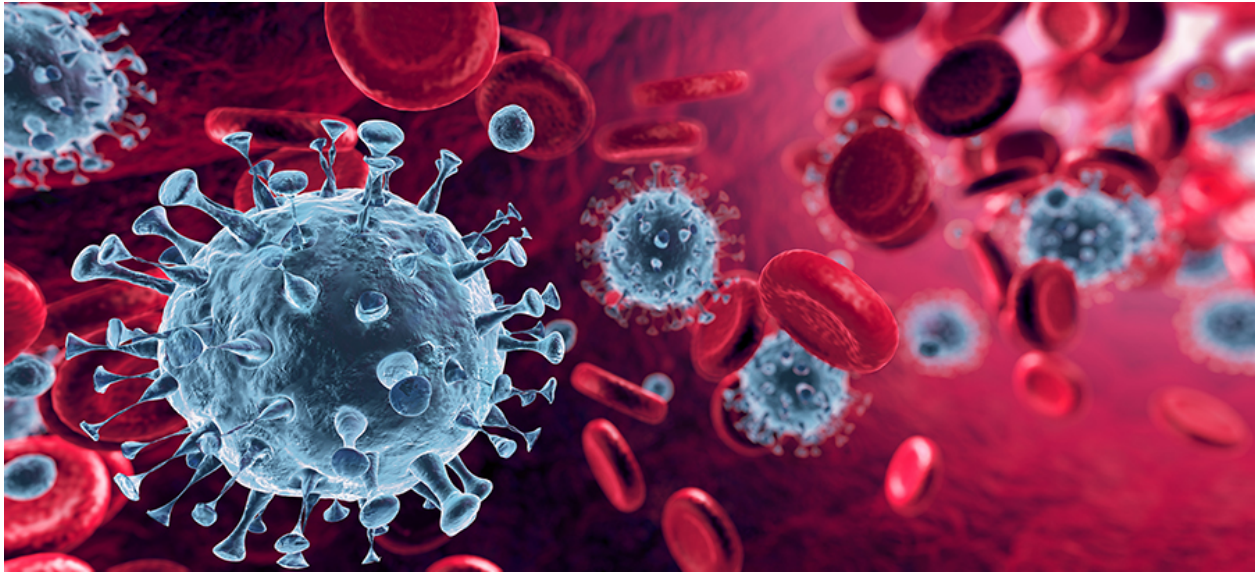


How Coronavirus Disproportionately Affects the Homeless

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The United States has undoubtedly felt the impact of Coronavirus. America is approaching 8 million cases and has recorded more than 210,000 deaths. We have all been informed of the best methods to mitigate the spread of the virus: wash your hands, socially distance wherever possible, etc. However, there is segment of the population that has been rocked by the pandemic more than any other in the country: the homeless.

Coronavirus disproportionately affects the homeless population, particularly in the state of California, where one fourth of the homeless population resides. Forty percent of homeless individuals in California are over the age of 65. Per the CDC, older individuals are more susceptible to the virus than any other age group. As one gets older, the severity of a Coronavirus related illness increases. Homeless individuals also have limited access to bathrooms and sanitation, making recommended guidelines such as washing your hands near impossible to follow. A third factor is housing. As the pandemic surges, so does unemployment. Not only that, Corona-related prison release programs are also contributing to the influx of newly homeless individuals. This leads to more instances of encampments and shelters becoming more overcrowded than they were previously. An overcrowded population is the perfect breeding ground for the Coronavirus. Although California is taking steps to mitigate this issue through a hotel housing program, it is simply not enough. Many hotels, neighbors, and legislators are refusing to participate.

With the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down, now more than ever the homeless need assistance in securing more appropriate housing. The pandemic has exposed just how poor

and inhumane many of the homeless' living conditions truly are. Although measures are being put in place to improve conditions, there is still much that needs to be done.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html>

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