



PRESS RELEASE

THE INTERNATIONAL VINCENTIAN FAMILY SIGNED THE DOCUMENT CALLING THE WORLD TO SOLIDARITY AND ACTION TO PROTECT THE HOMELESS FROM COVID-19

Among the one hundred signatures that call the world to solidarity and action to protect the homeless from the spread of COVID -19, we must mention the International Vincentian Family. This list, intended to continue to grow with the signatures of more institutions and individuals, can be viewed at <https://covid19-protecting-screening-rehousing.com/> and includes the signatures of many beneficent associations and organizations that are active in different parts of the world.

The premise of this appeal is based on the vulnerability of the most fragile members of society at this complex moment, individuals such as those who are homeless, refugees, and those who already live in precarious conditions. The petition of these associations arose from this stated reality and it is for that reason that they request that the people included in the aforementioned categories be given priority in the COVID-19 screening test process. These men and women are at tangible risk of becoming infected with the virus, and their precarious living situation is an aggravating risk factor. Neglecting these individuals can only worsen the overall epidemiological situation. Therefore, urgent priority measures must be taken to stop the spread of COVID-19, including the protection of the homeless.

In order to protect the homeless and vulnerable individuals in general, it is essential: to promote access to safe and appropriately hygienic housing that allows isolation ... thus controlling the possible transmission of the virus (in the present common housing conditions, such quarantine is impossible); to guarantee basic needs including food and access to health care; to provide necessary equipment for the reduction of risk (masks and gowns); since so many services and shelters are closed, there is a need to provide these vulnerable individuals with access to counseling and assistance; in light of the lack of safe alternatives to public space, there is a need to protect the homeless from punitive policy measures.

A proactive and systematic research policy is also needed. For obvious public health reasons, there is an urgent need to conduct Covid-19 tests on homeless people and refugees and to separate those who test positive and thus control the spread of the virus. At the same time there a need to test volunteers and medical personnel who are in daily contact with these vulnerable groups of people as well as to keep people sheltered. In light of the economic impact of the crisis, it is necessary to establish structural solutions for access to housing, which has become, more than ever, a public health imperative.

WE MUST #PROTECTTHEUNHOUSED

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