

# **COVID-19 and Homelessness: The Massachusetts Response**

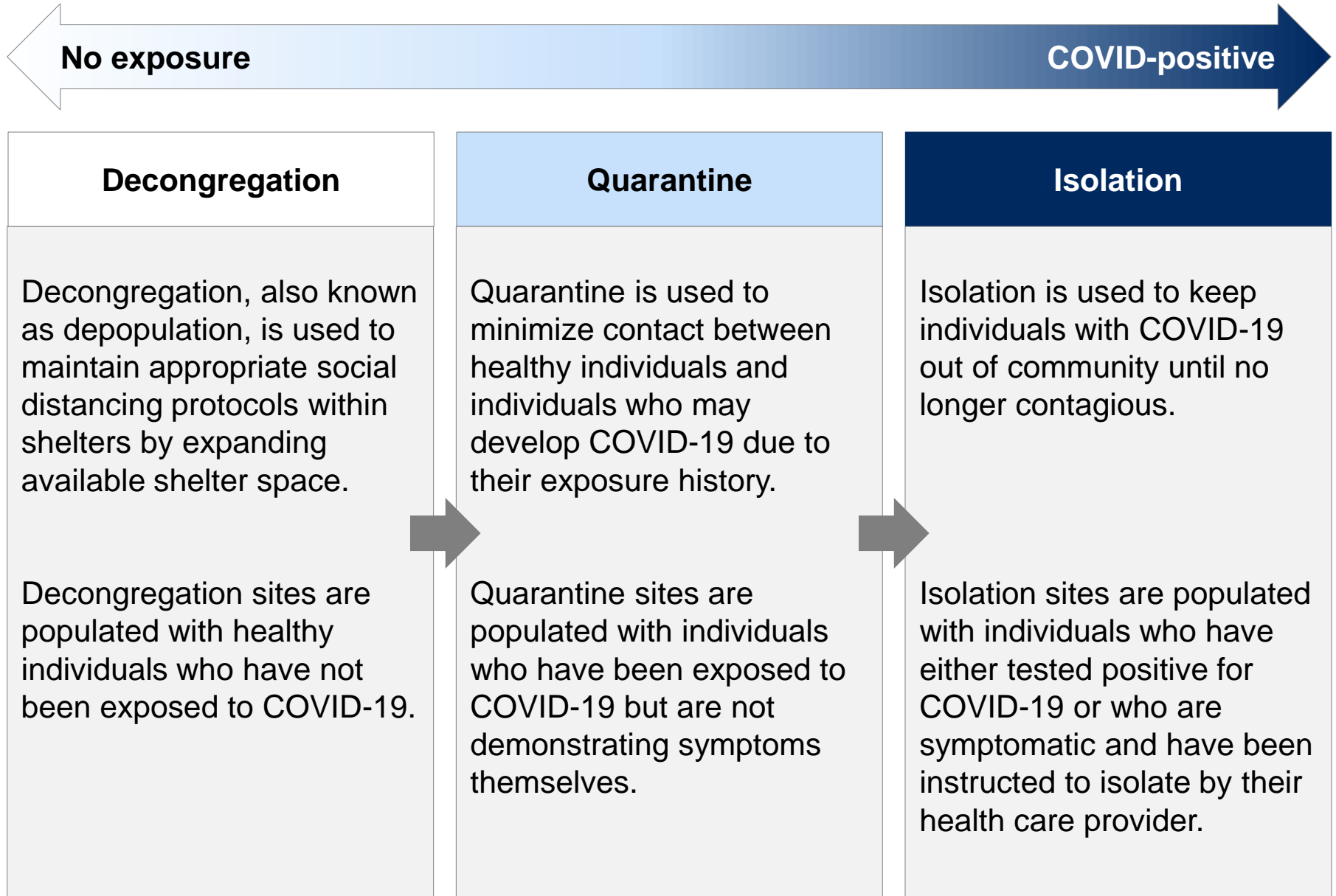
MA COVID-19 Response Command Center

May 2020

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# 1 Background: Three categories across the infectious disease spectrum



## 2 Decongregation and Quarantine: Establishing sites across the state to minimize spread of COVID-19 within shelters

- With the Baker-Polito Administration's support, communities across the Commonwealth are standing up:
  - **Decongregation sites** to improve social distancing within homeless shelters
  - **Quarantine sites** to provide a safe place for homeless individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 but are not symptomatic themselves
- These sites can be established in **existing facilities** or in **outdoor tents**
- The Administration created an **expedited process** for homeless shelters and municipalities **to request equipment and supplies** for these solutions
  - **Equipment includes:** heated tents, portable showers, portable toilets, hand-washing stations, generators, beds/cots, pillows, and blankets
  - **Supplies include:** hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, gowns, etc.)
- To date, **twelve communities** have received supplies to support their decongregation and/or quarantine efforts: Brockton, Cambridge, Fitchburg, Framingham, Greenfield, Haverhill, Hyannis, Lowell, Southbridge, Taunton, Waltham, and Worcester
- Some communities have established their own solutions in addition to the state-supported decongregation and quarantine sites

