

COVID-19 Homelessness Response Planning Series: Part 2

HCHN Governance Council

7/20/20

Planning Series Initial Goals

1. Deepen our understanding of how HCHN's COVID response efforts can be more accountable to individuals experiencing homelessness and front line providers.
2. Discuss the current and potential future role of the Governance Council (GC) to help shape HCHN's COVID response efforts.
3. Use an Equity & Social Justice (ESJ) perspective: we must listen to the experiences of individuals most impacted, review demographic data, and respectfully challenge our own- and each other's –biases.

Snapshot of New Public Dashboard Specific to Homelessness

The screenshot shows a web dashboard for Seattle & King County Public Health. On the left is a navigation menu with the following items: 'Public Health — Seattle & King County', 'COVID-19 resources', 'COVID-19 data dashboards', 'Daily outbreak summary', 'Key indicators', 'Economic, social and overall health impacts', 'Race and ethnicity data', 'Homelessness data' (highlighted in green), and 'Syndromic surveillance data'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'Home » Public Health — Seattle & King County » COVID-19 resources » COVID-19 data dashboards » Homelessness data'. The main heading is 'Homelessness and COVID-19' with a sub-heading 'Updated every Thursday'. Below this is a paragraph explaining that people experiencing homelessness are at risk for COVID-19 infection and that the data describes impacts on individuals who are unable to access a shelter or are unsheltered. A second paragraph defines the criteria for homelessness used in the data, mentioning partnerships with various organizations for increased testing.

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/homeless.aspx>



Summary of COVID-19 cases among people experiencing homelessness or associated with the homeless response system

Updated
7/16/2020

Cases

Mobile testing events

Since March 1st

July 9-15

Since March 1st

July 9-15

303

(2.4% of total King County cases)

9

(0.9% of total King County cases in the past week)

280 events

6,844 tests done

22 events

302 tests done

Hover over numbers for COVID-19 investigation definition of homelessness. In addition to cases among people experiencing homelessness, there have also been 35 cases among employees at homeless service sites since March 1st.

On-site testing events at homeless services sites are conducted by Public Health - Seattle & King County's mobile testing team and testing partners.

Case details: People experiencing homelessness

Hospitalized due to COVID-19: 57

(18.8% of cases)

Admitted to the intensive care unit

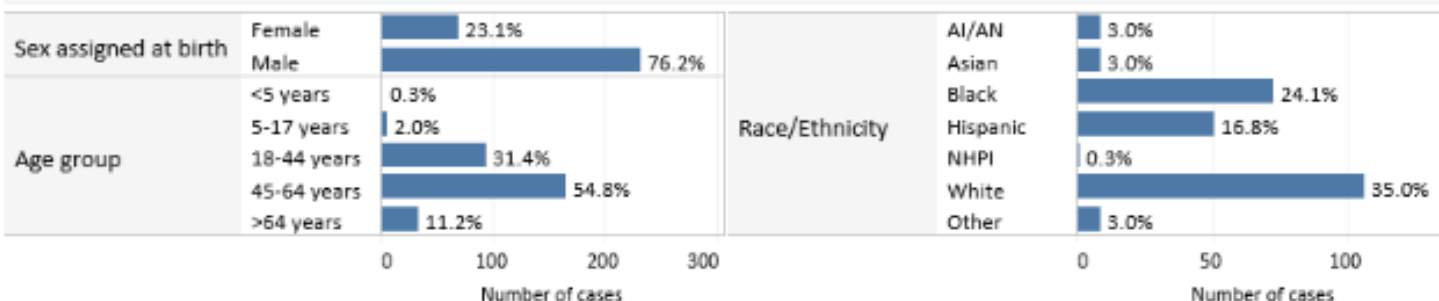
due to COVID-19: 8

(14.0% of those hospitalized)

Deaths due to COVID-19: 8

(2.6% of cases)

Demographics



Race groups are mutually exclusive, meaning that each person can only be counted within a single category. For the purpose of this display, Hispanic/Latinx is counted as a race and is not included in other groups. AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native. NHPI = Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Other = other race or multi-racial. There are 45 (14.9%) cases missing race/ethnicity, 2 (0.7%) cases missing sex assigned at birth, and 1 (0.3%) cases missing age.

