Overview (10 min)

Lucy Kasdin: Use Daily Disasters to Build Effective Relationships with Climate/Crisis-Affected (10 min)

Brittany Melton-Hill: Emergency Weather Response through a Denver Colorado Lense (10 min)

Stephanie Martinez: Extreme Heat & other emergencies (15 min)

Susannah King: Extreme Cold & other emergencies (10 min)

David Peery: Criminalization of Homelessness Exacerbates Climate Impact (10 min)

Audience & Panel: Group Questions and Discussion (25 min)



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Goals/Objectives

- Leave with ideas, resources you can take back to your community
- How to prepare for the unexpected
- Elevate issue of climate change, preparation/response and mortality prevention on national, state and local levels





As the World Burns... HCH Responses to the Impacts of Extreme Weather and Climate Change

Introduction and Overview

What are the growing impacts of changing climate has had an impact on Health Care for the Homeless efforts across the county? Climate change impacts on health, mortality and emerging types of unexpected emergencies that HCHs will increasingly need to be prepared to respond to:

- Heat/Cold
- Extreme Weather (tornados, storms, floods, hurricanes)
- Unanticipated/Unnatural Disasters
- Emerging Illnesses/Disease Outbreaks Driven by Climate Change



Lucy Kasdin:

Use Daily Disasters to Build Effective Relationships with Climate/Crisis-Affected: Where to Start?

- Understanding the landscape in your community
- Learn who is already serving this community
- Know those most vulnerable among your unhoused population
- Recognize barriers receiving real-time information during emergency and plan to address

Use Daily Disasters to Build Effective Relationships with Climate/ Crisis-Affected: Bridge Building

Ground your work in an understanding of why there is mistrust and trauma, and how this impacts relationship building

Identify and build/strengthen relationships with:

- Trusted community messengers
- Key stakeholders and advocate
- Local and regional government agencies

Use Daily Disasters to Build Effective Relationships with Climate/Crisis-Affected”: Using Daily Disasters as Opportunities

- Prepare for Anticipated (Heat, cold, storms) and Unexpected Emergencies (toxic plume, fires):
 - Who is needed to respond?
 - What resources are needed?
 - Develop clear communication plan
- Use “Daily Disasters” to bring together key stakeholders to response
- Keep Learning: Track lessons learned, formalize debriefing and use prior incidents to improve community response

Brittany Melton-Hill:

Focusing in on Making an Extreme Weather Response–Denver CO

Who: Do you know your unhoused population? Large encampments vs. smaller encampments vs. individual rough sleepers

