Implementation and (Re) Evaluation of Program in Shelters During COVID-19 Pandemic

Mauricio Urtecho

Toronto Housing & Homeless Supports serve a vulnerable population with complex needs. COVID-19 has identified challenges within the systems which led to increased pressure on staff and clients. There have been numerous outbreaks reported over the course of the pandemic, requiring IPAC guidance. City of Toronto and Public Health Ontario (PHO) provide detailed manual and guidance documents covering all aspects of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) best practices, however the implementation and detailed manual guidance are new. IPAC team has created numerous documents and presentations and are continuously collaborating with community partners on multiple interventional strategies intended to mitigate further viral transmission and prevent outbreaks.

IPAC team:
1. Created instructional materials to educate the frontline staff regarding prevention strategies
2. Organised over 50 vaccination clinics (delivered by external partners on monthly basis)
3. Conducts monthly site audits to ensure compliance with set regulations work on performance improvement with external partners on monthly basis)
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6. Collaborate with community partners

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PROJECT

Since the inception in May 2022 the IPAC team has overseen over 20 investigations and 9 confirmed COVID-19 outbreaks.

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LESSONS LEARNED

An accessible IPAC team with demonstrated expertise and experience in the IPAC field has been essential resource not only in managing COVID-19 outbreaks, as well as other types of outbreaks with a standardized approach to outbreak management, evaluation, and program management. IPAC team continues working on IPAC best practices implementation utilizing project management expertise; enhancing support for frontline staff and residents; considering involvement of shelter residents; and ensuring senior management support evaluation is occurrence before proceeding with implementation.

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