



Weighing the Public Health Harms of Encampments and Involuntary Displacement

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Involuntary displacement is not an effective or sustainable solution to unsheltered homelessness.

The solutions are permanent housing and addressing the upstream root causes to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.

Defining Involuntary Displacement

- **Not all actions or efforts to close encampments are the same**
- **Involuntary displacement here refers to:**
 - The forceful dislocation of people sleeping outside without their consent and without providing suitable alternative living arrangements or services
- **Involuntary displacement is often characterized by:**
 - Little to no advanced warning of closure
 - Minimal engagement with people living in the encampment
 - Destruction of property and belongings

Balancing Public Health Concerns

- **Public health concerns while unsheltered:**
 - Sanitation
 - Substance use
 - Pedestrian-vehicle injury
 - Violence and safety
 - Environmental exposure
 - Other hazards (e.g., fire)

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- **Public health concerns of involuntary displacement:**

- Immediate injury or death
- Loss of medications and survival items
- Separation from health and social services
- Negative interactions and stress
- Substance use and overdose

Humane Encampment Resolution

Establish multi-sector encampment resolution team

Coordinate housing placement matches

Initiate resident outreach and engagement

House encampment residents!

Assess encampments for health hazards and needs

Continue engagement for ongoing needs

Identify available housing units and their features

Clean space of former encampment

This approach takes time

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Thank you!
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