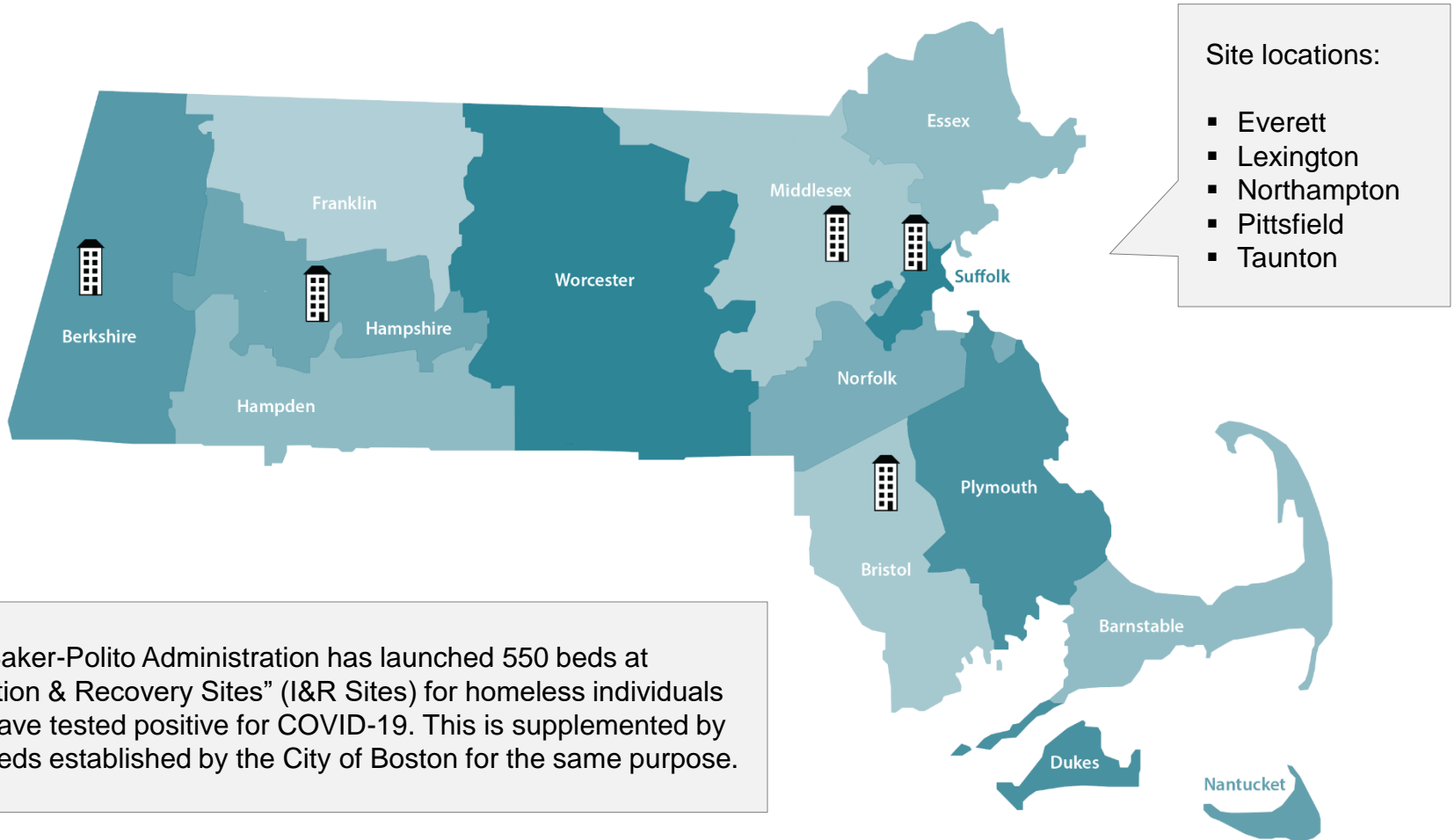
## 2 Decongregation and Quarantine: Examples of state-supported tent solutions



Decongregation and quarantine tents have been set up to be as small as 10-bed solutions or as large as 75 bed solutions (across multiple tents).

### 3 Isolation: The State has launched five Isolation & Recovery Sites for homeless individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19

Map of Isolation & Recovery Site locations



The Baker-Polito Administration has launched 550 beds at “Isolation & Recovery Sites” (I&R Sites) for homeless individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19. This is supplemented by 732 beds established by the City of Boston for the same purpose.

### 3 Isolation: Intake and departure criteria for I&R Sites

#### Intake Criteria

##### Financial Eligibility

- Individuals that are **experiencing homeless or housing instability** (i.e., people who normally sleep at a shelter, on the street, for whom home is unsafe due to violence, or who do not have a permanent address); **OR**
- Individuals in households **making less than 400% of the Federal Poverty Level** in need of a safe place to isolate

##### Clinical Eligibility

- Individuals with a **positive COVID-19 test result**

Individuals must be able to safely isolate without intensive medical supervision. These sites are **NOT** available for individuals who:

- Require assistance with Activities of Daily Living from on-site staff;
- Require medication administration (except for methadone);  
or
- Require the level of care provided at a Skilled Nursing Facility.

#### Departure Criteria

**To discontinue isolation, guests must fulfill one of two criteria:**

##### **If symptomatic at any point during stay:**

- At least 72 hours have passed since recovery (defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in respiratory symptoms); **AND**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or positive test result (whichever occurred most recently)

##### **If asymptomatic for entirety of stay:**

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test and they have had no subsequent illness

### 3 Isolation: At I&R Sites, guests are provided with all necessary services to ensure a safe recovery period, similar to if they were isolating at home



1 Homeless individual tests positive for COVID-19 but does not require medical care. Qualifies for I&R Site.

2 As a guest at an I&R Site, individual is provided their own hotel room along with 3 meals per day. Additional services on-site include nurse oversight, security, behavioral health supports, laundry and cleaning services, and linkages to other state services (e.g., DMH, DDS, MassHealth enrollment support).

3 Once recovered, guest returns to their originating shelter and may be connected to additional social services.



### 3 Isolation: Step-by-step outline of I&R Site process

#### Intake

- 1) Individual tests positive for COVID-19
- 2) Shelter, health care provider, municipality, or other individual contacts intake vendor
- 3) Intake vendor determines eligibility and assigns individual to closest I&R Site
- 4) Intake vendor arranges for transportation team to pick up individual at current location and bring to I&R Site

#### I&R Site Stay

Services included throughout duration of guest's stay:

- Guest provided with individual room and welcome package (toiletries, water, etc.)
- 24/7 nursing team checks vitals twice daily, with additional check-ins as needed
- 24/7 security team provides supervision of common spaces and hallways
- Individualized in-room food service provided three times daily
- Laundry service provided for towels, linens, and clothing
- Behavioral health services provided on an ad hoc basis (in-person or via telehealth)

