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**For Immediate Release: Homeward Alliance Announces COVID-19 Response Protocols**

Fort Collins, Colorado, March 17, 2020

Homeward Alliance, which operates 11 programs for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in Larimer County—including the Murphy Center—issues the following update related to COVID-19:

The outbreak of COVID-19 puts people experiencing homelessness at high risk of infection. That, in turn, significantly increases the risk of the virus spreading throughout the community. There are steps that everybody in the community can take to reduce these risks.

Those experiencing homelessness face a higher risk for several reasons. Day and evening shelters in Larimer County are crowded. People who are homeless lack the resources to practice preventative hygiene such as frequent handwashing and social distancing. They are more likely to have pre-existing, untreated health conditions. In addition, they lack a place to self-quarantine, rest and recover.

Homeward Alliance has taken the following steps to slow the rate of infection:

- We are participating in community-wide planning alongside dozens of service providers, facilitated by the Larimer County Health Department. We are advocating for resources to provide additional day shelter space, respite care, and other emergency services. We are sending regular updates to other service providers and helping coordinate response efforts among those providers.
- We have expanded prevention efforts at the Murphy Center, including heightened disinfectant procedures, limiting non-essential services and visitors, and moving some staff off-site.
- We heightened our awareness of guest health symptoms, including monitoring people for signs of infection and establishing protocols for isolating symptomatic guests.
- We are educating guests about how to best protect themselves from exposure.

“The people we serve are among the most susceptible to viral outbreaks, and our work will likely become even more imperative if the outbreak significantly impacts people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins, said David Rout, Executive Director of Homeward Alliance. “We do not expect to close the Murphy Center or halt our services, unless a better (larger) location presents itself or we are ordered to shut down.”

**HOW TO HELP**

**Donate Product**

- **Cleaning Supplies:** Disposable protective gloves, surgical masks, bleach, any wipes with bleach or alcohol, large black trash bags, Lysol spray, hand sanitizer (all sizes), any sized towels
- **Gear:** Sleeping bags, small tents, tarps, backpacks, winter jackets/fleece/hoodies, large and up
- **Food:** Individually packaged non-perishable snacks (e.g. granola bars, crackers, etc.)
- **Drinks:** Bottled water (individual serving size) and juice boxes/bags

**Donate Cash**

- Make a tax-deductible donation. Mail to “Homeward Alliance” P.O. Box 873 Fort Collins, CO 80522 or visit [www.homewardalliance.org](http://www.homewardalliance.org) and click on “How Can I Help.”

**Volunteer**

- Homeward Alliance, including the Murphy Center, has temporarily lost about 75% of its volunteers because many of our volunteers are considered high-risk for serious illness (if infected with COVID-19). We need healthy people under age 60 to fill in the gaps. To volunteer, email [Phil@homewardalliance.org](mailto:Phil@homewardalliance.org). Weekday, weekday evenings and weekend shifts available.