



THE SALVATION ARMY

Arkansas – Oklahoma Division

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEEPING THE HOMELESS HEALTHY

Flu epidemic, contagious viruses can be problem for shelters like Salvation Army

Having the flu can be dangerous and miserable for those with health insurance, but can be even more so for those with no access to a regular healthcare provider, like the homeless or those living in residential shelters.

The flu and other contagious viruses have surged through the state in the past month, and for those living on the street or in shelters, healthcare is sometimes not easy to come by.

“We have a partnership with Healing Hands, and they come to our Family Lodge to do health checks every week,” said Toni Sanders, director of Social Services for The Salvation Army Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Command.

“If we have residents who are sick, we get them to Healing Hands as quickly as possible.”

The first step in keeping a contagion out of the resident shelters at The Salvation Army is to “take care of our staff first,” said Sanders.

“We stress hand-washing and not sharing work stations. If you are sick, stay home,” said Sanders. “In the shelters, we also stress the importance of washing hands and covering your mouth when you cough. Having a sickness can be dangerous in the shelters because of the close living quarters.”

The Salvation Army Oklahoma City is not able to administer medications of any kind to clients. However, the agreement with Healing Hands allows residents to receive much-needed medical care.

Healing Hands provides primary health care, and all services provided to the homeless are free of charge.

Healing Hands will conduct health checks at The Salvation Army Family Lodge at 1 p.m. TODAY, Tuesday, Feb. 19. **The media is invited** to talk with Social Service personnel and Healing Hands about the flu epidemic and the medical care provided to the homeless.

Please contact Heide Brandes, director of public relations for The Salvation Army Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Command, at 405-246-1125 or 405-623-0665 if you plan to cover this.

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