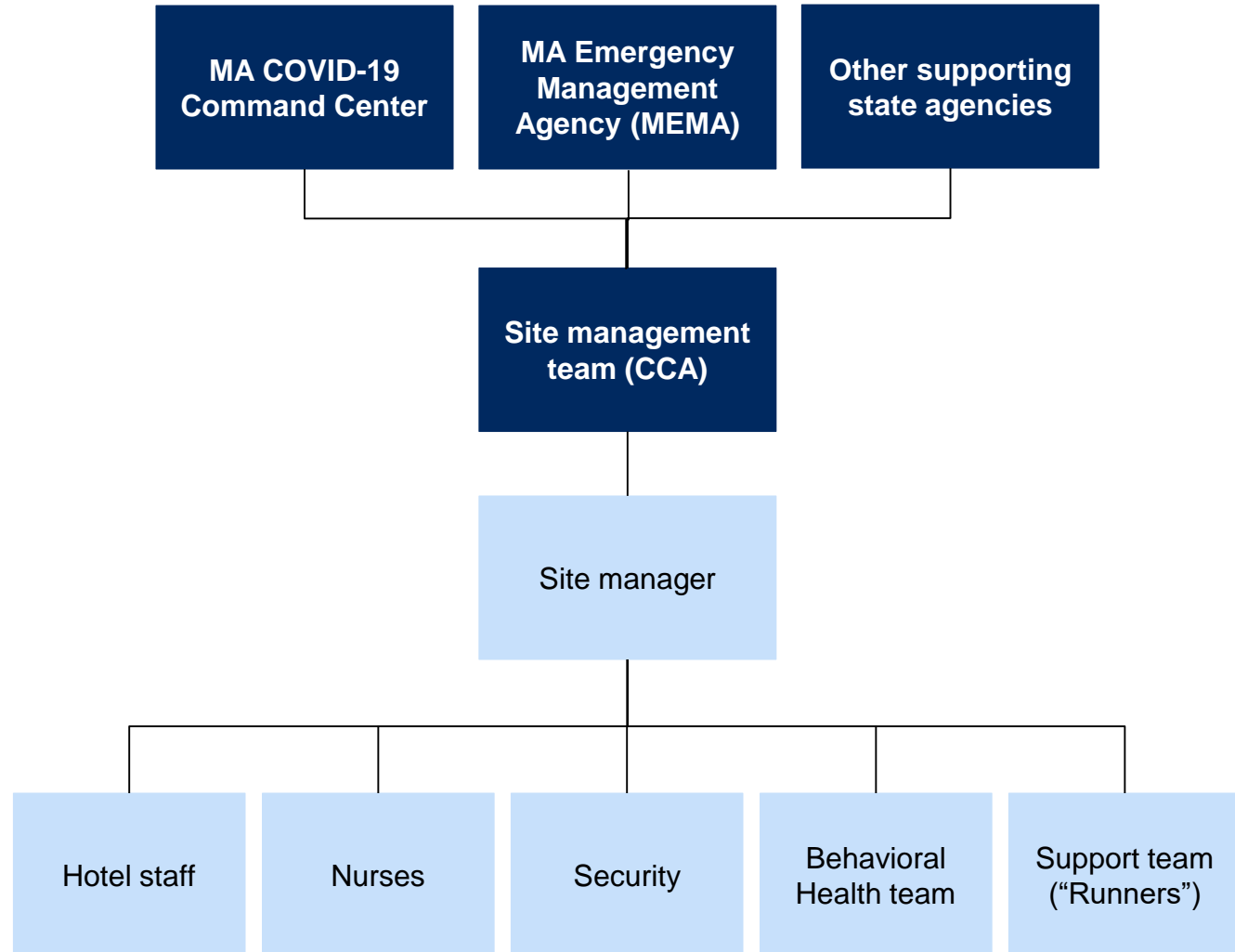
#### Departure

- 1) Clinical team determines that guest has completed all CDC isolation requirements
- 2) Guest is provided with "Discontinuation of Isolation" form, allowing re-entry to shelters
- 3) Intake vendor is informed of guest's readiness for departure and arranges transport
- 4) Transportation team returns guest to originating location (e.g., shelter, halfway house)
- 5) After 24 hours, cleaning service decontaminates room and prepares for next guest

