Update: Addressing the Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19 on Marginalized Communities in Fairfax County

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
KARLA BRUCE, CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER
JUNE 30, 2020
What’s Driving the Disparate Impacts?

▪ The way that the pandemic is affecting people of color reflects dynamics of race and class that existed well before COVID-19 emerged

▪ The disease is affecting the population more likely to
  • Work in public-facing jobs, where physical distancing isn’t practical
  • Experience loss of income from taking time off from work
  • Live in situations which limit the ability to self-isolate
  • Lack health insurance or a primary care provider

▪ Disparate impacts are not only health related – economic and social impacts too

▪ Can’t underestimate the difficulty in balancing an interest in good health and wellness while combatting the intersecting threats of hunger, eviction, and unemployment
Fairfax County’s COVID-19 Equity Strategy

- Continuing to focus on the populations and neighborhoods experiencing the most adverse health, economic, and social effects
- Accepting that our standard service models may not have the intended reach or impact
- Following five overarching strategies:
  - Expanding availability of testing and treatment
  - Engaging sector and community leaders to understand the unique situations facing residents most at risk
  - Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations
  - Connecting residents to services and supports
  - Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone
Highlights

- Expanding availability of testing and treatment
  - HD events held in coordination with other county agencies and community partners held in Annandale, Bailey’s Crossroads, Mount Vernon, and Herndon with others planned for future
  - Standing testing sites established by health safety net providers in the communities most impacted by the disease utilizing Health District case data and the COVID-19 Vulnerability Index

- Engaging sector and community leaders to understand and address the unique situations facing residents most at risk
  - Gaining useful information on immediate needs and insights on challenges faced by residents accessing existing systems
  - Allocating resources to support Outreach and Engagement efforts through community partners
  - Community Stakeholders Inventory compiled
Highlights

- Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations
  - COVID-19 language portal features information and resources in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, Hindi, and Korean
  - Expediting the hiring of a Language Access Coordination position to manage county language translation and interpretation capacity and efforts to promote quality and positive resident experiences

- Connecting residents to services and supports
  - Providing access to wraparound services at testing events and supporting residents who are isolating and quarantining at home or in hotels
  - Piloting rapid response strategies that can lead to change in how this work is done moving forward
Highlights

- Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone
  - Virginia Department of Emergency Management Health Equity Working Group providing masks and hand sanitizer to communities disproportionately impacted
  - World Central Kitchen food distribution
  - Partnership with Giant Foods to fast-track purchased food from GOYA for food pantries and direct resident disbursement
  - Pilot program with support from the Human Services Council’s Innovation Fund to engage small businesses such as ethnic grocers, restaurants, and food trucks to supply culturally reflective and nutritious meals and grocery through our food distribution network