



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING



MEMORANDUM

FROM: Steve DiLella, Director of Individual & Family Support Programs

TO: DOH Funded Emergency Shelter Providers

CC: Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Deputy Commissioner Shante Hanks, Leigh Shields-Church, Kara Capobianco, Katie Durand, Karin Motta, Jeffrey Scott, Susan Gajda, Jean Holcomb, Adam Osmond, Beau Anderson, Richard Cho (CCEH)

DATE: April 8, 2020

RE: DOH Emergency Shelter Contractual Requirements during COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Emergency Shelter Provider:

Thank you for your dedication and compassion as we continue to work together to protect people experiencing homelessness. For ongoing updates pertaining to the homeless service system, please see CCEH's [Coronavirus and Homeless Resource Guide](#). Ongoing updates are also available on the [State of Connecticut website](#).

The following protocols and updates will be in effect until the Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency enacted by Governor Lamont on March 10, 2020 is lifted. As we move to decompress congregate shelter settings through the use of motels, the Department of Housing recognizes that these emergency response preventative measures will impact shelter operations and your contractual obligations with Department of Housing. The department wants to stress that assisting clients to remain healthy and secure during this time is the primary focus. The intent of this memo is to address three areas of immediate concern for emergency shelter providers.

1. Reduced Shelter Occupancy

DOH anticipates that during this period of emergency declaration that shelter occupancy will remain below contractual capacity. Although we expect occupancy to fall below 85% capacity, shelters can meet their bed obligations by providing staffing at the hotels.

- a) All DOH funded emergency shelters are **required** to complete the Shelter COVID19 Health Protocols Planning Form by Monday, April 13th. Please see separate email communication from Beau Anderson dated April 6, 2020. The link to complete the survey can be found at:

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5531571/covid19healthprotocols>

b) Shelter case management services are to continue as clients transition to shelter. This support may be done by telephone or teleconference as technology permits. If staff are working onsite at the motel, they will be able to continue with case management services onsite.

c) DOH is working in conjunction with CCEH and Nutmeg regarding HMIS data guidance that will be forthcoming.

d) During this time of transition, DOH would like to reinforce the guidance distributed by CCEH on March 27, 2020. We are working on interim steps during this time of transition, and we will move to longer-term solutions based on the anticipated trajectory of the pandemic.

- **For clients who are staying in your shelter**
 - Continue enrolling new clients who will be staying in your shelter
 - Continue checking clients into beds on nights when they stay in the shelter
- **For clients who are enrolled in your shelter, and temporarily staying elsewhere due to COVID-19 relocation (e.g., hotel/motel, given a 'pass' to stay with family/friends, etc.)**
 - Keep their existing shelter enrollments open
 - Do not check them into beds at your shelter unless they are sleeping at your shelter that night
- **For clients who are exiting your shelter, not for a temporary COVID-19 relocation**
 - Process the client's exit per your normal procedure

2. Emergency Shelter Staffing

On March 20th, Governor Lamont announced that as part of the ongoing civil preparedness and public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, he is directing Connecticut residents to "Stay Safe, Stay at Home." The governor is directing all non-essential businesses and not-for-profit entities in Connecticut to prohibit all in-person functions if they are able to, effective March 23rd at 8:00 p.m. and through April 22nd (unless modified), and encouraging them to employ, to the maximum extent possible, any telecommuting or work-from-home procedures that they can safely implement. However, the order excludes any essential business or entity providing essential services or functions, such as healthcare, food service, law enforcement, and *similar critical services*. *Emergency shelter providers* fall under this exemption as [human service providers that provide direct care/support services to an economically disadvantaged population](#).

a) Coordinate staffing needs within your organization and at temporary motel sites with your Coordinated Access Network colleagues. DOH expects that all emergency shelter providers will contribute staffing to the extent possible at motels. If your agency is unable to deploy staffing to temporary sites, please consult with your DOH contract manager.

- b) In the event your agency ceases to provide shelter operations, or falls significantly below contracted beds (providing staff at hotels counts towards your contracted beds), you will need to submit a budget revision to DOH and obtain approval from your DOH Contract Manager.
- c) Please consult with your agency's insurance carrier regarding worker's compensation policy.
- d) Please consult your agency's human resource policies and with your legal staff regarding staff relocation to temporary work locations.
- e) All DOH funded emergency shelters are required to complete the Shelter COVID19 Health Protocols Planning Form by Monday, April 13th. This plan outlines any anticipated reductions in staffing. Please see 1a above to access the link.
- f) Please consult your human resource policies as related to the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).

3. Reporting

Changes to contractual reporting requirements will be as follows:

- a) Emergency shelter providers do not need to submit monthly utilization reporting for the months of March, April, and May 2020. As we transition shelter clients to motels, we recognize that shelter staff need to be focused on acclimating to temporary location operations. DOH will refer to narrative outlined in the Shelter COVID19 Health Protocols Planning Form for a detailed plan of your staffing functions (See 1A).
- b) Fiscal reporting is not currently due to DOH until August 31, 2020. DOH will make a determination to extend the final reporting deadline for FY '20 by no later than July 31, 2020. The state of emergency shelter operations over the next few months will be assessed as the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

DOH wants to ensure that the health and safety of our clients and staff is the focus of your work at this time. We are committed to working with providers regarding contractual obligations. This memo is intended to provide interim guidance until we have a better understanding of the impact and needs of transitioning to decompression space. As always, if you have any immediate concerns, please contact either Kara Capobianco (kara.capobianco@ct.gov) or Leigh Shields-Church (leigh.shields-church@ct.gov). Thank you for all of your efforts as we remain diligent in creating a safe environment for our guests and staff.