### 3 Isolation: I&R Site team structure

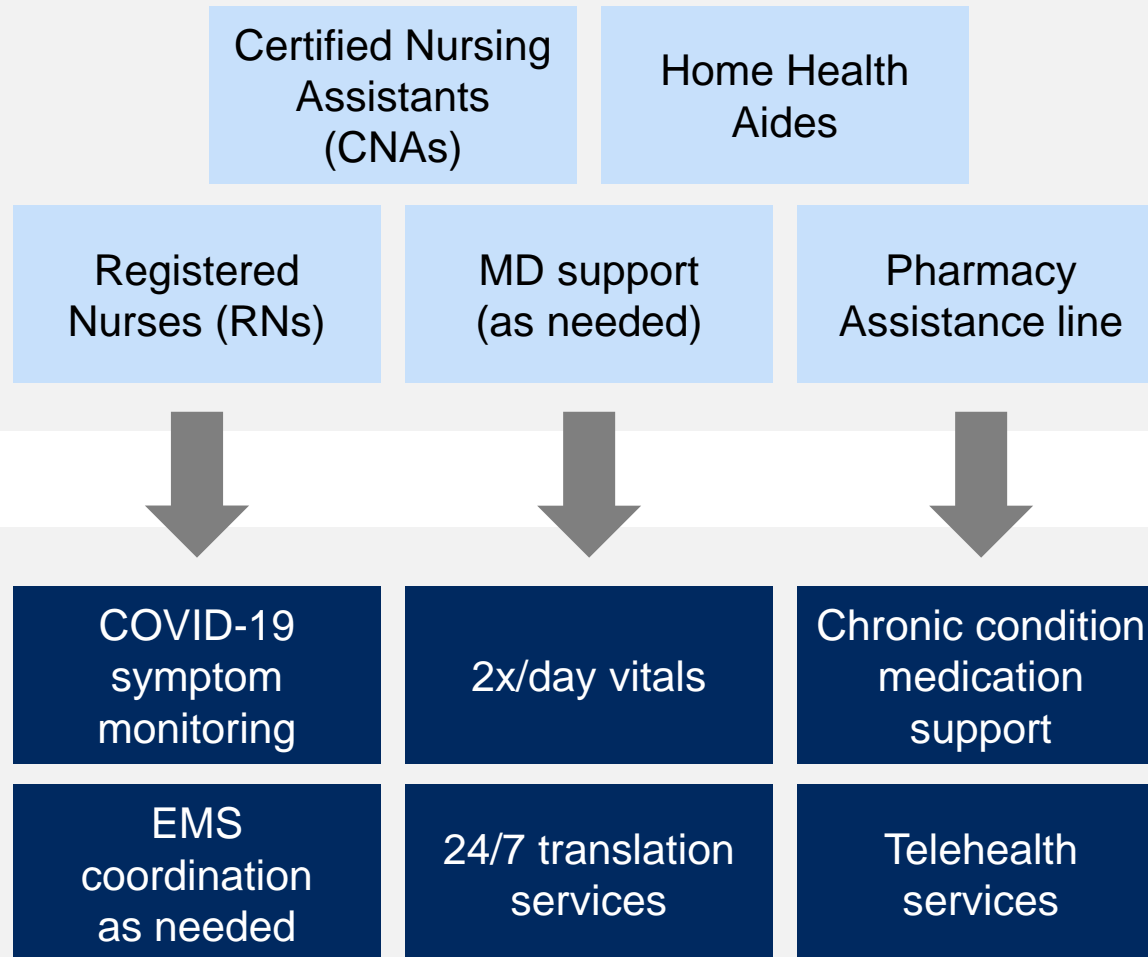
■ Across all sites  
■ Site-specific

- The Command Center and MEMA work together to oversee the I&R Sites
- Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA) manages day-to-day site operations, coordinating across sites and escalating questions to leadership when required
- Each location has an on-site manager who supervises operations and triages issues as needed
- In addition to clinical and security staff, each site has:
  - Hotel staff who manage room assignment and provide janitorial services
  - “Runners” who inventory supplies, go on shopping runs as needed, etc.



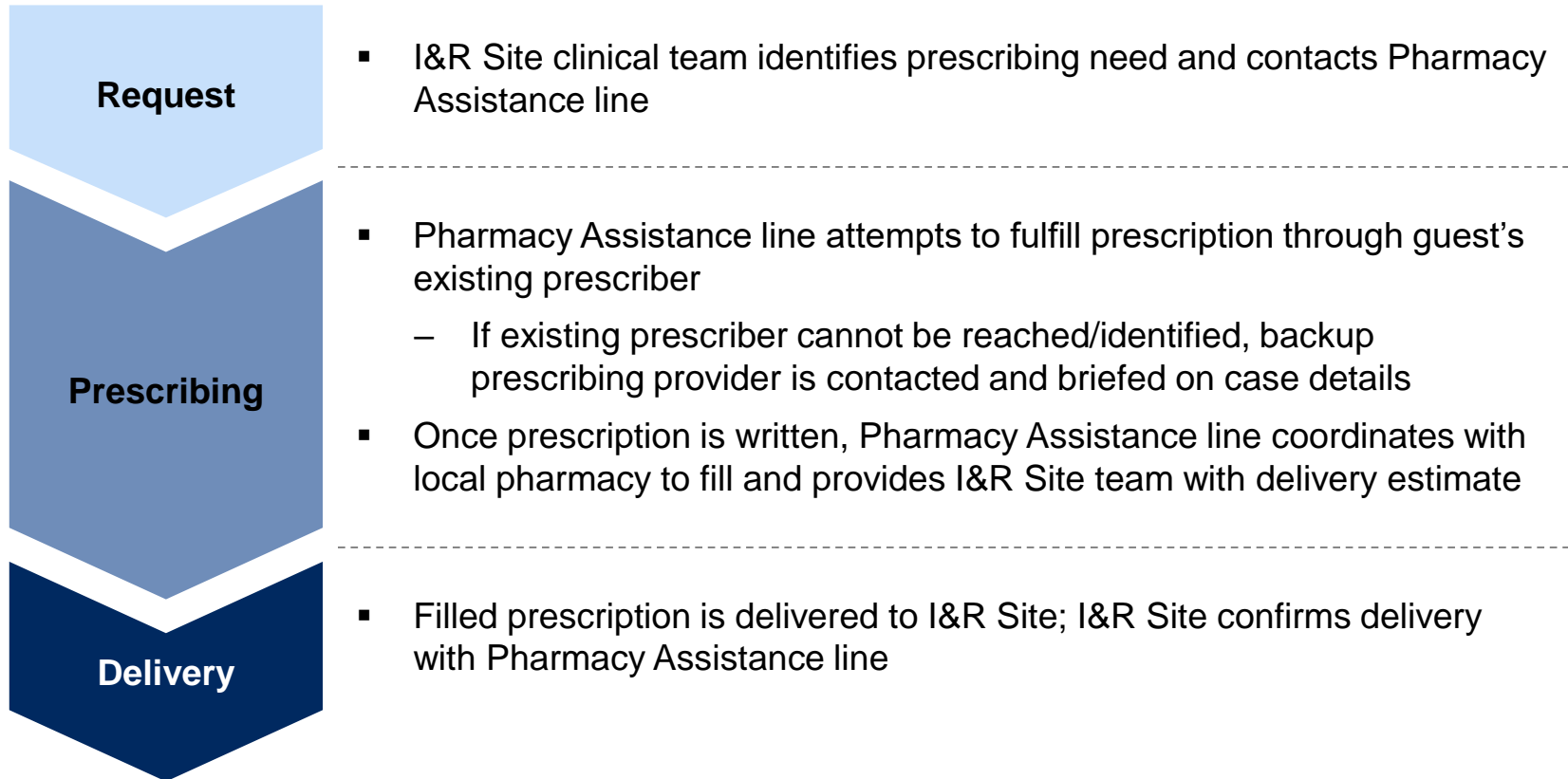
### 3 Isolation: Clinical services provided at I&R Sites

