Letter to Housing Choice Voucher clients and stakeholders

DHC measures to fight the spread of coronavirus

March 13, 2020

Dear DHC Housing Choice Voucher Participants and Partners:

The Detroit Housing Commission ("DHC") is committed to doing everything we can to ensure the health and well-being of those we serve, our partners and our community, and we want to keep you informed about DHC’s response to the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Currently, DHC is operating on normal hours and has not closed any of its offices or services. We will continue to perform housing quality inspections. We are, however, on the advice of public health officials, asking everyone we work with to call, email or use our website whenever possible, rather than visit our offices in person.

The following actions are being taken to help keep our participants, staff, partners and communities safe:

**Staying home if ill**

- DHC has instructed all staff who are ill, or have an ill family member, not to come to work until they have been symptom-free for at least three days.

**Social distancing**

- DHC is postponing non-essential meetings and encouraging staff to conduct meetings as much as possible by telephone or online.
- DHC is asking constituents to conduct business with DHC by phone, email or the website to reduce opportunities for the virus to spread, and to call your contact ahead of time if you must come in.
- DHC is ensuring adequate staffing to respond to an increase in people who contact us by phone, email or the website at dhcmi.org. Participants or partners can call 313-877-8817 if they don’t have the appropriate contact information.
- Some meetings, classes, workshops and other activities at DHC locations may be canceled or postponed; please check with the organizers of these activities.
Sanitation

- DHC has instructed staff on additional personal sanitation practices to ensure they are not transferring viruses to themselves or others.
- DHC is now cleaning common areas of buildings and offices at least daily, sanitizing door handles, railings, bathrooms, elevator buttons, vending and laundry machines, community rooms and other frequently touched surfaces.

The spread of COVID-19 is a public health issue. To stay informed or ask questions, you should contact:

Detroit Health Department – [www.detroitmi.gov](http://www.detroitmi.gov) (website); [dhealth@detroitmi.gov](mailto:dhealth@detroitmi.gov) (email); 313-876-4000


DHC will provide periodic updates, doing all it can to share information as this situation develops. You are strongly encouraged to access information on COVID-19 prevention and preparedness through the following resources:

Ready.gov: [https://www.ready.gov/pandemic](https://www.ready.gov/pandemic)
HUD: [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)

DHC is relying on the cooperation of all participants and stakeholders to promote and follow good health practices, including the following disease prevention strategies as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth;
- Stay home when you are sick;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm sleeve;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds (sing “Happy Birthday” twice), especially after going to the bathroom, before cooking and eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
We know the COVID-19 virus is causing great concern and want you to know we share that concern. DHC is taking the situation very seriously and is closely monitoring developments. We will adjust our operations as needed and will keep you informed of any additional changes.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sandra Henriquez
Executive Director
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
What every American and community can do now to decrease the spread of the coronavirus

- Consider providing additional protection for household members over 65
- Have only one family member care for them
- Give sick members their own room if possible, and keep the door closed

Households with sick family members

- Ensure all utensils and surfaces are cleaned regularly
- If possible, provide a protected space for vulnerable household members
- Persons such as by feeding or caring for the person
  - Person with underlying conditions, for example, wash hands frequently before interacting with the
  - Person with underlying conditions, for example, wash hands frequently before interacting with
- Have the healthy people in the household conduct themselves as if they were a significant risk to the
  - Significant underlying conditions include heart, lung, kidney disease, diabetes;

Households with vulnerable seniors or those with significant underlying conditions

- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning
- Disinfect surfaces like countertops, tables, and handles regularly
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their face and cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean hands at the door and at regular intervals

All households

Encourage your family members to...

Keeping the home safe
What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care
You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home
People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor
If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider’s office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask
You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes
Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items
You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day
High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms
Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider’s office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation
Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives

When and How to Wash Your Hands

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Learn when and how you should wash your hands to stay healthy.

Wash Your Hands Often to Stay Healthy

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
Why? Read the science behind the recommendations.

**Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can’t Use Soap and Water**

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

**How to use hand sanitizer**

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

**Caution!** Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of reach of young children and supervise their use. Learn more here.

**New Handwashing Campaign: Life is Better with Clean Hands**

To celebrate Global Handwashing Day on October 15, CDC has launched the *Life is Better with Clean Hands* campaign. This campaign encourages adults to make handwashing part of their everyday life and encourages parents to wash their hands to set a good example for their kids. Visit the *Life is Better with Clean Hands* campaign page to download resources to help promote handwashing in your community.

For more information on handwashing, visit CDC’s Handwashing website or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

**More Information**

- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives