HIFIS HOW TO: COORDINATED ACCESS IN AN OUTBREAK – PRIORITIZATION

Staying coordinated across the homelessness response system helps to remain housing-focused during the COVID-19 outbreak. During this period, service providers may have to perform coordinated access related activities virtually, such as prioritization. For those who are not used to work virtually, this can be a challenge. As a web-based application, HIFIS is designed to support virtual work.

This "HIFIS How To" resource covers the prioritization components of coordinated access.

This document is meant to provide HIFIS specific context to compliment the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) one-pager called "Coordinated Access in a Pandemic" and report called "Getting Back to Housing", which include additional information and guidance.

1. PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA RELATED TO COVID-19 VULNERABILTIES

Prioritization determines the order that clients are provided a housing resource when a vacancy becomes available. This process is informed by the information gathered through triage and assessment. Data used to inform this process can be sourced from HIFIS. For example, when a vacancy becomes available, reports using HIFIS data could identify which clients experiencing homelessness are eligible and who has more of the prioritization criteria – moving them closer to the top of the Priority List than the other eligible clients who are also waiting for an offer.

During the outbreak, a community may decide to modify existing prioritization criteria to reflect vulnerabilities specific to COVID-19 and related circumstances. The CAEH one-pager "Coordinated Access in a Pandemic" identified six possible data points that could be more relevant for COVID-19 (i.e. acquity; age; health conditions; discharge/referral from hospital; Housing type; and contributing factors) all of which can be tracked in HIFIS:

- **Acuity:** Communities may prioritize people with lower acuity for vacancies that become available, if case management supports are not available. Acuity scores are found in the VAT and SPDAT modules.

> **HOW TO COMPLETE AN ACUITY ASSESSMENT**
>
> Included in HIFIS are the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) and the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT).
>
> **How to Complete a VAT Assessment**

For support with HIFIS, contact Client Support Centre by email: **support@HIFIS.ca** or phone: **1-866-324-2375**

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1. From the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Assessments]**, then select **[VAT]**
2. On the **Vulnerability Assessment Tool List** page, click **[VAT]**
3. From the **New VAT Intake** page, add applicable information (fields marked with * are mandatory)
4. Type to search for an existing client in the Client Name field, then select the client from the search results. If the client does not exist, a new client will need to be created
5. Begin the assessment
6. To see the full description of the question, click the down arrow in the question title to expand it
7. Hover over the numbers in the answer column to see the description of what that number indicates to ensure the assessment is answered in a standardized way
8. If applicable, you can add additional comments about the answer in the field below the question descriptions
9. Once the assessment has been completed, click **[Save]**

For more information, consult page 66 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

How to Complete a SPDAT Assessment

1. From the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Assessments]**, then select **[SPDAT]**
2. On the **SPDAT Intake List** page, select the appropriate tab (VI-SPDAT or SPDAT), and the version of the test you would like to use
3. On the **New Intake** page, add applicable information (fields marked with * are mandatory)
4. Type to search for an existing client in the Client Name field, then select the client from the search results. If the client does not exist, a new client will need to be created
5. Begin the assessment
6. To see the full description of the question, click the down arrow beside the question title to expand it (this is not applicable for the VI-SPDAT)
7. Hover over the numbers in the answer column to see the description of what that number indicates to ensure the assessment is answered in a standardized way
8. If applicable, add additional comments about the answer in the field below the question descriptions
9. Once the assessment has been completed, click **[Save]**

For more information, consult page 62 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

- **Age:** Communities may prioritize older individuals for vacancies that become available, given their increased vulnerability to COVID-19. Age is found in Client Information.

HOW TO RECORD AGE

Age is tracked when you create a new client and is found in **Client Information – Client Details**.

1. To add a new client, from the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Clients]**, and click **[Add Client]**
2. Within the **Add Client** fields is Date of Birth. This is a mandatory field and marked with *
3. If the Date of Birth is unknown, the **Date of Birth Known** Yes/No toggle allows for an approximate age to be entered
4. Once all relevant fields are entered, click **[Save]**

For more information, consult page 18 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

- **Health conditions and/or discharge/referral from hospital:** Communities may prioritize people with respiratory challenges or those being discharged/referred from hospital, given their increased vulnerability to COVID-19. Heath conditions are in the Health Information module. Discharges/referrals from hospital are found in various modules (e.g. Admissions).

HOW TO RECORD A HEALTH ISSUE, MEDICATION, OR DIETARY RESTRICTION

1. From the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Clients]**
2. On the **Client List** page, select the Client record to which you want to record a health issue by clicking the name of the client
3. On the **Client - Vitals** page, click the **[Client Information]** menu and select **[Health Information]**
4. On the **Client - Health** page, select the **[Health Issue]** tab, then **[Add Health Record]**
5. From the **Add Health Record page,** add applicable information (fields marked with * are mandatory)

Note: Add drop down values to the Health Issue list by selecting Health Issue from the Look-Up Tables in the Administration tab.