Multi-level team provides clinical oversight to I&R Site guests, ensuring that individuals with worsening or acute symptoms can be diverted to an appropriate medical facility. When possible, sites partner with local community health centers to support with staffing.



### 3 Isolation: Detailed process for Pharmacy Assistance line

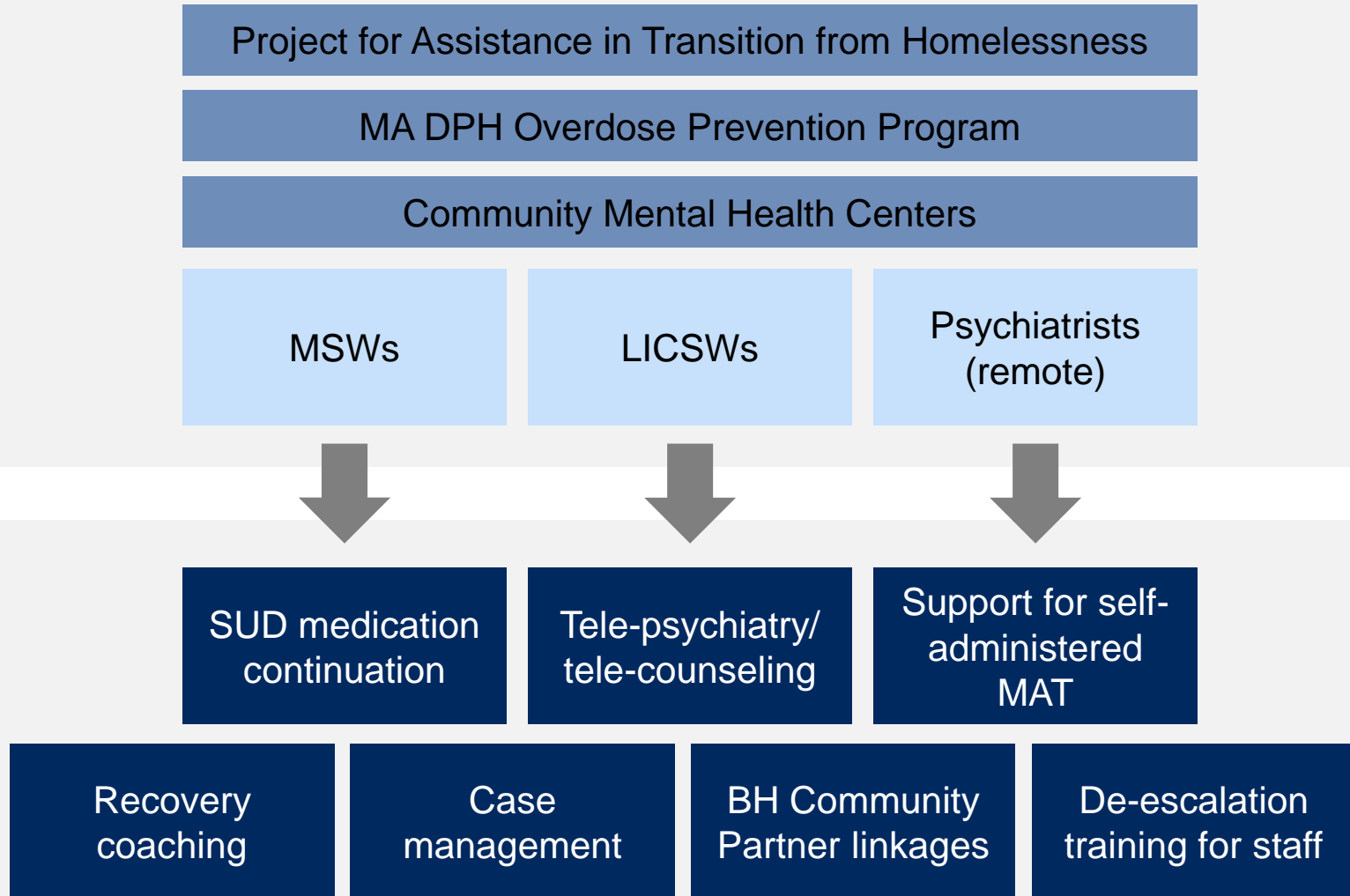
Should the clinical team determine that an I&R Site guest needs a prescription (new or refilled), they coordinate with a centralized Pharmacy Assistance line for timely delivery:



Additional support teams are available as-needed to discuss SUD-specific medication requests

### 3 Isolation: Behavioral health services provided at I&R Sites

I&R Sites serve as a unique opportunity to address guests' behavioral health needs, as facilitated through partnerships with several local BH providers.



