



# **Bedbugs in Multnomah County:**

## **Working Towards a Regional Strategy to Eliminate Bedbugs**

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# What are we dealing with?





# How We Got Here

- 2005 – Multnomah County EH developed a website and educational outreach materials to address emerging issue in Portland around bed bugs and how to work with private pest control operators.
  - Begin hearing from community organizations and housing partners about bedbug infestations
- 2006-2008 – Multnomah County Environmental Health coordinated multiple local and statewide bed bug forums to communicate local best practices, experiences, and issues.
- In August 2009, a “de facto” Bed Bug Advisory Group was created to discuss the broad issues of bed bugs in and around the Portland metropolitan area. Focus was on low income and transitional housing. Topics shared included best practices, experiences, issues, and recommendations to gain advocates and increase awareness in the government and general public.
- 2010-Multnomah County Environmental Health passes leadership of de facto task force to community led process. Begins addressing Environmental Health gaps, and works to coordinate county-wide response.

# Impacts on Housing

Metro Multifamily Housing Association represents over 150,000 rental units.

- MMHA members have treated bedbugs in more than 1000 rental units during the past year.
- MMHA members have spent between \$250,000 to \$500,000 in bed bug treatments.

# Impacts on Housing

- Most common landlord concerns include:
  - Timely notification of problem
  - Lack of education and hysteria around issue
  - Financial responsibility
  - Containment of infestation
  - Prevent introduction of pests
  - Tenant cooperation with treatment procedures
    - Necessary Preparation
    - Disposal of furniture

# HAP Bedbug Task Force

- The reasons for creation of the Bedbug Task Force
  - Had been a growing problem
  - Control can only be gained thru a proactive approach
- Challenges for control and eradication
  - Substantial effort required by both residents and staff
  - Substantial cost associated with inspections & treatments
- Lessons learned that have been put into an IPM plan
  - Early detection thru inspections
  - Education and overcoming the stigma



# Towards a Regional Strategy

- Why public health?
- Why now?
- Why Multnomah County?

# Bedbug Summit

- Why a summit?
- Who attended?
- What did we learn?
- What are next steps?



# Conclusion

- The roadmap towards a regional strategy is in front of us
- Program offer 40037A includes bedbugs within environmental health
- Long term strategies will require private and public partnerships and shared resources. “Combined Intellect”
- Bedbug Webpage:  
<http://web.multco.us/health/bed-bugs>

Questions?