



[March 25, 2020: Sent to all King County HMIS Users & HMIS Agency Leads]

Important: Changes in HMIS to Support COVID-19 Response

- [NEW: Public Alerts for COVID-19 Notifications](#)
- [NEW: "Health Check-in Needed" added to Location Tab](#)
- [NEW: Changes to HMIS Consent Policy and Process](#)

NEW: Public Alerts for COVID-19 Notifications

The HMIS Public Alert feature is being used for critical notifications during this time. These temporary alerts are part of fulfilling obligations to protect and support the health of individuals experiencing homelessness and agency staff. As a result, it is important to:

- **Keep HMIS data up-to-date and accurate at all times**
- **Pay attention to Public Alert banners and click to read the full text of alert (see screenshot below)**



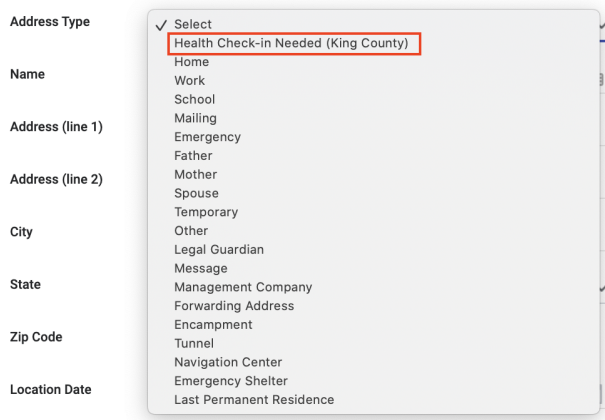
During the COVID Response period, the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) is charged with operating Isolation and Quarantine facilities. In a situation where an individual unexpectedly leaves one of the facilities and is known to be COVID+ , there is a duty and the authorization to notify homeless programs that the individual may be returning to the program(s) where they are actively enrolled and receiving services.

If staff have any questions about this Public Alert protocol, please reach out to your HMIS Agency Lead and they can work with the [System Administration Team](#) to locate relevant resources for your agency.

Additional resources can also be found at the [Health Care for the Homeless Network COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

NEW: "Health Check-In Needed" Added to Location Tab as part of COVID-19 Response

The list of **Address Types** (shown below) has now been updated to include the option for **Health Check-in Needed**. Outreach staff and other providers can use this option to flag that a client needs to be checked on when staff are accessing the client's record in HMIS. While this new Health Check-In Needed address type is now available, please contact your supervisor to verify criteria and expectations regarding its use. **HMIS does not collect information about specific health conditions, including whether someone has COVID-19. Additional resources for supporting people experiencing homelessness during this crisis can be found by visiting: [Health Care for the Homeless Network COVID-19 Resource Page](#)**