### 3 Isolation: I&R Site supplies list

All I&R Sites are supplied with a “hotel kit” that includes supplies necessary to open safely. Site managers can then request additional supplies as needed through MEMA.

Supplies in the hotel kits include, but are not limited to:

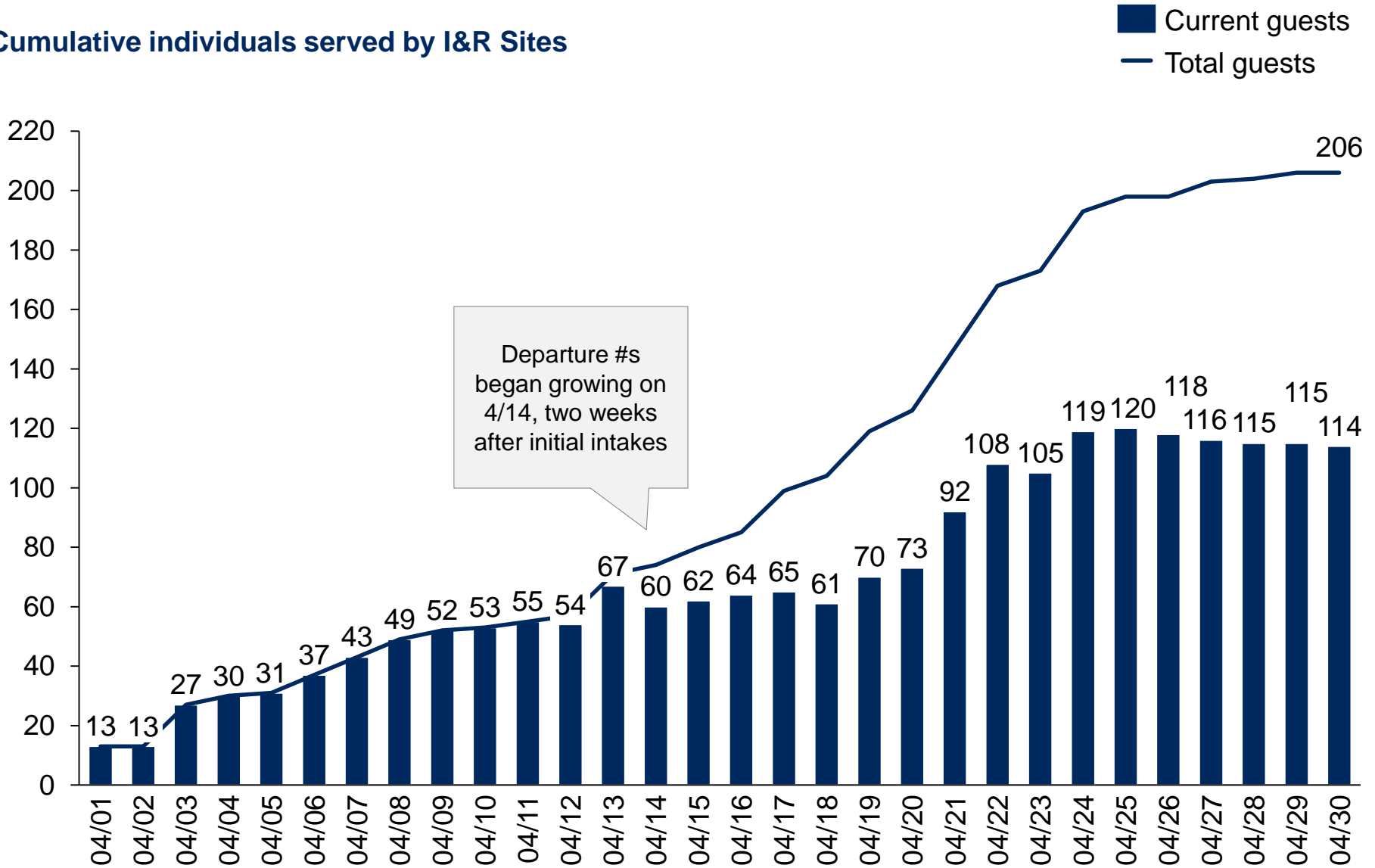
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** – N95 masks, gloves, gowns, etc.
- **Sanitizing equipment** – hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap, bleach
- **Vital sign monitors** – blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes, pulse oximeters, glucometers with test strips
- **Emergency equipment** – Narcan, AMBU bags, wheelchairs
- **Medication** – Tylenol, ibuprofen, first aid kits, medicine cups
- **Comfort supplies for guests** – toiletries, snacks, cough drops, socks and underwear, water bottles, etc.

