

Board of Health for Madison and Dane County
Isolation of Individuals Who Are Homeless

Resolution #2010-07

One of the quandaries that arose during the recent H1N1 epidemic is how Public Health—Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) would proceed if there were large numbers of individuals who are homeless suffering from H1N1. PHMDC had several conversations with both the Salvation Army and Porchlight. Fortunately, the incidence of H1N1 among individuals who are homeless was very low and there was no need to isolate large numbers of people.

The threat of H1N1 has receded, but the conversations with the Salvation Army and Porchlight have continued. The feeling of all parties is that we need to be better prepared for the possibility of needing to isolate individuals who are homeless—if not for H1N1, then for “the next big one.” The conversations have proceeded to the point where the parties are ready to enter into an agreement.

Porchlight is able to set up an infirmary that can house 20 to 25 single men. They will reassign staff to cover the infirmary during business hours and will cover that expense. Porchlight will use their existing staff to cover the infirmary during non-business hours and hire additional staff to backfill, with PHMDC covering the expense of the backfill. This is being done so that their more experienced staff will be assigned to the infirmary. Porchlight will provide for the basic needs of clients, including meals. It is estimated that it will take three to four days to get the appropriate pieces in place to open the infirmary. PHMDC will cover the cost of transportation when individuals need to go to the hospital and provide any over-the-counter medications that are needed.

The Salvation Army is already able to isolate a three or four single women or families. When additional single women or families need to be isolated, the Salvation Army will house these individuals in one of the hotels that they already use for their clients. The Salvation Army will provide for the basic needs of clients, including meals. PHMDC will reimburse the Salvation Army for motel expenses, cover the cost of transportation to the motel and the hospital, and provide any over-the-counter medications that are needed.

PHMDC will determine when there is a need for isolation services and establish referral criteria for the program. The agreements will be for one year and will automatically be renewed for two more years unless one of the parties terminates the agreement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Health for Madison and Dane County on behalf of Public Health—Madison and Dane County is authorized to enter into agreements for one year with two one-year renewals with Porchlight and the Salvation Army for the provision of isolation for individuals who are homeless and the Director is authorized to sign these agreements.

Drafted by: David Caes
Introduced: May 13, 2010
Action: