

Background: Bed Bug infestations is a growing problem around the Country, but also here in Michigan. The Michigan Department of Community Health has pulled together a work group to address concerns and provide information to the public relating to this issue. Our first meeting was held on 1/14/08, in Lansing. They asked that PMAM send a representative from the organization to represent the interests of multifamily housing. The work group consisted of members from the Michigan Department of Health, Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University, Michigan Environmental Health Association, Michigan Pest Control Association, Wayne County Health Department, and the PMAM, representing the property management industry. Everyone felt that there is little information out there from within Michigan and that this work group could possibly take the lead in providing information to Michigan residents concerning this growing problem. Eric Foster, with MDCH, let the initial workgroup meeting and hosted the meeting also. The meeting lasted four hours and resulted in four subcommittees being formed. Gary Offenbacher represented PMAM and the housing industry for the initial meeting. It was suggested that the Motel/Hotel industry also be invited to participate and possibly the College housing industry.

Issues to be addressed by the group:

1. Quality of Life Issues
2. Anxiety issues surrounding infestations.
3. Difficulty in control and management.
4. Public Education and Communication.
5. Residents with Special Needs.
6. Workforce training issues.
7. Toxicity of Pesticides and health risks.
8. Legal and enforcement issues.
9. Tracking of complaints.
10. Legal and Legislative concerns.
11. Cost and available resources.

The Committees formed picked some areas to target information on:

- Scientific – Basic Biology, History of problem in Michigan, Resistance to treatments and pesticides.
- Treatment Guidelines/ Safe Pesticides Use – research Cornell paper on homeless shelter infestations, Fact sheet and MDA Brochure, Inspect – Identify-IPM-Control Practices – Monitoring., Chemical vs. Non Chemical, Registered Pesticide List, Immediate Solutions.
- Laws and Regulations – Matrix of Relevant laws, Definition from regulatory standpoint, Case Law and financial responsibility, Advocacy, Local health department jurisdictional issues.
- Education/Training and Communication. – Licensed pest management company link, local jurisdiction contact list, training powerpoint, stigma and psychology.

It was agreed that the four groups would try to assemble a basic body of knowledge by January 31st and the subgroups would meet by phone or in person before the next work group meeting. The end product may be a binder with information about what is working in Michigan to combat bed bugs and numerous references of places to get further information and resources.

Please let Gary know if your organization has an interest in participating in some way – goffenbacher@continentalmgt.com