### 3 Isolation: I&R Sites are set up to meet both staff and guest needs



### 3 Isolation: As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 206 homeless individuals have been served by an I&R Site

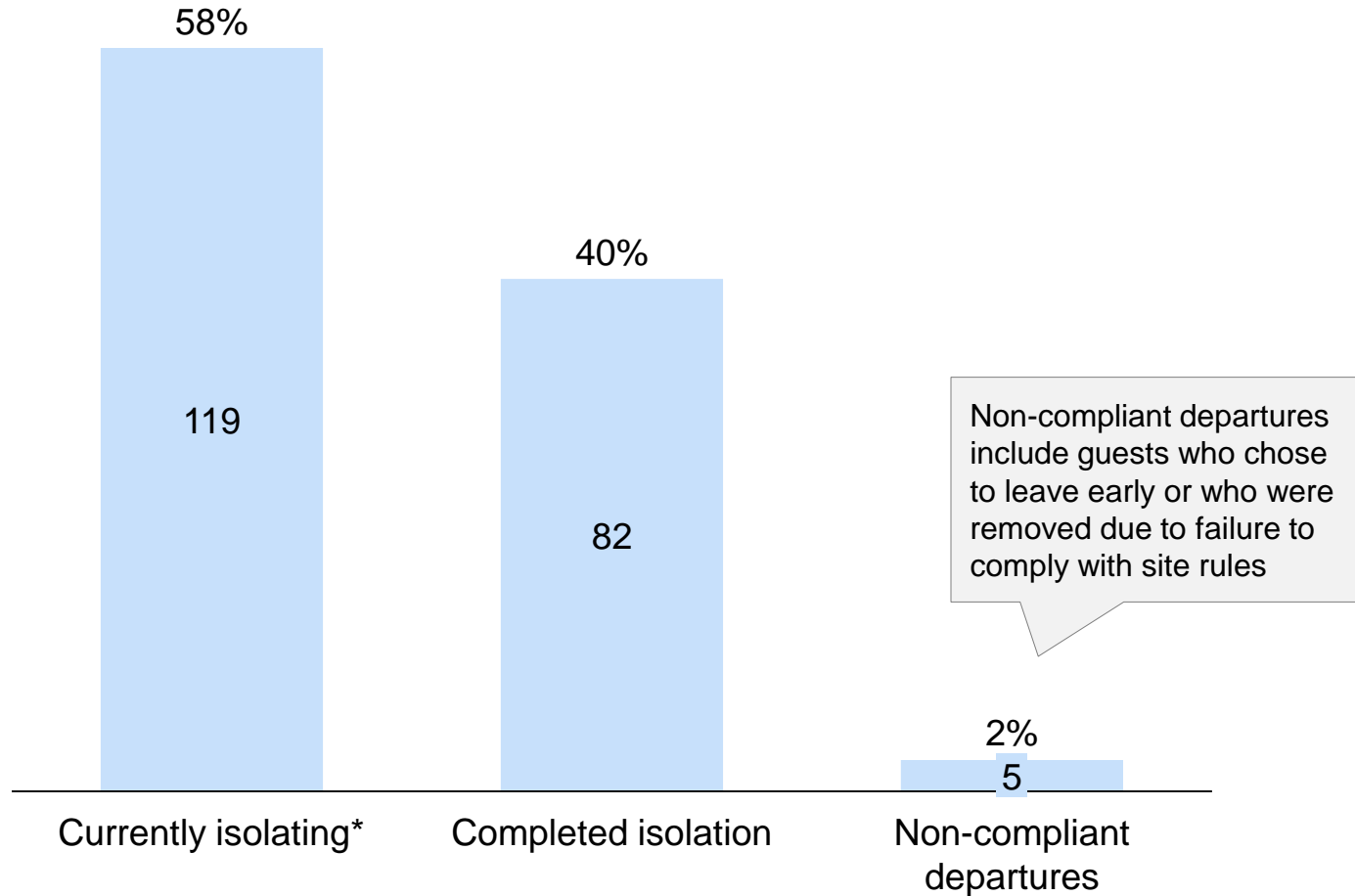
Cumulative individuals served by I&R Sites





### 3 Isolation: Of the 206 people served, 82 (40%) have completed their isolation period and have safely returned to community

Current status of individuals served by I&R Sites



\*Includes individuals transferred to a higher level of care, with I&R Site beds held for them for use upon hospital discharge