**Interdepartmental Collaboration to Address Public Health Issues in a Homeless Encampment in New Orleans**

Authors and Affiliations: Rachel Denny, MSPH1,5; Rachel Kimble, MPH2; Nathaniel Fields3; Amy Bunch, DVM, MPH4; Claudia Riegel, PhD5; Susanne Straif-Bourgeois, PhD, MPH, MS1

1LSU Health Sciences Center School of Public Health, New Orleans, LA; 2City of New Orleans Health Department, New Orleans, LA; 3City of New Orleans Office of Homeless Services and Strategy, New Orleans, LA; 4Louisiana Department of Health, New Orleans, LA; 5City of New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board, New Orleans, LA

|  |
| --- |
| Background: Homeless encampments represent areas where there is a breakdown in sanitation, shelter, and access to healthcare. Interdepartmental collaboration in local government is necessary to effectively address and mitigate the environmental and social conditions that contribute to adverse health outcomes in this vulnerable population.Description: Representatives from the New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, and Rodent Control Board [NOMTRCB], the New Orleans Health Department [NOHD], the Louisiana Health Department [LHD], the Louisiana SPCA [LAPSCA], City of New Orleans (CNO) Sanitation, and the New Orleans Office of Homeless Services and Strategy formed a workgroup to address issues of vector control, sanitation, harm reduction, healthcare access, and animal health in the encampment located at the intersection of Calliope Street and Tchoupitoulas Street.  |
| Accomplishments: NOMTRCB spent 252 outreach hours in the encampment. The rodent population was reduced by 80%. The flea population was significantly reduced between August and October. NOHD spent 488 outreach hours in the encampment, removed 276 hazardous items, and coordinated 6 cleanups with CNO Sanitation to remove waste and debris. Eight companion animals were vaccinated and treated for fleas by the Public Health state veterinarian and LASPCA. Thirty residents were housed, and the encampment was closed on 11/17/2024.  |
| Discussion: Interdepartmental collaboration allowed for issues contributing to adverse health outcomes in the encampment to be addressed from environmental, social, and One Health perspectives. Caring for the health and well-being of an unhoused population requires collaborative interventions to mitigate the conditions associated with potential public health issues.Future Steps: Homelessness is a major nationwide issue. Although the intervention program at the Calliope St and Tchoupitoulas St encampment represents a single site, the overarching theme of interdepartmental collaboration can be applied and adapted by local governments in major cities. |