What: How will your services differ from your day-to-day operations

When: Determine thresholds for activation, when possible

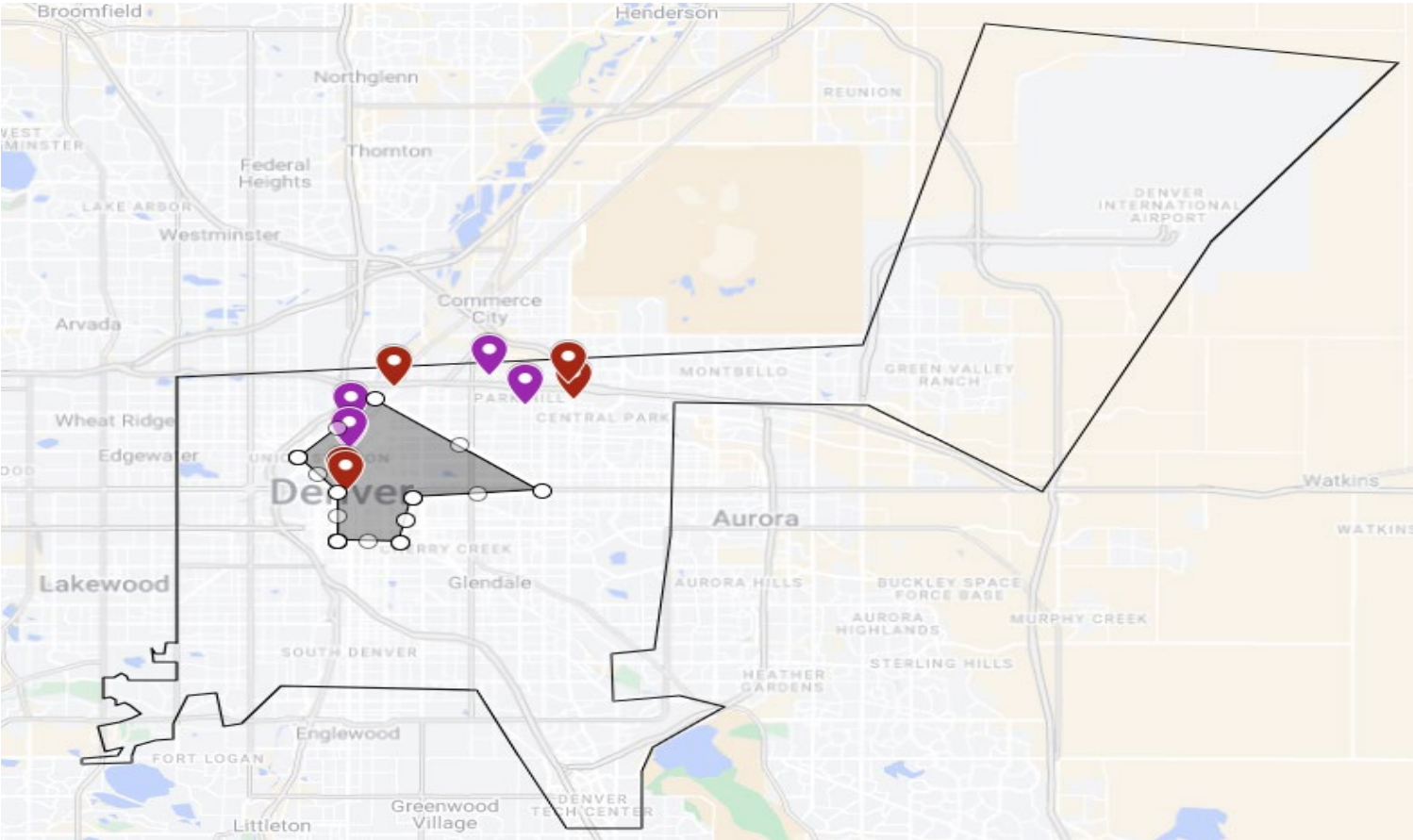
Where: Know the unique specifics of the geographical region you provide services to and how these specifics might affect the success of your response

How: Leverage relationships already built with other service providers inside/outside of your organization

Extreme Weather Response: WHEN

- Acknowledge that different services might require different thresholds (Cooling/Warming Centers vs. Street Med vs. Outreach)
- Reflect on reality of how things went "on the ground" at the threshold and adjust appropriately, when possible
- Consider situations where the threshold might not be the best gauge for activating a response

Extreme Weather Response: WHERE



- Purple locations are traditional shelters
- Red locations are various warming centers (overnight)
- Shaded in area is where staff are usually deployed during extreme cold weather emergencies



Extreme Weather Response: HOW

- Strategize what services to provide at what point in the disaster.
 - Consider how you can maximize time/skill of staff and the resources you (and other organizations/stakeholders) can provide.
- Consider barriers to clients accessing shelters and extreme weather relief centers. Provide alternative resources/options when available and appropriate.
- If possible, plan a staffing model that allows for flexibility and balances the workload to try and prevent staff burnout.

Stephanie Martinez Extreme Heat & other emergencies – Circle the City Phoenix

Heat Related Deaths in Maricopa County

- 645 heat related deaths in Maricopa County during 2023.
- 71 percent of heat related deaths occurred on a day when the Weather Service issued an excessive heat warning.
- 45 percent of heat related deaths were among people experiencing homelessness.

