

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) – Guidance for Homeless Shelters

As you know, a global outbreak of a respiratory disease named Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) started in China in late 2019. The virus has been detected in more than 90 countries, including the U.S. Currently, there have been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Michigan. However, the situation is rapidly evolving, and it is likely that we will see more cases across the U.S. Preparing now can help stop the spread of the virus should we see transmission locally.

### **What preventive measures can homeless shelters take to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like the virus that causes COVID-19?**

- Encourage and support your staff and volunteers to stay home when they are sick. Remind them to stay home and not return to work until they are free of fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including easy access to clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer (especially near food areas and restrooms)
- Minimize, where possible, close contact and the sharing of objects such as cups, food, and drink.
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, faucet handles, and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.
- Provide residents of the facility and employees with [accurate information about COVID-19](#) and steps they can take to protect themselves and their families.
- Post information in common areas that serve as reminders of the need for all guests, employees and volunteers to engage in personal protection actions.

### **How can we slow the transmission of COVID-19 and other viruses within our facility?**

- Assess all guests daily and upon entry for symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. Quickly move guests who are ill into an area that is isolated from the rest of the facility.
  - Designate a sick room (ideally in an area with an accessible bathroom) where guests with cold and flu symptoms can be housed in a separate building, room, or designated area. Beds in this area should be placed at least 6 feet apart or head-to toe with beds 3 feet apart. Mobile screens can be used to encourage compliance with separation areas.
- Symptomatic guests should eat meals separate from asymptomatic guests.
- If symptomatic guests need to move through areas with asymptomatic guests, they should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene, wear a [disposable](#) surgical mask, and minimize the time in these areas.
- Monitor staff for fever or respiratory symptoms before they start work
  - Staff with fever and respiratory symptoms should be sent home until they are fever free for at least 24 hours without use of fever reducing medication.
  - Staff with mild respiratory symptoms (runny nose, cough), but no fever should put on a surgical mask when interacting with guest. Staff should be trained to use surgical masks appropriately.
- Hand hygiene stations (sinks with antibacterial soap and alcohol gel products) should be readily available throughout the facility, esp. at the entrances of the facility. Make sure

tissues are available and any sink is well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.

- Ensure employees clean their hands according to [CDC guidelines \(https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html), including before and after contact with guests, after contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment, and after removing items such as masks, gloves and gowns.
- Educate and remind guests to perform hand hygiene throughout the day, particularly after using the restroom and prior to eating their meals.

What should we do if we need to transfer patients to the hospital?

If you plan to transfer the guest to higher level of care due to worsening respiratory status, notify EMS that the guest has an undiagnosed respiratory infection.

We encourage you to visit the Michigan Coronavirus website for updated information and resources: [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus).

#### **Additional Resources:**

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Fact Sheet – MDHHS](#)

[Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Q&A – MDHHS – Updated March 5, 2020](#)

[Stop the Spread of Germs Flyer \(COVID-19\) – CDC](#)

[Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations \(COVID-19\) – CDC](#)

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers \(COVID-19\) – CDC](#)

[Interim Guidance for Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events \(COVID-19\) – CDC](#)