Older Adults, Homelessness and COVID-19: Facts and Response

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Handouts: mngero.org
Type your questions during the webinar

FREE WEBINAR
April 15, 2021
12:00 - 1:15 pm

Older Adults, Homelessness and COVID-19: Facts and Response

Wilder Research & Catholic Charities
Minnesota Gerontological Society - April 2021
Poll question #1

How much do you know about older adults experiencing homelessness in Minnesota? (Single Choice)

• 1: A lot
• 2: Some
• 3: A little
• 4: Nothing

Homelessness study overview
What is homelessness?

**Federal definition of homelessness:**
- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and
- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised temporary living accommodation, or
- Has a nighttime residence in a place not meant for human habitation.

**Background: Minnesota Homeless Study**
- Statewide study has been conducted every three years since 1991
- Trained volunteer interviewers

**Last conducted on October 25, 2018:**
- 45 minute interviews in 300 shelters and programs; translated into Spanish and Hmong
- 400 locations across the state
- Companion study conducted in partnership with 6 American Indian tribes
Homelessness in Minnesota by age group

- Older adults age 55+ 10%
- Adults 25-54 43%
- Children age 17 or younger with parents 32%
- Unaccompanied youth age 24 and younger 15%

Wilder Research, 2018 Statewide Homeless Study count

Homeless older adult demographics and background

- 1,054 Older adults (55+) were counted
- 75% Male
- 58% Persons of color
- 69% Age 55-61
- 63% had lived in Minnesota for 20+ years

Wilder Research, 2018 Statewide Homeless Study count
**2018 Key Findings**

**Minnesota older adults (55+) homeless population trends**

Single-night count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1,054</td>
<td>1,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilder Research, 2018
Statewide Homeless Study survey
Nearly half of homeless older adults did not become homeless until they were age 50 or older and most are under age 75

Older adults experiencing homelessness vs. all Minnesota older adults
By age

- 55-61: 33% Homeless older adult population, 69% Minnesota overall
- 62-74: 29% Homeless older adult population, 44% Minnesota overall
- 75-84: 1% Homeless older adult population, 16% Minnesota overall
- 85+: 0% Homeless older adult population, 7% Minnesota overall

Source: Minnesota older adult percentages are from U.S. Census 2018 population estimates.

Minnesota older adults not in a formal shelter (outside or doubled up)

- 2009: 526
- 2012: 392
- 2015: 134
- 2018: 264 Women, 790 Men, 1,054 Total
Percent of homeless older adults not in shelter

- **27%** statewide
- **46%** greater Minnesota
- **21%** Twin Cities metro

Older adults experiencing homelessness who were not in a formal shelter increased considerably.

Wilder Research, 2018
Statewide Homeless Study survey

Complex health conditions

- **75%** have a chronic physical health condition
- **54%** have a serious mental illness
- **21%** have a substance use disorder

Older adults face multiple barriers to finding and keeping stable housing.

Wilder Research, 2018
Statewide Homeless Study survey
Complex health conditions

90% have a disability that limits their ability to work or do activities of daily living

38% have a cognitive issues that affects daily living

Income of homeless older adults vs. housing costs
By geographic region

Greater MN
Median income: $725 per month
Rent 1-bedroom (fair market) $613 per month

Metro
Median income: $750 per month
Rent 1-bedroom (fair market) $864 per month
History of systems involvement

53% had been incarcerated at some time in their lives

49% had lived in a drug or alcohol treatment facility

Older adults face multiple barriers to finding and keeping stable housing

People of color make up half of homeless older adults; they are overrepresented in Minnesota's homeless population

Older adults experiencing homelessness vs. all Minnesota older adults

By race

- White: 42% (Homeless older adult population), 92% (Minnesota adult population 55+)
- African American: 3% (Homeless older adult population), 3% (Minnesota adult population 55+)
- American Indian: 8% (Homeless older adult population), 1% (Minnesota adult population 55+)
- Hispanic: 5% (Homeless older adult population), 2% (Minnesota adult population 55+)
- Asian: 1% (Homeless older adult population), 2% (Minnesota adult population 55+)
- Multiracial or another group: 11% (Homeless older adult population), 1% (Minnesota adult population 55+)

Poll question #2

Have you or someone close to you had to isolate due to COVID-19 exposure? (single choice)

- Yes
- No
Elders and Homelessness

• Every body ages differently. We acknowledge experiences are different for everyone, but commonly:
  • There is declining sensory experience, increased health issues, memory concerns, feeling of lost independence and abilities
  • For homeless, often a tougher life, impacted
  • Feeling of not being valued by society impacted by homelessness as well

Elders and Homelessness

• There is no guaranteed housing for seniors, and the safety net has many holes
• Older adults often need more time and assistance from staff
• Complicated system to navigate, made more complex when dealing with decreased eyesight, memory, etc.
Homeless Elders Program

- Intensive case management to assist those in shelter or transitional housing to move forward into stability
- Help with:
  - housing applications/follow-up
  - obtaining benefits
  - MA
  - health plans
  - waivers
  - natural supports

Poll question #3

Imagine you were experiencing homelessness, and residing in a room with approximately 100 other people, and the pandemic hits.

- How would you protect yourself? (single choice)
  - Remain in shelter and try to socially distance (but you can’t)
  - Get a tent and start camping outside
  - Rent a hotel room, knowing your funds will only last a few days
  - Something else
March 2020…

- Emergency Stay at Home Order from Governor
- CC shelter and drop-in staff deemed essential
- Non-essential staff began working remotely

*How does one remain at home without one?*

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**CC Shelter Response**

- COVID preparedness team formed
- Plastic taped up to separate bunks
- Temp screenings, additional hand washing/sanitizing stations
- Isolation locations set up
- Increase flexibility of shelter hours
- Began researching hotel options (it will only be 2 weeks...)
Hotel Shelter Program

• Responses varied from county to county, our team was instrumental in standing up first hotel shelter site in Ramsey County
• March 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2020!
  • 60 individuals over 60, accommodations for 60 days
  • Provided primary staffing for 4-6 weeks

Hotel Shelter Program Challenges

• Basic needs
• Fear of COVID
• Code of conduct
• Room inspections
• Masking/social distancing
• Lack of information
• Lack of public services
Ramsey county provided leadership and staffing that we transitioned to over coming months

Increase in number of guests, as COVID spiked and hotel programs expanded

Current program role

Addition of other providers to program, push toward housing

Catholic Charities COVID Stats
No major COVID outbreaks among Ramsey County’s homeless so far — thanks to hard work and a former CDC specialist
County’s homeless COVID-19 response may cost up to $18 million

Media Coverage

• Older homeless adults being sheltered at a St. Paul hotel to protect against spread of coronavirus

• Dinkytown hotel transforms into COVID-19 respite for the homeless

• Catholic Charities takes extra precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19 in shelters, other settings
Housing and COVID19

- Check homelinemn.org for latest updates
- Regularly held webinars addressing the issue
- Slower processing time of apps
- Fewer opportunities for tours
- Difficulty obtaining documents

Thank you for attending our presentation!

Questions + Discussion

Questions about Catholic Charitie’s work?
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To learn more about homelessness in Minnesota & the 2021 Minnesota Homeless Study go to mnhomeless.org.
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