Shifting our Care Model

- Death Prevention
- Heat Relief: Cooling Station and Hydration Stations
- Hours of Operation
- Staff Wellness

Collaboration & Partnerships

- Connecting with county, city, and other community organizations in effort to positively impact the lives of those facing homelessness during extreme heat.

Supplies

- Water
- Ice
- Propel/Electrolyte packets
- Wound Care Supplies
- Hats
- "Summer" Kindness Kits



Extreme Cold & other emergencies – Hennepin County MN Susannah King

Winter weather in Minneapolis

- 72 days on average at or below freezing
- Of these days, about 22 are sub-zero temperatures
- This does not take into account bitterly cold days with windchill, leading to increased risk for cold-related conditions such as hypothermia and frostbite

Snapshot of numbers from Hennepin County
Last winter (from 2023 PIT count):

469 individuals unsheltered and outside
2,422 people in emergency shelter
421 people in transitional housing



Outreach- Multi-Agency response to cold weather

- We see an increase of exposure related conditions each winter
- Last winter we treated 35 individuals for frostbite
- 2 additional shelters open during the winter
- Temporary shelter/warming space opens during the extreme cold (1-2 days at a time)
- When it is bitterly cold, outreach teams will make rounds and offer to drive people to inside emergency shelter
- Community does warm weather gear drives



**Frostbite can happen in minutes.
Seek care.**

Health Care for the Homeless
612-348-5553 • hennepin.us/staywarm



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Housing Stability area of Hennepin County organize and designated warming centers and emergency winter shelters.