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6. Track detailed information regarding the client's medication in the **Medication** tab, and dietary needs in the **Dietary Requirements** tab
7. Click **[Save]**

For more information, consult page 26 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

DISCHARGE/REFERRAL FROM HOSPITAL

Referral from a Hospital can be indicated in the **Referred from** fields in various modules (e.g. Admissions). To ensure the drop down menus have the necessary fields, they need to be added to the **Directory of Services**.

HOW TO ADD TO THE DIRECTORY OF SERVICES / HOW TO ADD A PLACE

1. From the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Directory of Services]**
2. On the **Directory of Services** page, click **[Add Place]**
3. From the **Add Place** page add relevant information (fields marked with * are mandatory)

*Note: Add drop down values to the Type of Place list by selecting **Place** from the Look-Up Tables in the Administration tab.*

4. Select Yes/No for the place to appear in the **Referable from** and **Referable to** drop down lists. Click **[Save]**

For more information, consult page 69 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

HOW TO RECORD REFERRALS

When a field requests **Referred from** or **Referred to**, enter the appropriate service provider by finding them in the drop down menu.

If the organization does not exist, add the organization in the **Directory of Services** or ensure the **Referable from and Referable to fields are turned to Yes** in the Place settings (Directory of Services – Edit a Place)

- **Housing type and contributing factors:** Communities may prioritize people who are unable to safely isolate because they are living unsheltered or fleeing violence. Housing types associated with living unsheltered are tracked in Housing History and contributing factors associated with fleeing violence are tracked in the Contributing Factor Look-up Table.

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HOW TO RECORD UNSHELTERED HOUSING HISTORY

1. From the **Front Desk** menu, select **[Clients]**
2. On the **Client Lis**t page, select the Client record to which you want to add housing by clicking the name of the client
3. On the **Client - Vitals** page, click the **[Client Information]** menu and select **[Housing History]**
4. From the **Client - Housing History** page, click **[Add Housing]**
5. On the **Client – Add Housing History page**, add applicable information (fields marked with ***** are mandatory)
6. Click **[Save]**

Note: Add drop down values to the Housing Type list by selecting House from the Look-Up Tables in the Administration tab.

For more information, consult page 27 of the **HIFIS User Guide** or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

HOW TO ADD A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR

1. From the Front Desk menu, select **[Clients]**
2. On the **Client List** page, select the **Client record** to which you want to add a contributing factor by clicking the name of the client
3. On the **Client - Vitals** page, click the **[Client Information]** menu and select **[Various Factors]**
4. On the **Client - Various Factors** page, select the **Contributing Factors** tab then click **[Add Contributing Factor]**
5. On the **Client - Add Contributing Factor** page, add applicable information (fields marked with ***** are mandatory)
6. Click **[Save]**

Note: Add drop down values to the Contributing Factors list by selecting Contributing Factor from the Look-Up Tables in the Administration tab.

For more information, consult the **HIFIS User Guide** (p.31) or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre.

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2. USEFUL INFORMATION

- This document is part of a COVID-19 series of "HIFIS How To" resources. Resources in this series include:
  - Coordinated Access in an Outbreak:
    - i. Access Points and Messaging; and
    - ii. Triage and Assessment
  - Finding and Securing Housing in an Outbreak
  - Preventing Eviction in an Outbreak
  - Home Visits in an Outbreak
  - Promoting Healthy Practices in an Outbreak
  - Tracking Health Issues in an Outbreak
  - Managing Admissions and Transactions in an Outbreak

- The existing Reaching Home directives have been updated to provide guidance to funding recipients regarding the eligibility and use of Reaching Home funds, highlighting where adjustments have been made to existing program parameters, as well as to illustrate how existing eligible activities can be employed to reduce and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

- Visit the Canadian Network for the Health and Housing of People Experiencing Homelessness, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness or the Homelessness Learning Hub websites for resources on how the homeless sector can respond to a COVID-19 outbreak.

- Visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's website for guidance for providers of services for people experiencing homelessness (in the context of COVID-19).

3. HIFIS SUPPORT AND STAYING CONNECTED

- Have feedback or a "HIFIS How To" tip to share with your peers? Contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre by **email** at support@HIFIS.ca or **phone** at 1-866-324-2375.

- For questions about HIFIS, refer to the HIFIS Toolkit or contact the HIFIS Client Support Centre by **email** at support@HIFIS.ca or **phone** at 1-866-324-2375.

- To receive the HIFIS Newsletter send a request to sign up by email at info@HIFIS.ca.