



Board of County Commissioners Briefing

Working Towards a Regional Strategy: Year One Update on Bedbug Workgroup

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Community Health Perspective

Bedbugs disrupt people's lives

- Work for the impacted person & family
- Anxiety, frustration and conflict for apartment neighbors, family, friends
- Additional work and stress for landlords and hotel operators
- Expense of treatment & ongoing prevention
- Damage to facility's reputation (and potential revenue impacts)
- Distraction from other aspects of running a business
- Potential use of inappropriate chemical applications

A personal story

A case study of housing...

- Where we were in 2008 – 2009
 - Taken by surprise
 - Didn't know how to treat bed bugs – most common pest problems in Multi-family housing had been cock roaches or fleas from pets
 - Sprays for bed bugs often took 6 to 8 treatments over 2 to 4 months
- Impacts
 - Exceeded Budgets for pest control many times over – in 2009 spent in excess of \$35,000 for bedbug treatment
 - Infestations spread because we didn't know enough to react quickly – one building had 41 cases out of 42 apartments
 - Residents, who didn't have much to begin with, lost belongings

Housing ...

- Pro-active solutions
 - Resident education [meetings, posters, brochures, etc.]
 - Developed internal procedures with specific roles and responsibilities laid out for staff
 - Modified our leases to require residents to notify us of infestations and to cooperate with treatment
 - Integrated Pest Management – using least toxic sprays, heat; increased inspections
 - Better surveillance and quicker reaction

Housing

- Results

- Overall costs have gone down due to quick response
- Still experience significant number of cases
- While we have seen bed bugs in quite a few of our communities, the greatest number of cases are seen in buildings serving formerly homeless...new residents bring them in or they have visitors who bring them in

Housing...

- Needs:
 - Biggest needs are faced by smallest non-profits and for profit landlords – don't have the flexibility in budgets to absorb costs
 - Residents need help replacing belongings – beds and other furniture
 - Track cases and develop procedures/agreements on preventing transfer of bugs from one building to another



Public Health Approach: A model for the Bedbug Workgroup

- We cannot eliminate bedbugs; we ***can*** control their human and business impacts
- Identify best practices
- Bring stakeholders together to collaborate on methods for identification, prevention and treatment
- Carry out monitoring (“surveillance”)
- Education and outreach



Multnomah County 2011-2012

- Convened Bedbug Summit
- Formation of Steering Committee and Bedbug Workgroup
- Bedbug capacity building
 - Surveillance Framework
 - Hotline (988-Bugs)
 - Website expansion
 - Training and education/outreach
 - Annual Report





Legislative Action: Background and Concept

- Critical importance of understanding the scope of the problem, and identifying trends
- Need legislative protection of pest control operator data (for proprietary interests, client confidentiality, records requests etc)

QUESTIONS?

More information: www.multco.us/health/bed-bugs

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