

BED BUG ISSUES – Task Force Discussion outline – 2/3/11

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR INFESTATIONS?

- Tenants cannot be held responsible if, as is the usual case, it cannot be proven that they were responsible for introducing the BBs.
- If tenants are responsible, they will invariably make do-it-yourself applications and misapplications of pesticides putting themselves and others at risk, control efforts will be uncoordinated and piecemeal at best, thus doomed to fail, and be individually more costly than contracting control for a block of units or the entire building
- Tenants should be educated on how to avoid infesting the premises, e.g., by info presented to all new and existing tenants, also defining the tenant's obligation to inform management if they discover bed bugs on the premises
- Units should be pest-proofed as much as possible, i.e., sealed to prevent BB dispersal. Landlords should be responsible for this, for continuity and because it is a building improvement.
- Landlords are beginning to write bed bug clauses into leases, requiring tenants to pay for control of BB infestations
- Legislation may be needed requiring cooperation from tenants, allowing treatment access, proper prep before treatment, notification of infestation, and requiring them (or *any* individual) to pay for treatment if they negligently or purposefully introduce bed bugs. Likewise, landlords should be barred from renting units they know or suspect are infested.

OVERSIGHT AND ENFORCEMENT IN HOTELS, APARTMENTS, etc.?

- Municipalities are empowered to handle BBs as any other nuisance issue, but may not have the training or resources to investigate them. Citizens are unaware that complaints should be lodged with the municipality
- Health departments do not have jurisdiction to act, and may also lack the necessary training and funding
- Authorize State regulators (IDPH) to penalize PMPs whose BB control operations violate the established "Best Practices" for BB management as specified by the Subcommittee

THE BEDDING ACT AND DISPOSAL OF INFESTED MATERIALS?

- The IL Safe & Hygienic Bedding Act should be funded
- The Act does not require sellers of secondhand bedding items to comply
- The Act could be amended to expand its scope to secondhand dealers?
- The Act could be amended to include guidelines for proper disposal of infested materials? Such as: sealing in plastic (before dragging out), damaging to make unusable, marking as infested, placed outside building for disposal ASAP

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS?

- Develop brochure for tenants? Require landlords to provide an approved BB pamphlet to tenants? To post BB posters in a common area of each building?
- Conduct BB training for municipal officials & code enforcers, local health dept. staff, school officials, landlords...
- Get IL-specific info on bed bug problem through questionnaire to PMPs via IPCA?

SUBSIDIZING BED BUG CONTROL FOR LOW/NO-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS?

- Low-income residents cannot afford professional pest control, may misuse pesticides in unsuccessful attempts to control BBs on their own, and thus may be perpetually infested and serve as BB reservoirs. Programs could be established to provide these residents with low/no-cost encasements and traps
- Where pest control is provided to low/no-income residences, residents (e.g., seniors and the disabled) may be incapable of preparing their units for pest control, which may delay control indefinitely and again create a bed bug reservoir for infestation of other units and buildings. Subsidizing the preparation and cleaning of these units, by paying for outside help from cleaning services, could provide relief

DEVELOPING PEST MANAGEMENT “BEST PRACTICE” GUIDELINES FOR PMPs?

- Could serve as basic, minimum guidelines to be met by all BB management programs, and as a basis for possible regulatory enforcement, and also to guide consumers (property managers, landlords, hotels, as well as individuals) in hiring pest management and knowing what to expect with regard to BB service.
- Subcommittee could formulate guidelines which could be posted on the IDPH Website, but would not be “enforceable.” Municipalities might adopt the guidelines as an ordinance that would be enforceable. IDPH could send the guidelines to a Legislative committee that might approve them as “rules” which IDPH could then enforce, though this process would probably take a year or more to enact the rules.