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APRIL 2020

HARLEM UNITED NEWSLETTER: **EMERGENCY EDITION**



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IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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Harlem United's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Like so many of you, Harlem United has spent the last several weeks learning about the recent outbreak of the coronavirus (Covid-19), processing what this pandemic means for our staff, clients, and communities. Many of our colleagues, clients, neighbors, and friends are more vulnerable to Covid-19 because of underlying chronic conditions and homelessness. Our communities need more care in the face of this pandemic and depend on our extra help. At Harlem United, this means changing the way we work to keep our communities safer and healthier.

We're all in this together, and we are committed to keeping essential services open to provide for those most in need.

Therefore, as you know, Harlem United has suspended some services and changed the hours of other services. These timings are pending any necessary extensions to comply with potential government orders.

Though face-to-face meetings have been suspended, we are still working with our clients to make sure they get what they need. From Housing to Health Home, our programs are continuing to operate remotely, connecting clients to care, stability and health.

Also, we are stepping up on all facility cleaning efforts, working to ensure that our essential services can go on without interruption, while additionally considering the safety and security of our staff, clients, and other community members. Though Harlem United services may need to be temporarily altered considering the City's (and nation's) recent declarations of a State of Emergency, we pledge to take care of our clients in the best way possible, with compassion. We wish you and your family good health and safety during this critical time for our city. Remaining healthy, both physically and emotionally, during these stressful times is a top priority. Covid-19 has altered the way we live in 2020, but Harlem United has prepared to adapt to life in this pandemic.

Please check [our website](#), for updates on our latest timings, resource links, and emergency protocols, as events unfold.



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Operational Plan

Our communities need more care in the face of this pandemic and depend on our extra help. As a result, Harlem United has adjusted our current on-site hours of operation to be as follows:

The Nest Community Health Center (169 W. 133rd Street, NY, NY) – The clinic is continuing operations on a limited basis, with reduced on-site staff, Monday – Friday from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm, with the last appointment being scheduled no later than 4:00 pm. There are no primary care appointments on Saturdays, however the Wellness Center is open between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm.

Dental – Dental services are open from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, Monday – Friday for emergencies only.

Specialty Services – Gynecology services are provided on an emergency basis only. All other specialty services (podiatry and cardiology) are suspended.

Appointment Protocols – If a patient has fever, cough or shortness of breath they will be given an appointment after the provider has contacted them. They should not walk in. Patients that do not have fever, cough or shortness of breath and have another urgent medical issue should contact the call center (646-762-4950).

Telehealth visits – Telehealth is being offered to patients, to avoid large patient gatherings in waiting areas and ensure continuity of care for patients who require medication refills.

Housing - Housing services continue via telehealth and Covid-19 Wellness checks for scatter site clients. Staff also continue to provide onsite coverage at New Broadway and the Congregate sites.

Mobile Syringe Exchange – Mobile Syringe Exchange is operating outside of 290 Malcolm X Blvd., on Tuesdays from 9:00 am– 4:30 pm. The mobile unit will also be at Coney Island every other Thursday starting April 9 from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm and on East Tremont in the Bronx every Friday from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Please note that the basement of 290 Malcolm X Blvd (Lenox Ave) is closed until further notice. To stay up-to-date, please remain in close communication with your supervisor and check the [Harlem United website](#) for updates. In addition, you may call the main number (212-803-2850), which will have an ongoing message with updates.

Willis Green Jr. Community Health Center and ADHC (123-125 W. 124th Street, NY, NY) – ADHC has temporarily suspended regular services as directed by the State Department of Health, AIDS Institute. Willis Green is open from 8:00 am – 11:00 am for distribution of “Grab and Go” breakfast and lunch. In addition, a nurse will be on-site during these hours to provide a 30-day supply of DOT medication for those clients in need.

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) – FNS continues services in a limited capacity to ensure coverage of meal distribution. Effective March 30th, FNS provides pantry bags one day a week on Thursdays at Willis Green from 11:15 am – 2:30 pm. Pantry bags include nonperishable food to cover 5 meals. Assessments, reassessments and individual counseling take place by telephone.

