July 29, 2021

Public Health Advisory

COVID-19 Update, State Health Officer Order, and Updated Guidance

Dear Colleagues:

This advisory provides an update on COVID-19 community transmission, notice of the State Public Health Officer Order, information on updated masking guidance, and guidance on boosters and antibody testing.

Current Situation

MARIN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH REQUESTS THAT PROVIDERS IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE, UNVACCINATED PATIENTS AND REFER FOR VACCINATION IMMEDIATELY.

Delta Variant

Since April the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant has been circulating in Marin County. This variant is highly transmissible in indoor settings and requires multi-component prevention strategies to reduce spread. Despite high vaccination rates, Marin County is experiencing substantial levels of community transmission due to the Delta variant. While most COVID-19 cases are among unvaccinated residents, the proportion of breakthrough cases is increasing. Hospitalizations have also increased, primarily among unvaccinated persons. Marin County is also seeing a concerning uptick in cases among staff and residents in long-term care facilities.

Unvaccinated Workers in High-Risk Settings

On July 26, 2021, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued an Order requiring vaccine verification of staff; enhanced respiratory protection for source control; and diagnostic screening testing for unvaccinated and incompletely vaccinated workers.

Updated Masking Guidance

On July 27, 2021, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance for fully vaccinated people given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant. CDC recommends that fully vaccinated person wear a mask in public indoor settings. On July 28, 2021 CDPH aligned its Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings with the CDC and recommend universal masking in public indoor settings statewide. CDC and CDPH also endorsed that fully vaccinated people at higher risk for COVID-19 infection, as well as unvaccinated and not fully vaccinated persons consider wearing a mask in non-public indoor settings. Household transmission and small gatherings are major drivers of COVID-19 transmission in Marin County.
Boosters and Antibody Testing

The Food and Drug Administration, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and CDC have not approved or recommended a COVID-19 vaccine booster. Also, there is not a recommendation to initiate another vaccine series for individuals with undetectable antibodies. On May 19, 2021, the FDA issued a safety communication advising against antibody testing. The vaccine activates both humoral immunity (antibodies) and cell-mediated immunity.

Actions requested of providers

Delta Variant
1. Proactively identify patients who have not received their COVID-19 vaccine and refer all eligible patients for COVID-19 vaccination immediately. Same-day appointments are available at GetVaccinatedMarin.org.
   a. If patients with access and functional needs (AFN) [e.g., transportation barrier, disability] need home-based COVID-19 vaccination, contact patients, confirm their interest, and refer patients ready for home-based COVID-19 vaccination to Marin County Public Health - Request for Mobile Vaccine.
2. Join the CDPH Director, Dr. Tomás Aragón, on Monday, August 2 at 12 PM for a training on having proactive conversations with your patients and clients about COVID-19 vaccines. Registration (gotowebinar.com).
3. Educate patients on ways to reduce their risk and prevent getting sick.

Unvaccinated Workers in High-Risk Settings
1. Review the State Order and implement requirements no later than August 23, 2021.
2. Marin County Public Health has BinaxNOW Test Kits available for facilities that have a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) waiver and adhere to reporting requirements. Order via email - mhoac@marincounty.org.

Updated Masking Guidance
1. Advise patients and staff to adhere to updated masking guidance to ensure universal masking in indoor public settings.
2. Encourage patients to consider masking in indoor non-public settings if at higher risk for COVID-19 infection and/or when gathering with unvaccinated persons.

Boosters and Antibody Testing
1. At this time, providers should not refer patients for COVID-19 booster vaccines.
2. Marin County Public Health currently advises against COVID-19 antibody testing.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH
Deputy Public Health Officer
Lsantora@marincounty.org