

During our January Point in Count survey it was found that Paterson has about 300 homeless individuals in the city. COVID – 19 has drastically changed that the number. Shelters, and recovery centers have closed their doors to new individuals in order to keep their residents safe. We have also seen an uptick on evictions. Although the governor has stopped the eviction process many individuals are unaware of the process and regulation and have evicted their tenants. Many have gone to the extreme measure of shutting tenements water, which makes homes inhabitable.

- At the beginning of the pandemic the County convened a round table which included, the City of Paterson Department of Human Services (myself), and non-profit like Eva`s Village, St. Paul`s CDC, Paterson YMCA, Catholic Charities, and 211. During this time, we spoke about the immediate need to establish shelter for homeless individuals, and we developed a plan to shelter homeless individuals who were COVID positive as well as individuals who were street homeless.
- A system was created where those who were suffering from homeless could call 211 and they would be placed in a hotel.
- After individuals were placed in a hotel by 211; they would they be referred to Catholic Charities or Board of Social services, who would take the case. Offer those individuals additional time at the hotels and would work with them to apply for additional services and they them on the road to permanency.
- Since, most of the individuals were Paterson residents Paterson HHS reassigned a staff member to oversee this process. We made sure that those in need in the city of Paterson were getting placed and receiving the support they need. Tenee in HHS was over see case management making sure that individuals in the hotel were being referred to Catholic Charities and Board of Social Services. She was also on many of the calls with 211 as a liaison and advocate to make sure that Paterson individuals were being placed.
- Tenee was given a number where hotel residents, and those in the community could call directly for a status of their process.
- Approximately 400 people were placed in hotels during this partnership. We placed street homeless as well as those experiencing homeless. It was 400 people county wide, but a vast majority were from Paterson. (I could get specific number from 211 if needed)
- Paterson HHS did onsite case management to assist with unemployment applications, food stamp and TANF applications. We created a strong Partnership with Catholic Charities who has done a phenomenal job working with individuals towards permanency. We did not want anyone to fall through the cracks.
- Through the Mayors leadership and connection, Paterson HHS was able to apply for a grant from the CDC foundation. CDC foundation was able to hire 16 medical staff which included doctors, RNs and LPNs and deployed them to Paterson to monitor our homeless population at hotels, and in shelters.
- Paterson HHS provided on site medical monitoring of all individuals staying in the hotels as well as shelter and recovery center residents. We monitor for COVID -19, high blood pressure, and diabetes among other things.
- When the decision was made by the county to stop placing single homeless individuals in hotels. Paterson HHS was focused on helping our homeless population. We have worked diligently to

find a solution. Homeless families, seniors and people with disabilities are still being placed by 211 into hotels. Single individuals are who we are trying to connect to shelters.

- Due to COVID -19 shelters have closed to new residents due to safety concerns, and many have had to change the capacity of residents allowed because to new guidelines.
- Paterson HHS has partnered with the state to provide rapid testing so that the shelters feel safe opening up the beds that are available.
- We are also partnered with the state to provide testing to shelter residents and staff. We have tested about 70 people this week in our new testing piolet. Test monitoring is being done by the CDC Staff.
- In a partnership with Catholic Charites we have been able to place 134 homeless people into permanent homes.
- Single Rate Occupancy at Paterson YMCA have also just become available, so we are working to provide additional rapid test to fill those rooms.
- During since March Tenee and I have been working with the community and working with residents who 7 days a week and placing individuals are giving them resources from 8:00am to midnight.
- We have also worked to provide onsite municipal IDs, birth certificates, food, clothing, baby items to the homeless population that we are serving.

Realities/Concerns

- 211 is no longer placing single individuals in hotels which is a problem for street homeless populations.
- Shelter beds are not expanding to full capacity because of new covid regulations and the beds that the are available have not been filled because individuals need to be tested before being accepted. There is an overall shortage of beds.
- We have large uncommented homeless population many who have been illegally evicted from their homes during this time, nonetheless are very difficult to place because many services are not available to them.
- Another important note is that not all homeless are addicts. A large population of people on Paterson street that are substance abusers, who are difficult to reach. Many of them are not from the City of Paterson, and do not want help.
 - Many of those individuals stay on our streets for a few days and then go home
 - Others come to the city for recovery services, but never make it to a recovery center for many reasons.
 - Most of the individuals serviced in our city are not from the city of Paterson.
- As a Department of HHS we do not have the capacity to do massive outreach. I am currently working on bringing a social worker or clinician on board through the budget process.
- Currently all of the recovery centers are operating at full capacity.
- I am currently working on an addictions plan in partnership with the Paterson Police, St Joes Hospital and the Prosecutors office. First we need to work on a plan that the no profit need to follow. As well as a way to encourage MAT (medical assistance treatment). We have two doctors opening their business in Paterson, and we have already created a foot plan of a partnership.
- Resources, and support are still needed.