Health Home - Health Home is operating via telehealth, providing Covid-19 Wellness checks and ongoing health assessments for clients.

We’re all in this together, and we are committed to keeping essential services open to provide for those most in need. May you all continue to stay safe and in good health through these challenging times.

Strategic Advancement Funding Updates

In mid-March 2020, Strategic Advancement immediately pivoted our fundraising and communications strategies to launch a new Covid-19 campaign, where we share vital information about changes to our ongoing services, educate our online communities about public health best practices, help manage staff and patient anxiety, and most importantly, encourage donations to Harlem United in this difficult time. We share some of the highlights across our different channels below.

Grants

We are happy to report that we have received three awards in the last two months: a primary care for HIV Prevention grant to benefit Health Services from HRSA (\$255,676); a fast track grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies, in support of our Food and Nutrition program (\$12,000); and a small community grant from the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC to facilitate syringe cleanup in East Harlem (\$4,000), to start tentatively in July.

We also have begun the arduous process of contract execution for the NYS Statewide Health Care Facility Transformation Program and submitted four grant applications in the last month to New York Community Trust (\$250,000), Robin Hood (\$90,000), WarnerMedia (\$15,000), and MAC AIDS (\$15,000). We will continue to work hard to find other funding opportunities that are Covid-19 specific in this crucial time.

Individual Giving

Through our individual giving channels, we have raised over \$3,000 since mid-March 2020 from grassroots donations as a direct result of our new fundraising strategy around the Covid-19 crisis. We received 14 new donations in response to our social media and direct email campaign, with our largest pledge coming from Marvin Griffith, our Harlem United Board Chair (\$1,500). We are so thankful to Mr. Griffith and the rest of our generous donors!

Additionally, we have received much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Afya Foundation, who delivered face masks, gloves and other needed supplies to The Nest Community Health Center. We have also been pledged 3,000 bars of soap for our housing residents and other clients, which will arrive by the end of April, from the Sundara Foundation. We appreciate all the help and are grateful for the work that these great foundations are doing to help in this time of community need.

Communications

As the communications arm of our Covid-19 campaign, we developed a new [Covid-19 website section](#), making updates across the site so that community members know about any changes to our hours and services and adding in new sections on emergency giving. Also, we stepped up our direct email strategies by sending out an e-blast message to inform 4,500+ Harlem United supporters about our response to the pandemic and asking for donations; we will be sending out weekly emails from now on.

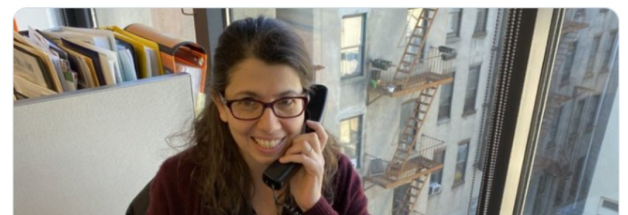
On our social media, we have added a series of Covid-19 related articles and information, disseminating more than 50 posts across all our platforms so far. We are focusing on the issues that especially affect our clients and staff at this time, such as how this pandemic is impacting people of color, those with underlying issues, or those grappling with homelessness and access to care.

Finally, we have started a new social media campaign highlighting Harlem United staff who are working so diligently to help clients and patients in need: [#HarlemUnitedHeroes](#). Our goal is to celebrate staff who are contributing to our Covid-19 response and show our community that we are still hard at work. We will be sharing selfies of staff while they work on the frontlines. **If you would like to participate**, please email [Maya Martin-Udry, Director of Communications and PR](#).

Happy National [#DoctorsDay](#) to all the doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals working hard through the [#COVID_19](#) crisis to deliver life-saving care at our two community healthcare centers.

You are all true [#HarlemUnitedHeroes](#).