Warming center link:
<https://www.hennepin.us/staywarm>

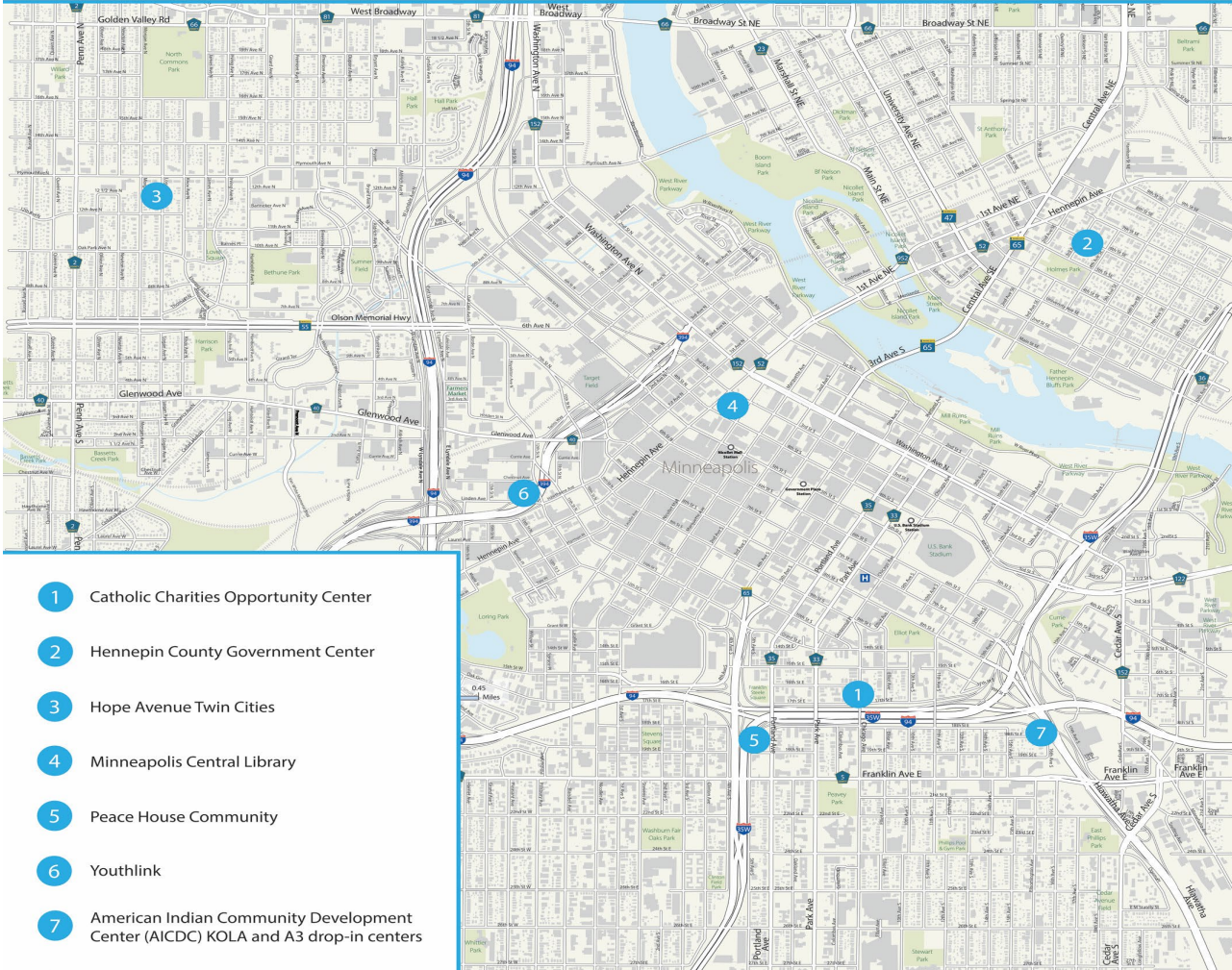


Frostbite can happen in minutes.
Daytime warming spaces now open.

[hennepin.us/staywarm](https://www.hennepin.us/staywarm)



Severe cold warming locations



HCH Street Medicine & Outreach Team care in the field

- Person-centered harm reduction approach
- Trust and rapport
- Can do some wound care in the field, using small pop-up tent or vehicle in cold weather conditions
- Delivering basic needs supplies, medication, wound care supplies
- Safe use supplies and Narcan kits



Stabilization - From encampment to respite care: a community response

- HCH both identifies and partners with other outreach agencies to identify people who need respite beds
- Low barrier access to HCH's respite program for people suffering from frostbite or other health issue
- Outreach staff able to move patient directly from an encampment into respite
- Once in respite, patient was able to stay in respite through healing and amputation, offering daily dressing changes, care coordination, etc.



Other weather-related response

Heat in Minneapolis

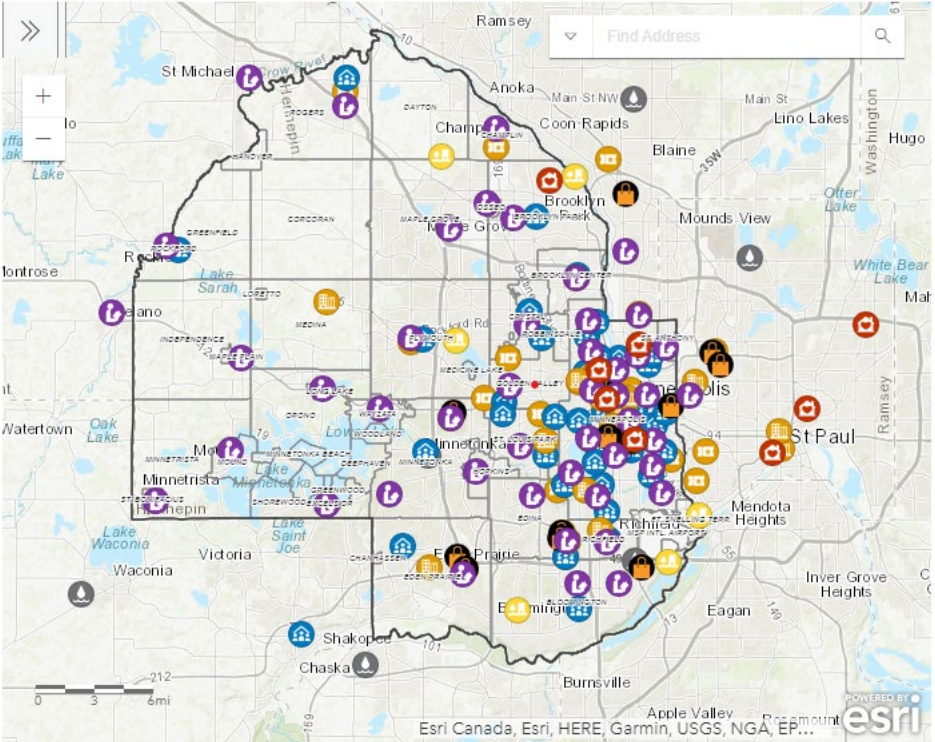
- It is rare for temperatures to go above 100 degrees (average once every 4-5 years)
- Heat + humidity are a factor for heat related conditions
- Cooling centers also function as a refuge from poor air quality due to smoke from Canadian wildfires

