



**WASHINGTON LAWYERS' COMMITTEE**  
**FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND URBAN AFFAIRS**

**Via Email**

March 25, 2020

Joseph Wilmer, Administrative Director  
Hope Village  
2840 Langston Place, SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
[jlwilmer@hopevillageinc.com](mailto:jlwilmer@hopevillageinc.com)

**Re: COVID-19**

Dear Director Wilmer:

We have received reports that raise serious concerns about the potential spread of the COVID 19 virus to residents and staff members at Hope Village. Persons confined to Hope Village live in close quarters, cannot engage in social distancing and are exposed to staff members who enter the facility every day. Many residents are in high risk groups due to age or health condition. To limit the risk, it is essential that any person who can be placed on home confinement have their release expedited and that critical infection control practices be implemented.

On March 20, 2020, Hope Village issued a shelter in place order for all residents that restricts all non-emergency movements outside of Hope Village, including for all employment, in an effort to “flatten the curve” to minimize spread of the virus. We have also received reports from residents that they do not have adequate access to soap or toilet paper, that cleaning supplies are in short supply and that screening on people entering the facility is lax. To protect the health of residents and staff and promote public health, we urgently call on Hope Village to:

- **Facilitate expedited emergency release of residents to home confinement.** We understand that there are a number of Hope Village residents who are eligible for home confinement and have a home to return to, but need Hope Village’s assistance, in coordination with federal partners, to transition, including modification of existing requirements for home confinement (e.g. approved landline at residence, phone bill, employment, graduated permissions prior to transition, etc.).
- **Education of the people in your care:** Residents need to be informed about the virus and the measures they can take to minimize their risk of contracting or spreading the virus. They must be educated on the importance of proper handwashing, coughing into their elbows, and social distancing to the extent they can. Information about the spread of the virus, the risks associated with it, and prevention and treatment measures must be based on the best available science.

- **Education of the staff:** Administrative, vocational, and CQ staff all must be educated about the virus to protect themselves and their families, as well as the people in their care.
- **Staffing plans:** Regardless of how many staff stay home because they are sick, Hope Village will have to continue functioning. There must be a plan for how necessary functions and services will continue if large numbers of staff are out with the virus.
- **Provision of hygiene supplies:** The most basic aspect of infection control is hygiene. There must be ready access to warm water and adequate hygiene and cleaning supplies, both for handwashing and for cleaning. Hope Village must provide residents ongoing access to soap and other cleaning supplies, and residents should not be required to pay for their own cleaning supplies and/or rely on provision of such supplies from family and community members.
- **Screening and testing of the people in your care:** The plan must include guidance, based on the best science available, on how and when to screen and test (if available) people at Hope Village for the virus.
- **Housing of persons exposed to the virus:** The plan must describe how and where people in the facility will be housed if they are exposed to the virus, are at high risk of serious illness if they become infected, or become sick with it. This should not result in prolonged restrictions of resident movement, including for work that is considered essential. Any interruptions in regular activities, including access to employment and recreation, should be based solely on the best science available and should be as limited as possible in scope and duration.
- **Vulnerable Populations:** The plan must provide for additional precautions for those who are at high risk of serious illness if they are infected, such as elderly people, people with chronic illnesses, and people with compromised immune systems.

Accordingly, we request a response with Hope Village's infection control plan and any plans to facilitate immediate release to home confinement or other housing settings by **March 27, 2020**. We appreciate your prompt and meaningful response to this matter.

Best,

\_\_\_\_\_/s/  
Lyndsay Niles  
Counsel

cc: Quincy Booth, Director, DC DOC ([quincy.booth@dc.gov](mailto:quincy.booth@dc.gov))  
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