[#NationalDoctorsDay](#) COVID19 [#COVID](#)



This post garnered high engagement from our followers, making it one of the best performing posts of our Covid-19 campaign

Covid-19 Resources

Below is a directory of resources that may be helpful to you, your families, and your communities. Please share! If you've found other information and resources that work for you, we encourage you to share them with us at communications@harlemunited.org



Updates from City, State, and National Agencies:

- » [CDC guidance to protect yourself](#)
- » [CDC recommendations for Healthcare Providers](#)
- » [NYC DOH Updates](#)
- » [NYS DOH Updates](#)



Resources in multiple languages:

- » [NYC Emergency Management](#): directory of resources that can be translated into dozens of languages
- » [NYC Health](#): factsheets and tips in multiple languages



Health Insurance Coverage

- » NY State of Health, "[Special Enrollment Period Open Through April 15th for Uninsured Individuals](#)" (*statewide*)
- » Community Service Society of New York, "[Community Health Advocates](#)" (*statewide*)



Housing

- » Homeless Shelter Directory, "[New York Homeless Shelters and Social Services](#)" (*statewide*)
- » Coalition for the Homeless (NYC), Crisis Hotline, 212-776-2177 (*local*)
- » NYC Housing Preservation and Development, Section 8 voucher holders having trouble paying rent because of income loss should email DTRAI@hpd.nyc.gov. (*local*)
- » NYC.gov, ACCESS HRA: Cash assistance for those unable to pay their rent due to reduced work schedule. Apply [online](#), in person at a [job center](#), or 718-557-1399 to learn how to apply by mail (*local*)



Immigration

- » Protecting Immigrant Families, "[Factsheet: Know Your Rights, Protect Your Health](#)"
- » New York State Youth Leadership Council, "[Emergency Funds for Undocumented Youth and Families](#)" (*local*)



Working from home:

- » We suggest that all managers set up for [free conference calling](#) and [Zoom video conferencing](#) accounts
- » [Work from home tips from disabled workers who have years of experience](#)
- » [6 tips for working from home during Covid-19](#)
- » [More tips for working from home](#)
- » [Working from home with kids during Covid-19](#)



Food:

- » EVERY New Yorker can pick up three meals Monday-Friday from any NYC public school. 7:30 am – 11:30 am for kids, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm for adults. Text 'NYC FOOD' or 'NYC COMIDA' to 877-877 and find a location near you
- » [Food Bank NYC](#)
- » [FoodHelp NYC Map](#)
- » [Invisible Hands](#): Grocery delivery



Mutual Aid, Donations, and Volunteering:

- » If you're working from home and you participate in Harlem United's commuter benefit plan, you can donate your Metrocard to an essential worker using [this form](#)
- » [Request or offer aid locally- arranged by neighborhood](#)



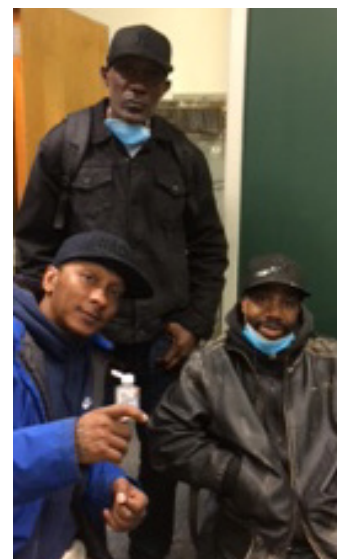
Childcare resources:

- » DOE "[Regional Enrichment Centers](#)" for children of healthcare workers: RECs will be open Monday-Friday from 7:30 am - 6:00 pm. Students will be provided three hot meals a day and technology for remote learning, as well as art and PE classes. Each location will include a nurse and isolation rooms, in case anyone displays symptoms
- » [NYC Parent Coordinator Community](#): information and guidance to help you support families
- » [Childcare Coop Creator Tool](#): this tool helps groups of parents and caregivers generate fair schedules to share childcare duties



