

FACT SHEET



El Dorado County

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 BY PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Q: Why Are Homeless Folk Being Placed in Motels?

A: COVID-19 can impact anyone and everyone, but those who are older or have a pre-existing condition are more likely to become infected and if they do are more likely to become seriously ill which puts a burden on our hospitals. The homeless are just one of our "at risk" populations along with seniors and those with chronic conditions that the County is working to support. The best way to reduce the risk of infections in these high risk groups, as well as prevent the spread of COVID-19 through the community, is to ensure they are sheltered, and for the homeless, the Governor's direction is that we place these folk in selected motels.

Q: Who Will Be Placed?

A: The plan for sheltering the homeless in motels, presented to and approved by the Board of Supervisors, focuses on placing only the most vulnerable, i.e., those who are seniors, or have pre-existing medical conditions. The County's main strategy is to promote sheltering in place, encouraging the homeless to stay in their existing camps, and to provide outreach and support to help them stay in their current locations. As a result, it's only a smaller number of carefully selected individuals who will be placed in motels, and each person will be carefully screened before placement.

Q: How Will Placed Individuals Be Supported?

A: The County team, in partnership with the Sheriff's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), has a detailed plan to provide a range of services to meet basic needs. The aim is to provide sufficient services so individuals placed in motels have no need to wander locally. Food will be brought in daily from the Upper Room, laundry services and clothing will be provided, each individual will get a daily health check and physicians and staff from Marshall will be visiting to support any medical needs. In addition, overnight security is being put in place to keep an eye on the residents and to discourage visitors who carry the risk of spread of infection.

Q: What is the Board of Supervisors Oversight?

The Board of Supervisors has been presented with and approved a three-phase plan for supporting the homeless in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, and of which motel placement is a part. This recognizes that while the long-term challenge for homelessness focuses on housing and employment, our immediate challenge is the public health of risk of infection, which the homeless COVID-19 crisis plan is designed to address. The three phases are as follows:

- Phase 1 - Active outreach, education and support to keep the homeless folk in place in their camps. A community action team led by HOT and including Marshall healthcare staff, and volunteers got this work underway two weeks ago
- Phase 2 - Placing the vulnerable in motels. This work is underway use of motel space in Pollock Pines is one of a number of motels in different communities that we are working to secure
- Phase 3 - Planning for a surge. This is a contingency plan being worked on with the Q:County Emergency Operations Center that is identifying Alternate Care Sites that can be ready should infection spread in El Dorado County and we need to shelter larger numbers of people. In this situation, we will need to shelter seniors, families and others in addition to some homeless folk.

Q: What Happens When the Health Crisis is Over?

The focus of the homeless strategy approved by the Board of Supervisors is for short term support of the homeless through the COVID-19 crisis.

There is no plan within El Dorado County to continue motel placement, although in their Board Meeting of 4/14 the Board of Supervisors did agree a joint statement with the City of Placerville to seek review, along with the Sheriff's HOT team, of options for longer term management of the homeless. At this time there is no commitment to any particular solution or use of existing property.

Q: What is the Governors Directive and Project RoomKey?

People may have heard through the media of the Governors directive to County's to move quickly to shelter the homeless, and many counties are now ahead of us in securing motel room access. Some Counties are planning to shelter larger numbers of homeless, but that is not the case for El Dorado County. Our plan is to only shelter the smaller number of folk who face the most significant health risks. Funding is being made available from the State of California and the Federal Government to support this process. You may hear of "Project Roomkey" which is the name being used by the Federal Government for this program.

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