

# Alert to Emergency Shelters in Baltimore City

## Hypothermia – What you know could save a life!

### Hypothermia Facts: Did you know?

- Hypothermia is a common cause of illness and death in urban areas
- People can die of hypothermia even when the temperature is above freezing, especially if it's wet or windy
- People who are hypothermic may be lethargic and confused – they can look like they're intoxicated, when really they're sick and need medical attention
- People who have the greatest risk of dying from hypothermia:
  - Homeless people
  - Substance abusers
  - People with psychiatric disorders
  - Elderly people
  - People with chronic medical conditions or malnutrition

### Recognize the Signs

- Lethargy and confusion
- Slurred speech
- Trouble walking normally
- Uncontrollable shivering – note that shivering **STOPS** as patients get colder, because the muscles tire out. People with the most severe hypothermia may not shiver.

### What Can You Do?

- **SUSPECT** hypothermia in people who look like they're intoxicated, are confused, are having trouble walking or talking, or are shivering uncontrollably
- Help the person get warm again:
  - Remove all wet clothing
  - Cover the person with a warm dry blanket
  - Give the person a hot beverage
  - Allow them to remain indoors to warm up
- Call 911 and send the person to the hospital if:
  - Initial symptoms are severe OR
  - The person is not improving after 1-2 hours of rewarming OR
  - If you use a thermometer, send all people with oral temperatures of 93 degrees or below to the hospital immediately