

NEW IHN POLICIES

WEEKEND IN-TAKES

As of this Saturday, July 18, IHN staff will be providing emergency shelter intakes to families 365 days a year. This means that intakes will take place on Saturdays and Sundays as well as weekdays. This is in response to our community's increased need for emergency shelter and our commitment to meeting that need so that children and their parents aren't sleeping on the streets, in their cars or in other unsafe situations when there are IHN beds available.

As you're aware, we've been running a full house most of the time - again because of the community's increased need for emergency shelter - but there are some Fridays when we end the day with an opening or two. Since our goal is to have a full house (until we end homelessness, that is) at all times, we have not been comfortable with leaving on Friday knowing that there are unfilled beds over the weekend - especially not when temperatures outside are either very cold or very hot, and we're in a position to provide shelter.

Here's what weekend intakes may mean for you, as EITHER the current week host or the upcoming Sunday host:

Let's say it's Friday and your census is full. Chances are you won't have a change over the weekend. But, if a family leaves Saturday, there is the possibility you will get a new family that day just like you might on a weekday. You may or may not, however, get an emailed census. You may, instead, receive a call regarding the new family from our weekend Day Center staffer and intake worker, Beatrice Stringer.

Or, let's say it's Friday and we have an opening or two. Chances are you may get a new family or families on Saturday.

Less likely, although still possible, are new family intakes on Sunday. This is because the Central Access Point (CAP) is closed that day. But, there may be times when special circumstances may require a Sunday intake. CAP, as you may recall, stands for Central Access Point and is a referral agency for families seeking emergency shelter with IHN or one of the other family shelters in the Greater Cincinnati area. FYI, the CAP number is 381-7233.

Even more important now is the Be Prepared for a Full House policy, which we've included in recent issues of the InterCoordinator and in email messages. So, set up all beds Sunday, have extra sets of linens handy, and tell your cooks to prepare or shop for meals to serve 22, including enough for seconds.

Families will be screened with the same thoroughness as during the week. And you will have the same access to IHN staff (Beatrice at the Day Center and the staff member handling on-call duty, 325-4547) as currently. In addition, you will be notified of updates as soon as possible, just as we do now.

We will, of course, be doing everything possible to make this transition a smooth one. We realize that you, too, want to help as many families as possible, and we're thankful for your devotion to helping those who, without you, would be living in dire circumstances.

ON- CALL POLICY

Given the nature of the IHN shelter, it is necessary for quick communications between shelter staff and congregations, particularly in the event of situations in which a host congregation needs to get a staff opinion on a course of action. At the same time, it is necessary for staff to not be "on-call" at all times as well as to have appropriate "down time" so that they can relax and spend uninterrupted time away from the office.

During non-business hours, this is the procedure to follow in a non-medical-emergency issue involving a guest:

- **Call 325-4547:** This is the IHN evening “on-call” phone and it will be staffed all weekday evenings and weekend evenings after business hours (see business hours below). This number will be at the top of the census where, formerly, staff emergency contact names and numbers were located. There will be no one’s name next to the number because staff will be rotating “on-call” duty. Call the number and the evening “on-call” staff person will answer. **If you receive no answer, leave a message and wait 30 minutes for a call-back.** If you do not receive a call-back within 30 minutes, do one of the following:
 - Contact your Coordinator, who will have a listing of staff home phone numbers, or...
 - Look in your congregation’s IHN emergency binder with IHN “**last-resort**” staff home numbers - to be kept in a private location - and contact a number on that list. **Please do this only if 325-4547 doesn’t respond within 30 minutes, or attempts to reach your coordinator fail.**
- For other, guest-related questions that you’d like answered during weekday Day Center business hours, 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, call 471-1100 and ask for Eve Beasley. For other, guest-related questions that may occur to you during weekend Day Center business hours, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday, call 471-1100 and ask for the IHN weekend coordinator (whom we are currently in the process of hiring, at which time you will have that person’s name at the top of the census.)
- **If there is a medical emergency or possible medical emergency with a guest, do not hesitate to contact 911.**

Controlled Substances, Prescription Medication and Over the Counter (OTC) Medication Policy

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cincinnati (IHNGC) is concerned about the well-being of all guests, and respects the right of guests to treat health concerns with prescription medicines legally and appropriately prescribed by health professionals and to treat other health concerns with appropriate prescription and/or over-the-counter (OTC) medications. At the same time, IHNGC is concerned that such medications be not abused or fall into the hands of those not authorized to take them.

At the Day Center, therefore, all prescription medications including “controlled substances” will be logged in by the Director of Operations and kept in a receptacle in a secure location while designated staff is at the Day Center and the Guest is at the Day Center. Medications will be logged in and logged out as necessary throughout the day. The receptacle will also include OTC medications (such as Tylenol or Advil) as well as an emergency cell phone equipped with minutes and a charger. (This is for volunteers in the event of a guest hospital visit- see How to Handle Medical Situations policy.)

At the end of the day just prior to boarding the bus, the Facilities Manager will the receptacle to the Bus Driver, who will then give it to a volunteer at the appropriate host congregation, where it should be kept in a secured place and, if the congregation would like, may be locked (the lock must be removed before handing it back to the Bus Driver the following morning though).

A Volunteer will allow the Guest to take the proper amount of medication at the times indicated by the prescribing health professional.