Mental Health, Safety, Wellness, and Stress Reducing Resources:

- » [City resources for people experiencing domestic violence](#): visit the link or call the 24-hour Hotline 1-800-621-4673
- » [NYC free online mental health support](#)
- » [Mental, emotional, and spiritual support for frontline workers engaged in the fight against Covid-19](#)
- » [Online AA Meetings](#)
- » [7 Science Based Strategies to Cope with Covid-19 Related Stress](#)
- » [CDC recommendations for managing Covid-19 related stress](#)



Hard at work: Danny Del Valle, Angel Morales, Gabriel Paulino, Olga Keber, Aubrey St. Kitt, Derrell Gibbons, and Keith Hembrick at work during the Covid-19 crisis

Staff Highlights

While many of us at Harlem United are adjusting to working from home, many more are still on the front lines, offering our essential services that can only be provided in person. We want to extend an extra-special thank you to those staff members continuing to work on-site. You are going above and beyond to ensure clients have access to resources they need in this uncertain time.

Our **Maintenance and Facilities staff** have been hard at work, ensuring that our sites are sanitized and safe for everyone to work in. **Staff at the Nest** continue to provide healthcare, working doubly hard to ensure that our patients have access to care and support, while **Administrative staff** are making sure that our bills get paid and that we do, too! **ADHC and FNS staff** are going the extra mile to keep our pantry open so that clients can still access food in this uncertain time. Our **Syringe Exchange staff** continues

to provide critical harm reduction service at multiple sites. **Congregate Housing and New Broadway staff** are making sure that residents remain safely and stably housed. **And for Health Home, scatter-site housing programs, and the rest of our colleagues who are working from home**, thank you for all that you're doing. Your telephone calls to clients, administrative work, and continued collaboration guarantee that Harlem United is able to operate.

Your amazing work has never been more critical or valued. Thank you all for ensuring that our clients and patients are not left without access to critical resources during this crisis. Your commitment to your clients is an inspiration.

Keeping our Facilities Clean

The novel Coronavirus can potentially live on many surfaces for hours, even days. In order to prevent infection, maintenance staff are regularly cleaning our office common spaces, congregate housing, and other facilities. Because many of our clients and staff are particularly vulnerable to Covid-19, this work is especially critical in protecting everyone's health.

Many teams are banding together to tackle this essential work. The Scattered-Site Operations team quickly shifted to working with Facilities to keep Harlem United's congregate housing sites, Willis Green Jr. Community Health Center, The Nest Community Health Center, and our administrative sites safe and sanitized. Efforts are particularly targeted toward frequently touched surfaces, like door handles, elevator buttons, and handrails. All staff are using gloves and mask to protect themselves and clients, and observing 6-foot personal space rules.

Thank you to everyone working to keep our facilities protected by using preventative measures. Your flexibility, diligence and commitment are commended!

CONGRATULATIONS to our staff celebrating over ten years at Harlem United:

Gwen Didier, Managing Director - Health Home

Aicha Dierro, Client Registrar - Prevention Services

Upcoming Events



Upcoming Events

April 2020

April is [National Minority Health Month](#)

April 6 -12

[National Public Health Week](#)

April 7

[World Health Day](#)

April 8- 16

Passover

April 10

Good Friday

(Harlem United Closed)

April 10

[National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day](#)

April 12

Easter

April 16

[Annual National Healthcare Decisions Day](#)

April 22 – May 23

Ramadan

April 27 - May 1

[Patient Experience Week](#)

May 2020

May 5

World Hand Hygiene Day

May 3 - 9

[North American Occupational Safety and Health Week](#)

May 10 - 16

[National Women's Health Week](#)

May 18

[HIV Vaccine Awareness Day](#)

May 25

Labor Day

(Harlem United Closed)

May 27

[National Senior Health & Fitness Day](#)



Amado Sanson, Mike Rustin, Delores Williams, Gloria Martinez, Al Harmon preparing food pick up at Willis Green Jr. Community Health Center