

"THE HUB" at Chelsea Police Station

COVID 19: Isolation and Quarantine

Healthcare Studies
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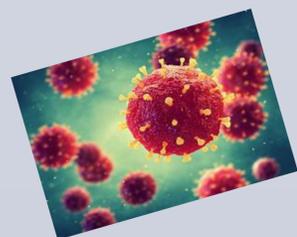


What is the "HUB"?

- The HUB works with families and individuals that are facing challenges and need one or more services from community agencies to reduce and overcome hardships.
- The HUB is a police-led initiative made up of officers, community agencies and government officials who address issues and situations before an emergency occurs.
- Resources are mobilized based on the patterns of issues and situations identified in that community.
- Situations that may be addressed include but are not limited to: mental and physical health, housing, violence and crime, parenting, unemployment, poverty and drugs.

Related Literature:

- COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus, is a disease that affects the respiratory tract. It is contracted through close contact and airborne particles, such as the droplets from coughing and sneezing. (Baylor College of Medicine, 2020)
- Symptoms of COVID 19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include: fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle/body aches, new loss of taste or smell, congestion, fatigue and nausea/vomiting. (NCIRD, 2020)
- The U.S. Department of Justice's, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office, has defined community policing as: "A philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues." (Megas, 2019)
- Community policing has led to a decrease in crime rates across most of the United States. "The FBI has documented a steady national decrease in almost all types of crimes over the last decade." (Jayachandran, 2016)



The Internship:

- Participate in HUB meetings: HUB meetings occur once a week with the CPD and participating agencies to discuss the needs of the community and the problems that residents are facing.
- Participate in Chelsea Downtown Taskforce meetings: These meetings are made up of court personnel, social service workers, city staff and business owners that identify trouble spots and implement intervention.
- Shadow Community Health Navigators: During a patient's rehab/outpatient registration, CHN's assist individuals with accessing different community resources, outreach and documentation.
- Volunteer at the Selah Resource Center: The Selah Resource Center provides free breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday for residents in the community.

Methods and Materials:

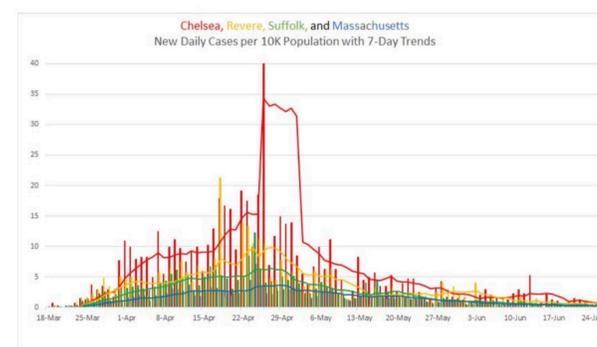
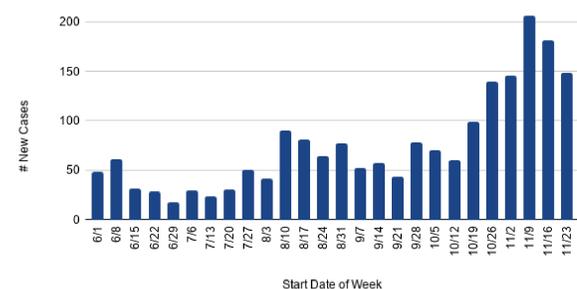
- As reflected in the chart below, the infection rate of COVID-19 in Chelsea was six times the state average, potentially resulting from the high number of "essential" workers residing in Chelsea, MA. Nearly 80 percent of workers in Chelsea fall into the "essential worker" category. Upon closer analysis, there are many underlying legal and social drivers which have also played apart in the elevated risk of infection. (Boston Public Health Commission, 2020)
 - Chelsea has led the Boston region in unemployment, and also has the state's highest crime rate.
- Secure housing is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet housing in Chelsea has become increasingly expensive as rent in Boston skyrockets. As a result, 30% of Chelsea's population lives within 3 square miles, in one 10-block area of cramped apartments. (U.S. Census, 2020)
- In light of these issues, my project focused on assisting officers with locating homeless and undocumented individuals by gathering data from within the HUB and information provided by Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
 - My research focused on "essential" care workers in Chelsea, MA.
 - Focus of research: A study on how public health and safety intersect in a city plagued by generations of poverty and crime, compounding the effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic.
- Case Study: How undocumented Latinx individuals, living in Chelsea, MA, have become both vulnerable and resilient amidst the COVID-19 pandemic due to: limited access to care/food, limited income, environmental and social and injustices, and housing insecurity.

Data:

The following issues were identified as the most common challenges for undocumented Latinx families living in Chelsea, MA:

- Housing
- Daycare/raising children
- Food insecurities
- Limited work
- Access to services and healthcare
- Undocumented individuals are excluded from most major welfare programs, including childcare subsidies, like The Child Care and Development Block Grant for daycare. Chelsea has implemented an Emergency Rental Assistance program for residents impacted by COVID-19, including low-income households. Undocumented families are excluded from this relief program due to their "off the books" employment status/lack of social security IDs.
- Traditional funding for groceries is provided through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, however, SNAP is only available to citizens and qualified immigrants. (primarily legal permanent residents)
- Immigrants lost most of their "essential" jobs after the first shutdown from COVID-19. Many attempted to return to their jobs only to find out they no longer existed. Many were forced to find other ways make ends meet when they did not meet the criteria for any stimulus money or unemployment.

Weekly Covid-19 Cases since June 1, 2020



(Source: Department of Planning and Development Chelsea, 2020)

Resources:

- "STOP THE SPREAD" COVID-19 testing. Testing available to all residents, no payment/proof of insurance necessary.
- MGH Chelsea provides comprehensive healthcare for newly-arriving refugees to identify an array of physical and psychosocial services needed.
- Mass General's Center for Disaster Medicine contracted with a local Quality Inn to create an isolation center, giving patients who were infected but could not quarantine at home, a way to protect their household members. 28,000 "care kits" were passed out and more than 5,000 phone calls were made to educate and connect high risk residents with resources such as food and mental health support.
- Chelsea Collaborative Advocacy Group providing food and disseminating information to the public about COVID-19.

Results and Conclusion:

- The pandemic is still ongoing and things are changing every day. Hardships felt throughout immigrant and poverty stricken communities will last years to come, however, the HUB has made it its mission to bring their knowledge and resources together for a multifaceted response by having their "boots on the ground" and "ears on the street" as the pandemic progresses.
- The men and women of the HUB are responsible for going to different sectors of the city to address recognized problems in real-time and implement a solution. These men and women are the public's eyes and ears, they relay important information, introduce them to different outreach opportunities/resources and stay in contact with each individual/family to ensure they receive the services and care they need. They have helped in over 450 situations since its implementation in 2011.
- There are a number of gaps within the community that will still need to be addressed even after the pandemic is over which include: rent control/affordable housing, adequate childcare and healthcare. (including mental health/addiction)
- I had a great experience at the HUB. In the midst of one of the most trying times of my generation, I was able to use my current clinical healthcare knowledge and apply it. Learning how to transition my strengths and experiences into new environments will be important in my next endeavor in healthcare and will benefit my patients.
- I have gained a greater appreciation for the many injustices and challenges faced within immigrant and undocumented communities that often go unnoticed by society.
- I have gained a greater appreciation for the men and women who work selflessly every day to help communities who are a lot less fortunate than themselves. The HUB is a perfect example of how community policing is finding a way to assist those who are struggling to make a living and take care of their loved ones.

Acknowledgements:

- Dan Cortez, Site Supervisor
- Chelsea, MA Police Department