In the case of an emergency, please see the “How to Handle Medical Situations Policy.”

The necessary security of prescription medications will be determined by the Director of Operations, Case Manager, or Executive Director according to the potential they present for possible abuse.

There are some medical situations that a guests and volunteers may feel comfortable handling themselves, such as, for example, taking temperatures and administering adult or infant Tylenol. But if a guest or volunteer is unsure of what to do, here's what we suggest:

- The volunteer, not guest, calls 911. (Sometimes the guest will call anyway, but this is to be discouraged. If the situation is not critical (determined by the paramedics) request that the adult guest be transported to University Hospital. University Hospital should not bill your congregation for emergency room services (see below for further explanation). If the situation is critical, the paramedics will probably take the adult guest to the nearest emergency room regardless of anyone's preferences. Children experiencing medical issues are taken to Children's Hospital, which also should not bill your congregation. Both hospitals have long had charity programs in place and accept uninsured as well as underinsured patients.
- Arranging for childcare – If the children don't (or can't) accompany their parents to the hospital, ideally the parent should try and reach an emergency contact (listed on the census) to let them know they may need to come and get the children within 2 hours. If the parent is unable to make this call, a volunteer should do it. The emergency contact should be told to bring identification and be informed that we won't release the children to anyone other than the emergency contact, or in lieu of that person, another person bringing BOTH a note from the emergency contact AND the emergency contact's driver license or other form of official identification (state-issued ID, utility bill). Tell the emergency contact that, if either of these possibilities can't be met, IHN staff will make other arrangements for the children.
- On arrival, the emergency contact must show ID, as mentioned before, and be in stable condition to get the children. If you're uncomfortable with his/her condition, call the IHN on-call number, 325-4547, regarding what to do.
- If the emergency contact cannot be reached by either the guest or a volunteer, call the IHN on-call person, 325-4547, and we'll handle arrangements for the children.
- Tell guests that, once they're seen at the hospital, they should call a volunteer, who will want to know if the doctor is thinking of keeping the guest overnight, or is considering releasing him or her within several hours. The volunteer should give the guest the emergency cell phone number that is in the medications receptacle. Be sure and get the guest's cell phone prior to their going to the hospital. Remind the guest to keep emergency contacts apprised of what's going on.
- Return transportation – If the guest doesn't arrange this with a spouse, relative, or emergency contact, etc., here are the options:
 - Return transportation from University or Children's hospitals – Both hospitals will make arrangements for cabs and fare at no charge to IHN for return transportation to the congregation. If, for some reason, either hospital staff needs reminding of this, the guest should ask to see a social worker.
 - Return transportation from a hospital other than University or Children's hospitals – Because other area hospitals do not have well-established charity programs, it's possible that cab arrangements and fare will not be provided free of charge to IHN. This is one reason we encourage the use of University Hospital, as well as the fact that it's an excellent hospital and our IHN medical personnel are all practitioners there. In this case, a volunteer, NOT THE GUEST, should call Towne Taxi for return transport. IHN has an account with Towne, phone number 761-7700. VERY IMPORTANT - Please do not give this number to any guest or let any guest know that IHN has an account with Towne Taxi.

ALSO VERY IMPORTANT - We strongly advise volunteers NOT to transport guests to or from the hospital for several reasons: the possibility of a medical emergency, particularly on the way, safety and liability.

IHN FLU PROCEDURES

By MerryBeth McKee, IHN Director of Operations

In the continued health interests of our guests, volunteers, and staff, we're repeating the precautions, published in the October InterCoordinator, for preventing the spread of the influenza virus and other common viral infections:

Promote regular hand washing among guests, staff and volunteers, providing hand soap in the bathrooms and hand sanitizer and bleach wipes throughout the building. Show children proper hand washing techniques that include rubbing of hands with soap under warm water for at least 30 seconds (or the Happy Birthday song) before thoroughly rinsing. Be sure to post signs reminding everyone to wash their hands, especially children coming from school or day care.

Clean and disinfect communal surfaces daily. This includes doorknobs, appliance handles, computer keyboards, light switches, tables, remote controls, etc.

Disinfect communal toys and books daily during the flu "high season." Putting certain items away during this time may be a good idea to eliminate extreme volunteer labor.

Post flyers in key areas around the building indicating "How to Protect Yourself and Others" from the flu.

If a guest is experiencing any flu-like symptoms (fever, fatigue, sore throat, coughing, body aches or headaches) please advise them to limit the spread of the infectious droplets by:

1. Cough or sneeze into their elbow. Droplets expel up to 3 feet, but your elbow is able to wrap around, containing the droplets on your sleeve. Using your hand just moves the droplets onto the next thing you touch.
2. Wash clothes/bedding on the hot setting in both the washer and dryer.
3. Carry a plastic bag with them if they are using tissues. After blowing their nose, they should immediately deposit the used tissue in the bag. Also, when finished sneezing, they should wash or sanitize their hands before touching anything others would touch.

It is important to notify the Day Center if any guest experiences flu-like symptoms. Proper procedures will be followed in determining whether or not the guest and/or family needs to be quarantined. Face masks will be made available to guests with severe coughing.

All guests (age appropriate) and staff will be given the H1N1 flu vaccine by MedVan physicians when it becomes available.