Cooling options link

[Cooling options | Hennepin County](#)

— Cooling options map

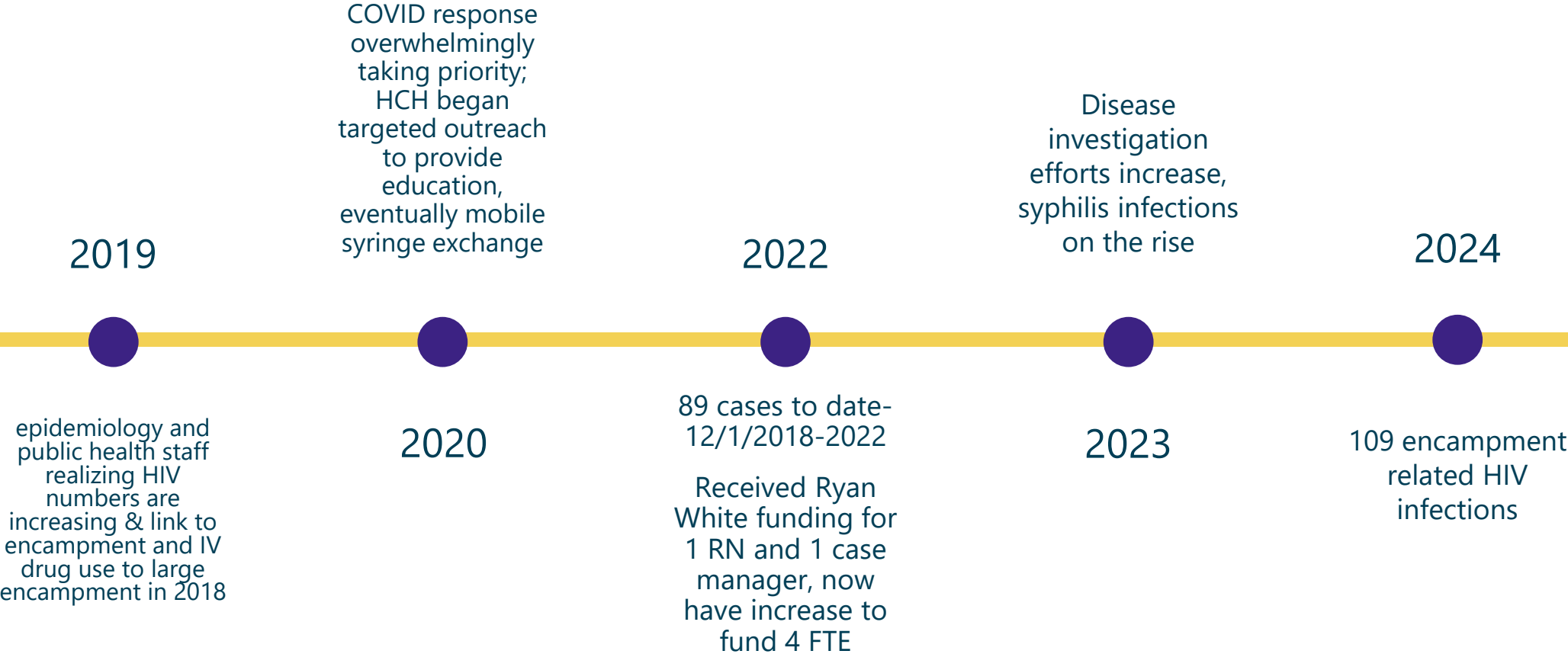
Map Instructions: Use the arrows in the upper left corner to open the legend and map details. Turn each layer on/off by using the check box. Click on each map layer arrow to show the legend symbol. Click on the individual map locations to display contact information. View the map in full screen using the mobile map link below.



