

Statement of Need Regarding Homeless Citizens Facing the COVID-19 Pandemic

To Whom It May Concern:

As cases of active COVID-19 rise in Durham County, recommendations have come forward for more strictly observed social distancing, isolation, and quarantine practices. But if an individual or family is homeless, where are they expected to isolate or quarantine?

Durham has in excess of 1,000 people living in shelters, outside, or in unstable housing situations, and multiple hundreds more in congregate living settings who would otherwise be homeless. These individuals are at higher risk for transmission, and a high proportion are over age 50 and medically vulnerable. Current emergency shelter settings in Durham are not meeting minimum requirements for social distancing, and have no ability to provide isolation or quarantine for symptomatic or diagnosed citizens.

The undersigned group of community partners has identified the following urgent needs for this population;

- Overflow emergency shelter space to accommodate minimum needs for social distancing, and resources to facilitate transition of individuals to non-shelter settings before they become ill.
- Enhanced access to testing for symptomatic individuals meeting criteria for testing that does not require transportation to another site.
- Isolation shelter spaces for individuals who have not undergone testing but are exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness, with appropriate psychosocial, security and medical supports.
- A plan for quarantine capability for diagnosed cases of COVID-19 or persons under investigation (PUI), which meets Centers for Disease Control guidelines for quarantine. This may require multiple sites.

In challenging times, the opportunity and imperative are evident to provide for these vulnerable members of our community. We are poised and ready to support the development of a coordinated plan for homeless individuals in Durham County. Please contact Jacob Feigal, MD, Clinical Director at Healthcare for the Homeless Clinic in Durham to schedule a phone call or meeting at 919-684-5518.

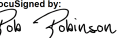
Sincerely,

  
Jacob Feigal (Mar 24, 2020)

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Elizabeth C Brill, MPS (Mar 23, 2020)

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Charles Browning, MD, CMO  
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