

Hoarding Task Force

As stories of hoarding continue to permeate the media, staff at the Department of Human Services are working with other community organizations to seek solutions as part of the Allegheny County Hoarding Task Force.

Established in 2012, the Allegheny County Hoarding Task Force is dedicated to eliminating stigma, increasing education and awareness, and coordinating community resources. While the group is community-led and not sponsored by any one agency, it includes participation from DHS Office of Behavioral Health (OBH), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and Integrated Program Services (IPS), as well as the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County Health Department, local clean up companies and nonprofit organizations.

"It's estimated that 2 to 5 percent of the Allegheny County population may have a hoarding disorder," said Don Grant, Older Adult Protective Services supervisor in AAA. "As our population ages, the incidence of hoarding is expected to increase and now is the time to start looking at strategies to address hoarding. DHS is one of the many important segments in our community that needs to be involved in this conversation."

Last May, the task force undertook a strategic planning process, facilitated by DHS IPS staff. Under the new plan, the group is now focused on three major areas: education, coordination and needs assessment. In the short time since the plan's inception, members have created a draft education curriculum as well as a resource guide. A needs assessment survey is being distributed to providers to learn more about the frequency of hoarding as well as current efforts to respond to community needs.

"Unfortunately, no funding is available to help with hoarding, and the task force itself does not and cannot accept funding because it is not a 501(c)(3)," said Ryan Hoy, integrated supports coordinator in IPS. "A lot of the work has come from community professionals dedicating time to help move the Allegheny County Hoarding Task Force forward."

The next task force meeting will be held Monday, June 13, and is open to any interested community members. For more information, please contact Ryan Hoy at Ryan.Hoy@alleghenycounty.us, or 412.350.4511.