

## Avalon Housing COVID-19 Update

### March 20, 2020



*There's no way to minimize this.*

*Things are challenging right now.*

We are grateful to our employees who have worked quickly and diligently to respond to this public health emergency with compassion, flexibility, and a total dedication to ensuring safety for our clients, staff and partners. We've received many gestures of support from our community, which is helping us get through this difficult time.

- Avalon Housing is the largest provider of permanent supportive housing - now for 780 people - in Washtenaw County. With help from our City and County partners, we successfully continue 24/7 onsite staffing where needed, and offer an in-person response for essential needs elsewhere.
- We've curtailed many of our routine services. We've prohibited visitors at our 24/7 sites, and focused all physical and behavioral health care on essential health needs. We're supporting our tenants by educating them on COVID-19, and seriously limiting their social interactions.
- We're still moving in people who are currently experiencing homelessness. We were proud to sign a lease this week with someone who was sleeping outside. These routine acts for us feel particularly meaningful at a time like this.
- Our medical team with Packard Health has prioritized assessing and addressing physical health issues, in an effort to keep all clients away from hospitals and other health clinics unless absolutely necessary. Our case management teams are prioritizing in-person crisis response and medication support for clients. They conduct routine visits and check-ins via telephone.
- We have quickly scaled up in-home meal options in partnership with Food Gatherers for our tenants/clients in supportive housing, to limit their out-of-home trips to grocery stores, food banks and meal programs.

We don't need to tell you that the situation is shifting rapidly, and every day brings new challenges. This crisis underscores what we already knew – **Avalon clients are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.** Escalating restrictions and directives highlight the key role Avalon plays for hundreds of people each day in meeting their most basic safety and health needs.

As of this writing, we still don't have a confirmed COVID-19 case among our clients or staff. Our work thus far will help us respond when clients or staff members do become ill. We're prepared to sustain these efforts, but can't do it without help from our community.

**Here is how you can help us meet urgent needs:**

1. We **continue to need funds and encourage you to give directly** to Avalon online ([avalonhousing.org](http://avalonhousing.org) and "Donate now") or invest in the United Way [COVID-19 Relief Fund](#).
2. We need donations of personal protective equipment (disposable surgical masks, hand sanitizer, disposable gloves), diapers, soap, wipes, toilet paper, and baby formula. *Please contact Ryan Walker at [rwalker@avalonhousing.org](mailto:rwalker@avalonhousing.org) for information about where/when to drop off donations.*