

## HOSPITAL & TESTING SITES

### ACTIVATED RESPITE AND PROTECTIVE ACTION REFERRALS PROTOCOL

#### I. Overview of Motel/Hotel Resources Available in Denver

The City and County of Denver is partnering with Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) and the Salvation Army to support motel/hotel room options across Denver for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, these *low acuity* rooms are offered under two types of programs:

- A) **Activated Respite (AR):** Rooms provided to support *isolation* during the contagious period of the virus for those who have a confirmed positive test result or a high-clinical index of suspicion of COVID-19.
  - AR does not offer quarantine services (see section III, Eligibility)
- B) **Protective Action Respite (PAR):** Rooms for those who are *at risk* of complications if they were to contract COVID-19
  - Clients must have an eligible medical condition (see section III, Eligibility)
  - To qualify, clients must pass a safety evaluation by the CCH integrated health team

Services offered at both Activated Respite and Protective Action facilities include:

- Single or double occupancy motel rooms with meals provided,
- Minimal integrated health team support provided by Colorado Coalition for the Homeless.
  - CCH strives to provide daily support at AR and weekly support at PAR

These programs **do not offer** levels of care found in skilled nursing or assisted living facilities. Individuals must be independent with activities of daily living and safe unsupervised in a motel room with intermittent follow up from the healthcare team. Guests must be able to ask for help when needed.

Note: As temporary programs developed from an emergency response to a health crisis, neither of these programs are permanent nor have a guarantee into permanent housing. Please inform and support your client to connect with case management or other community resources if permanent housing is identified as the primary need.

#### II. Activated Respite (COVID-19 Isolation) Eligibility

##### A) Referral Eligibility for Site

The following hospitals/testing sites are eligible to refer into Denver's Activated Respite resources:

- Hospitals and testing sites **located in the City and County of Denver** may refer all patients who meet the eligibility criteria for these resources (see Section IV).
- Hospitals and testing sites located outside the City and County of Denver but who receive transports from Denver Health paramedics, may refer patients who meet the eligibility criteria for these resources (see Section IV) below **as long as the patient was transported by Denver Health paramedics**. Note: Due to capacity limitations, transportation cannot be provided under these circumstances. The hospital/testing site making the referral must arrange transportation.
- Hospitals and testing sites located in Aurora, Adams, and Jefferson Counties who arrange and provide COVID-19 appropriate transportation for the client after the referral has been approved and the client assigned a bed. \*There are a contracted number of beds for these referrals; if at capacity, we may not be able to accept referrals.

##### B) Referral Eligibility for Clients

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Please utilize the referral process below for clients experiencing homelessness with confirmed or suspected contagious COVID-19 infection. Please note that hospitals and testing facilities need to provide a positive test result or pending test documentation.

#### 1) Inclusion Criteria:

- Positive PCR
- Pending PCR with new onset cough, fever, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or sense of smell within the last 2 weeks

#### 2) Exclusion Criteria:

- Quarantine: Close contacts of COVID-19 who are not experiencing symptoms who have a negative or pending test result
- Quarantine: Clients with a low clinical suspicion of COVID-19, such as only secondary symptoms (fatigue, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, congestion, nausea, diarrhea) with a negative point of care or awaiting test results
- Clients unable to care for self in an independent living environment safely
  - Dependence to complete activities of daily living (transferring/walking, feeding, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, continence); high-acuity behavioral health & medical conditions
- Someone who has a 2<sup>nd</sup> positive COVID-19 test within 90 days of their 1<sup>st</sup> positive COVID-19 test and has already been cleared from the contagious/isolation period

*Note: Families are also eligible for Activated Respite if someone in their household is symptomatic or has been tested for COVID-19; however, arrangements may be customized for each household to reduce risk of spread to other family members. If the client who qualifies for activated respite is discharged by self or the program, non-eligible family members are no longer able to remain in the program.*

### III. Activated Respite (COVID-19 Isolation) Referral Process

If a patient meets the criteria stated above, hospital/testing site staff should take the following steps.

1. Offer to connect the patient to hotel/motel isolation resources.
  - i. If the person declines the offer and is symptomatic for COVID-19 or has been tested for COVID-19, the patient will not be allowed to receive shelter in congregate settings or any services from homeless service providers for the 10-day contagious time period and should be informed of this.
    - i. Please follow your facility procedure on transferring this COVID-19 alert into HMIS for a 10-day period
  - ii. If the person accepts the offer, the hospital/testing site will continue to step 2.
2. Hospital/testing site staff will request the patient's verbal consent to share their information for the purposes of connecting them to services.
3. The CCH referral process is available 7 days per week between the hours of 8 AM and 5 PM.
  - a. If the referral is outside business hours, please try to maintain the COVID-19 positive client at your facility overnight and pursue the referral the next morning. COVID-19 positive or suspected individuals are not permitted in congregate settings, such as shelters, and are not advised to be transported via methods such as cabs or buses.

