PROMOTING HEALTH IN HOMELESS SHELTERS (PHHS)

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Program Goal

Increase adoption of infection prevention and health education policies and procedures within homeless shelters to:

- Reduce transmission of TB and other communicable diseases
- Promote holistic health within their employees and clients
Program Rationale

- Outbreaks of TB in homeless shelters across the U.S.
  - Jacksonville, Florida
  - Kane County, Illinois
  - Los Angeles, California
  - King County, Washington
  - New York, New York
  - Portland, Maine
  - Atlanta, Georgia (3 dead)

- DOH has conducted mass TB screenings in local shelters due to exposure to infectious cases
Program Scope

- Emergency Shelters (ES)
- Transitional Housing (TH)
Participating ES/TH Agencies

- Alpha House of Tampa
- Catholic Charities
- DACCO
- Family Promise of Greater Brandon
- Gracepoint Wellness, Inc.
- Mary & Martha House
- Metropolitan Ministries
- Salvation Army
- St. Vincent de Paul
- The Spring of Tampa Bay
- VA Transitional Dormitory & Domiciliary
Participating Non-ES/TH Agencies

- Florida Department of Health
- Hillsborough County:
  - Board of County Commissioners
  - Healthcare Services
  - Homeless Services
- Iasis Healthcare (Humana)
- Magellan Complete Care
- Staywell Medicaid MMA
- Tampa General Hospital
- USF AHEC/COM
PHHS Continuum of Integration

1. No integration of PHHS recommendations within the agency
   - No infection prevention/control or health education policies and procedures mandated by the organization

2. Providing symptom screenings to clients at intake/annually

3. Number 2, plus providing health education to staff and clients

4. Number 3, plus providing TB testing (including referrals) for: (1) clients at intake and annually and (2) high-risk staff upon start of employment and annually

5. Implementation of TB prevention measures within the agency
Health-Related Outreach

- Operation Reveille 2014/2015
- Operation Stand Down 2014
Deliverables

■ Infection Prevention Plan
  - Symptom screening template
  - Referral form for TB testing to DOH TB Center
  - Cough alert log/Line list
  - Shelter Assessment Form

■ Health Promotion Toolkit
  - Information on a variety of health issues that disproportionately affect those experiencing homelessness

■ Both can be found on the THHI website
What Can You Do to Prevent TB?

The workgroup members decided what measures should be feasible for any shelter without using any additional resources:

- **Maximum space between beds**
- **Arrange beds “head to toe”**
- **Maintain bed logs/lists and keep them for 1 year**
- **Provide tissues for clients and staff who are coughing or encourage coughing into their elbow**
- **Provide TB education for staff, clients, and volunteers**
- **Post signs to promote cough etiquette and proper handwashing**
Time and Resources

- Prevention saves time and resources than response
  - *Day-to-day duties*
    - Track bed log/list
    - Symptom screening at intake for clients
  - *Most other responsibilities are one-time duties or occur annually (e.g. arrange beds head-to-toe, infection prevention plan, and shelter assessment)*
  - *Easier to respond to a TB exposure in shelters with these policies/procedures and partnerships in place*
What Can Your Organization Do?

Encourage your administration to:
- Attend a quarterly PHHS workgroup meeting
- Review the infection prevention plan template and health promotion toolkit on THHI’s website
- Consult with the Department of Health TB Center
- Evaluate your organization’s already established health-related services, education, and policies
Learn from Other Counties

- Communities with TB outbreaks have widely adopted these policies and procedures as a \textit{response}.
- In Hillsborough County, we would like to see organizations adopt these policies and procedures as a \textit{prevention measure} to avoid a TB outbreak.
- We don’t want any organization to receive negative attention if a TB outbreak were to occur within their facility.