**TO: Ben Stone and Laura Taylor, DHCD  
FROM: Jack Cooper, MUPHT**

**Annette Duke, MLRI**

**CC: Sarah Byrnes**

**DATE: March 27, 2020**

Yesterday on a Zoom call that the Mel King Institute facilitated with over 50 public housing resident leaders, presidents of tenant associations, and resident commissioners, concerns and questions were raised about the COVID-19 crisis. What follows is a list of the issues raised. Many are urgent and we hope that we can work with you to take quick action and build upon the work that DHCD, resident leaders, and LHAs are doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep people safe. We appreciate all of the steps you are currently taking.

Please feel free to call Jack Cooper on his cell at 617-293-8075 so that we work with you to take action during these challenging times.

1. **Visitor Policies:**
   1. Elders are very concerned about visitor policies because people are coming and going. They feel VERY vulnerable. Some high-rise elderly buildings are only letting nurses and PCAs and workers in. Tenants want to know how to restrict guests.
   2. One tenant spoke about how they had a visitor log in order to be able to communicate with people in case some get COVID-19.
2. **Staffing:**
   1. We heard about one LHA where one LHA Commissioner told the executive director and staff to go home. It is unclear how the property is being managed.
   2. Residents are unclear what levels of office staffing the Housing Authority should have at this time.
   3. Residents are unclear who is essential staff.
3. **Maintenance**:
   1. In terms of maintenance one tenant said that no maintenance is being done; another tenant said that staff is on half-time, and another tenant said that staff is being asked to use sick-time to stay home.
   2. Tenants are not clear about what is emergency maintenance.
   3. People were very concerned about using shared laundry space.
4. **Supportive Services:**
   1. There is an urgent need for supportive services money to flow to LHAs quickly to be able to provide support.
   2. Tenants were concerned about how to get tenants groceries and medicine, especially seniors and people with immunosuppressed systems.
   3. Tenants are concerned about how to help tenants who are not ambulatory and who have balance issues to prevent them from falling (for example, putting flyers above the lock so people don’t have to bend down).
   4. MUPHT is supporting MassNAHRO’s supplemental request for $5 million for supportive services and maintenance and urged residents to make calls.
5. **LHA Board Meetings:**
   1. Tenants were concerned that LHAs Boards were not holding meetings
   2. We said we would share the Cambridge Housing Authority notice where there was a public conference call number that all could call into.
   3. DHCD needs to give LHAs a clear directive to continue to hold board meetings and provide them with best practices.
6. **Communication to Tenants:**
   1. Tenants want to be able to set up phone trees to provide support, but realize that there are privacy issues in terms of giving out phone numbers and need more guidance and ideas about how to do this without violating someone’s privacy.
   2. Tenants need to know how to establish building or hall captains.
   3. One LHA is using rob call to alert tenants, for example to community room closure.
   4. Tenants wanted to create systems to alert people about who is in quarantined and needs helps.