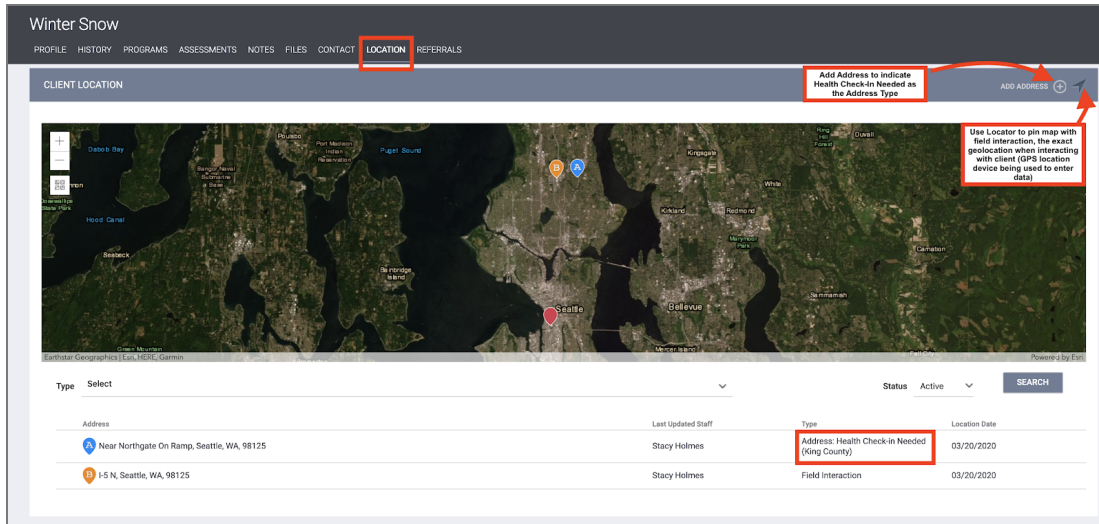


Two different types of location records can be

entered and reviewed on the Location Tab to help support clients and fellow providers:

1. **Manual Add Address with Health Check-in** - enter this type of location to indicate that a health check-in is needed for this client by selecting Health Check-in Needed as Address Type. Staff can then complete remaining fields with as much information as possible and save the screen. Even if Address is a corner or general location, the map will show pin based on zip code.

2. **Field Interaction - Auto-Geolocation** - in addition, staff can also add a pin to the map in the client's record for a "field interaction" using the geolocation data of the mobile device being used. If staff want to record the exact location when interacting with client then they can click the Locator Icon, allow location access from device's browser, and the map will pin the location using GPS.



- Address Type, provides a picklist of general address and/or contact information categories. This is where to select: Health Check-in Needed (King County).
- Name can be used as a brief description field for the location like "Blue Tent"
- Address (line 1) provide a street address, or cross streets, or general location. With City & Zip the system will attempt to map based on the data entered.
- Name, Address (line 1), City, State, Location Date need some data entered before screen can be saved.
- The Active Location toggle defaults to "on" to indicate that this location is not out of date and still relevant.
- Private toggle - should not be used and should remain off so that location record can be easily found and reviewed by other staff as needed

NEW: Changes to HMIS Consent Policy

The following temporary changes are effective immediately.

Verbal Consent by Clients

- King County HMIS policies will now **temporarily allow for verbal consent and release of information**. Staff must explain the information contained in the [Client Consent to Data Collection & ROI \(2020\)](#) and [Client Information Sheet](#), and answer any questions to allow for

meaningful informed consent before asking client to consent, and before creating a client profile in HMIS that contains personally identifying information (PII), such as Name, SSN, and Date of Birth. (Note: additional languages can be found on [HMIS Webpage](#))

- If verbal consent is granted by the client, **the client's consent must still be documented in HMIS behind Privacy Shield in HMIS by marking "verbal consent"** (see screenshot below).
- The verbal consent may be in place until the staff is able to obtain a signed ROI for uploading into HMIS at the next available opportunity when in-person contact can happen.
- As part of collecting or verifying the identifying information over the phone, staff should be sensitive to any concerns re: safety/domestic violence and must never release/verify to caller any information that the staff person is seeing in HMIS...even if caller has shared PII that matches what is currently showing in HMIS.
- Under existing policy, clients need to consent at one agency only within the King County Continuum of Care so staff should continue to search for existing client profiles in HMIS before creating a new one.

Paper Copies of HMIS Consent Form

Since staff complying with new social distancing work locations may no longer have a convenient way to scan and upload a PDF into HMIS, they may now temporarily keep the paper ROI Form on file until upload can happen. **To indicate that the client has provided a signed consent form and the staff has the paper copy in possession, the staff should select "Signed Paper Document" as the option when Adding ROI behind the Privacy Shield.** Staff must keep the paper copy of the signed ROI in a secure location approved by the Agency until staff are able to scan and upload the PDF per usual.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Permission: Yes

Start Date: 03/24/2020

End Date: 03/24/2027

Documentation: Select
Electronic Signature
Attached PDF
Signed Paper Document
Verbal Consent

Temporary options during crisis period

CANCEL

Note: as agencies and systems work to respond to the current COVID-19 crisis, guidance is being updated on an ongoing basis. We will continue to provide updates on these and other topics as new issues arise and/or as we obtain updated guidance. **Please reach out to your HMIS Agency Lead and/or the [Help Desk](#) if you have any questions at any time.**