Facility details: Homeless service sites

Facility Type	Facilities with a case	Number of cases	Facilities with a death	Number of deaths
Homeless housing facility	27	60	5	6
Emergency shelter	41	166	1	1
Day services	4	5	0	0

In addition to the above, there have been 72 cases and 1 death among individuals experiencing homelessness in the past 12 months but not enrolled in shelter, day services or a homeless housing program at the time of diagnosis. This includes anyone in encampments, living on the streets, or enrolled in rapid re-housing.

Homeless housing facilities include permanent supportive housing and transitional housing. Emergency shelters refer to overnight accommodations serving people experiencing homelessness. Day Services include day centers, hygiene centers, and food/meal programs.

Session 1 Overview

We paused the planning agenda.

We spent the majority of the meeting processing our feelings on the murder of Mr. George Floyd and how our community was coming together in mourning, outrage and action.

We began a discussion on what supports members - particularly members of color, those with lived experience, &/or front line providers – may need now.



The Black Lives Matter mural that is being drawn on East Pine Street is quickly taking shape. (Dean Rutz / The Seattle Times)



Microphone in hand, Hazzaunderwood leads protesters in chants as they march from Harborview Medical Center to City Hall plaza on June 6. (Alan Berner / The Seattle Times)

Seattle Times articles sent as session 1 pre-reads:

[' Racism is the biggest public health crisis of our time:' Health care workers of color fight twin pandemics](#)

[Coronavirus brings a "whole other layer of trauma' for workers who serve homeless people'](#)

Themes From Session 1 to Carry Forward

1. While everyone is experiencing a range of emotions, these conversations can be retraumatizing and exhausting for members of color.
2. It may be easier for white people to be hopeful that lasting change will come from the spark of recent actions. Little evidence to support this.
3. White people - especially those in leadership - need to do more than just “step back” and listen. The white savior industrial complex* plays out in daily decision making and harms people of color.
4. The language we use matters and reveals biases and blind spots. Nobody wants to be continually referred to as cases, statistics, or risk factors.
5. Slowing down to thoughtfully reflect and plan is important. That said, individuals currently experiencing homelessness need us to act with urgency and have already identified priorities.

Health | Local News | Project Homeless

Coronavirus brings ‘a whole other layer of trauma’ for workers who serve homeless people

May 21, 2020 at 6:00 am | Updated May 21, 2020 at 9:09 am



1 of 2 | Engagement Services Project Manager Simone Andu, left, and Senior Program Manager of Engagement Services Charese Jones work at YouthCare, which provides services to Seattle's homeless youth. (Mike Siegel / The Seattle Times) Less ^

* White savior industrial complex refers to how white people, and white-led organizations, approach serving ‘communities of color’. [More can be read from Teju Cole](#)

Some COVID-19 Priority Public Health Planning Needs Identified by CAG members

How COVID-19 is making it even harder to access services and protect our health

Vital public services that once ensured safety, hygiene, and temporary shelter for folks who have nowhere else to go have been shut down with the unintended consequence of leaving many without access to these necessities.

More people are living unsheltered. Shelters close their referral and walk-in programs to ensure safe social distancing. It's impacted public health risks of unhoused populations.

Hygiene kits being distributed are not framed to meet the needs of the unhoused population.

Food banks are operating at or past capacity, and community feeding programs have discontinued serving their neighbors, causing more food insecurity.

How the response to protests are adding additional stress on top of everything else

Closure of drug stores due to protest activities making it difficult for people to access medications.

Transportation concerns – people getting stuck downtown due to Sound Transit shutting down service.

Living in vehicles that are not sealed well and hit by tear gas.

Not only do people have a hard time getting supplies like face masks, but some people of color are afraid to use them because of racism.

What Will Accountability Look Like This Summer?

Centering the voices of people with lived experiences and front line providers*

BACKGROUND

We know what needs to get done to help people living off the grid (unsheltered). We already know where to go. Most important, we know how to do it. The challenge comes down to directly helping people with basic needs – get food, water & coffee.

Q1. It's July and reaching 80 degrees. How we can strategize to help people living off the grid concretely get more water, food and coffee this summer?

Q2. What is getting in our way and how can people in leadership positions help?

* Other GC members and administrative team members encouraged to listen in and will be invited to directly participate at the end of this brainstorm.