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4. Once verbal consent is obtained, hospital/testing site staff will:
    - i. Visit <https://www.coloradocoalition.org/activatedrespite> to fill out the Activated Respite Referral form linked on the website. This will automatically submit the form to [activatedrespite@coloradocoalition.org](mailto:activatedrespite@coloradocoalition.org)
    - ii. On weekends only, *also* call 303-312-9800 to inform the team of the referral, as this inbox is only monitored on-demand during on-call weekend hours. You will be directed to an answering service who will forward your call to the appropriate intake team member. If the staff member is not immediately available, please ensure you give an updated contact # to return your call.
  5. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless healthcare team will review the intake form to determine whether the patient meets the criteria for the program, whether additional information is needed, and whether a room is available. Depending on capacity, room availability cannot be guaranteed.
    - i. Please note that review of the intake form and referral determination can take up to 2 hours.
    - b. If you have not had confirmation within this timeframe – or, you have not had confirmation and it is past 4:30 on a weekday, please call 303-312-9800 to confirm the receipt of your referral.
    - i. If the referral is not approved, hospital/testing site staff should keep the patient at their facility if the patient requires a higher level of care or refer to another shelter resource if appropriate (see below).
  - i. If the referral is approved, CCH will confirm that the patient has an Activated Respite room and provide the initial referral for transportation, serviced by Bayaud, if referring facility is eligible for this (Note: Transportation only operates from 8 AM – 5 PM).
  - i. Hospital/testing site staff will notify the patient that they will be taken to an Activated Respite program. They will remind patient that going to Activated Respite is helping them (isolate) shelter in place. Clients can leave their room. Recommended reasons for leaving the isolation room may include leaving to smoke or to go on a socially distant walk. Please educate clients on the public health ramifications of entering group settings during this timeframe, such as a bus or a store.
6. For referrals from Denver-based facilities:
    - i. Staff will make sure the point of contact and person requiring transport are at the meeting location at the appropriate time. Provided point of contact will help the person board the vehicle.
    - ii. NOTE – Multiple people **may be** transported to Activated Respite via a single transport. DDPHE recommends social distancing within the vehicle to the extent possible, that people in the vehicle keep their masks on and wash their hands after exit, and that the vehicle is not completely full if possible. Windows should be rolled down to extent practical to ventilate during and after transport.

#### IV. How to Direct Other Patients

- A) Individuals who are not confirmed or suspected of COVID-19 and who are not high risk for complications of COVID-19 should not be referred to Protective Action or Activated Respite.
- B) Those who require a higher level of care than these motel/hotel resources can provide should be retained at the hospital or connected with another higher acuity of care location.
- C) Those who do not need a higher level of care should be directed toward congregate shelter resources. All other individuals and households should receive congregate shelter services and follow guidelines for social distancing, handwashing, wearing face coverings, etc. For information on existing resources, please

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see: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/housing-information/resident-resources/find-shelter.html>

#### D) Additional Resources for Veterans

- a. The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program has relaxed some guidelines to allow them to support SSVF-eligible veterans during the COVID crisis who otherwise may not have qualified for this service. In addition to supporting housing, this has allowed for motel rooms for veterans who are not demonstrating symptoms of COVID but who would be at high-risk for greater complications should they contract the virus.
- b. Shelter guests who would be appropriate for protective action who are veterans should be connected to the SSVF program.
- c. To connect a **protective-action** appropriate veteran to motel resources through the SSVF, contact Missy Mish with the VA's Community Resources and Referral Center. This coordination will help us serve more clients in non-congregate settings.

Missy Mish, LCSW  
VA Eastern Colorado Healthcare System  
Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) Program Manager  
Phone: 303-294-5601  
Fax: 720-723-7838  
Email: [mary.mish@va.gov](mailto:mary.mish@va.gov)

#### A) **Protective Action Eligibility:** Client does not have COVID-19 but is at high risk for complications of COVID-19.

##### **Inclusion Criteria**

###### Eligibility Criteria (Who to refer)

- Age  $\geq$  65, with or without medical conditions
- Clients any age with conditions that place a client at-risk for complications from COVID-19, including the following conditions:
  - Morbid and Severe Obesity (BMI  $>35$ )
  - Chronic Lung Disease
  - Pregnancy or up to 6-months Post-partum
  - Immunocompromised, such as organ transplant, HIV/AIDS, Cancer, Immunosuppressant medications
  - Chronic Kidney Disease, including dialysis
  - Uncontrolled Diabetes
  - Hemoglobin disorders, such as sickle cell disease or thalassemia
  - Heart disease
  - Liver Disease

Note: Eligible conditions may be dynamic as recommendations from the CDC or clinical studies are updated based upon most recent evidence of COVID-19 complications and risk factors.

###### Qualification Criteria (Steps for admission)

- Negative COVID screening upon referral
- COVID-19 test prior to admission
- Condition which directly places client at risk for complications if COVID-19 is contracted
- Qualification by CCH's integrated health team safety evaluation
  - Low-acuity health needs; can function safely in independent living environment

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NOTE: Partners, caregivers, children, and family members may be able to accompany a qualified individual into the Protective Action program if one person in their household is high risk. Family members must also follow the qualification criteria named above. *If the client who qualifies for protective action is discharged by self or the program, non-eligible family members are no longer able to remain in the program.*

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Clients unable to care for self in an independent living environment safely, who need a higher level of care such as traditional respite, assisted living, skilled nursing, or hospital-level care
  - Dependence to complete activities of daily living (transferring/walking, feeding, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, continence); high-acuity behavioral health & medical conditions
- 1. All other individuals and households should receive congregate shelter services and follow guidelines for social distancing, handwashing, wearing face coverings, etc.

#### **V. Referral Process to Protective Action**

- a. Protective action evaluations and intakes are paused until further notice as transitions take place to align program needs and available resources.
- b. For referral information, please call (303) 293-2220, option 9. A voicemail system will be updated in both English & Spanish to inform the status of protective action referral availability.
- c. There is not a waiting list for protective action.
- d. The purpose of protective action was to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and minimize complications in our most medically vulnerable populations. The most effective intervention to protect against COVID-19 is vaccination. If your client has not been vaccinated, we strongly encourage you to support vaccine access and information to your client. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, along with many other public health, community health, & hospital partners are offering vaccine access.