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October 29th, 2020

Dear Hospital Emergency Department Director:

As we approach the winter, the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) is concerned about the risks that unsheltered New Yorkers experiencing homelessness face during the cold weather months in NYC. Many have chronic conditions that put them at higher risk of cold weather-related injuries and death.

Similar to prior years, DHS will declare a Code Blue Alert under the circumstances described in the attached procedure. Unlike prior years, we are still in the Covid-19 pandemic and asking hospitals to allow individuals in need to use the hospital ED waiting room or hospital space may be unfeasible, depending on how high the case rates are. If the pandemic continues or there is a resurgence, we will seek other options and ask that you work with DHS and its outreach teams to achieve the most appropriate outcome for our clients.

If an individual experiencing homelessness presents to your hospital emergency department, does not need immediate medical care, and requests or accepts DHS services, please call the DHS Joint Command Center at 212-607-6040 or email SHCCC@dhs.nyc.gov.

On behalf of all New Yorkers, thank you for your help in assisting individuals experiencing homelessness during cold weather emergencies.

For any questions, related to DHS Code Blue please contact: Shane Cox at scox@dhs.nyc.gov.

We appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Fabienne Laraque, MD, MPH
Medical Director

Appendix I

Contact Information for DHS Outreach Teams

Bronx Outreach

BronxWorks

24-hour number: 718- 893-3606 Director:

Juan Rivera

jrivera@bronxworks.org

Brooklyn/Queens Street to Home

Breaking Ground 24-hour
number:

Brooklyn: Casey Burke 917-753-1837

cburke@breakingground.org

Queens: Cara Ochsenreiter 631-875-4353

cochsenreiter@breakingground.org

Manhattan Outreach Consortium CUCS

24-hour number: 212-222-9806

Director: Erica Strang

212-724-1001 or estrang@cucs.org

Staten Island

Project Hospitality

24-hour number: 347-538-2314

Director: Teisha Diallo teisha_diallo@projecthospitality.org

MTA Outreach

BRC

24-hour number: 212-533-5151

Director: Tim Long

tlong@brc.org