Also view our mobile map.



Emerging Infectious disease- HIV Outbreak response



Emerging Infectious disease- HIV Outbreak response

Cross-Departmental Hennepin County Response:

Public Health

- Health Care for the Homeless
- Public Health Department Data Analyst Team
 - Data analyzation and distribution to inform the work
- Ryan White Grant Administration
 - Increasing funding for staff
 - Facilitate housing focus group
 - Lived experience survey
- Public Health Clinic Team
 - Disease investigation, increasing FTE
 - Expanding case management programming
 - Centralizing Narcan supply and ordering
- Community Based Infectious Disease Team
 - RNs working within HCH, expanding efforts to address syphilis, Hep C

Agency response & partnerships

Clare Housing

- Innovative housing programming
- Hotel voucher program
- Increased outreach

Avivo

- Tiny Village housing, dedicated harm reduction housing
- Outreach team

Example - Mobilizing across agencies during crisis

- May 28, 2020 – response during George Floyd demonstrations
- Several large encampments in the city due to COVID/sheltering in place
- One in the area near the 3rd precinct in Minneapolis and site for protests
- MDH, Hennepin County, outreach agencies, community partners, City of Minneapolis mobilized to evacuate this encampment, coordinating shelter, transportation, food, etc
- Residents were relocated to a hotel as concern for fires and safety rose



David Peery

Criminalization of Homelessness Compounds Adverse Health Impact of Extreme Urban Heat

- Climate change exacerbates everything, but PEH are hit first, foremost and hardest.
- Encampment sweeps evict people from the shelter of bridges or the shade of tents thus placing them in harms way, forcing them to relocate to alternative shade
- Hostile architecture often prevents the homeless from seeking shade and shelter
- Increasing stress, leading to higher drug overdoses, hospitalizations and increased mortality (JAMA Study, April 2023)
- Elevating institutional mistrust, which harms outreach efforts – people are dehumanized as "service resistant"
- Breaking links between vulnerable people and their service providers



David Peery

Changing the Dominant Dehumanizing Narrative of Homelessness

- First Rule of Holes: Stop Digging!!!!!! Criminalization is an expensive way to make homelessness worse
- Localities MUST suspend sweeps and food-sharing bans during heat emergencies
- Providers have a moral duty to identify policies that harm their patients
- Promote the JAMA Study, April 2023, demonstrating how encampment sweeps harm the health of the homeless
- Stop using dehumanizing terms that enable criminalization -- "service resistant" or "shelter resistant"
- Promote street medicine and peer support services
- Establish Cooling Centers, suspend coordinated entry



Questions and Takeaways for Participants

- From today's presentation, what can you bring back home to put into work in your local community, health center or HCH program?
- Should/how should HCH's adapt their model of care to reflect a shift towards mortality prevention and emergency response?
- How can providers continue to carry out our work through a filter of increased criminalization and dehumanization of the people we serve?
- Review/Edit Help develop our **growing list of Policy and Planning Recommendations:**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/12xFC3qo58qnpUW9GbS1Mdjzgjk9pn2L/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=100619916180966793721&rtpof=true&sd=true



Questions and Follow Up?

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