



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

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Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance: Essential Home Visits

Situation Update

There are now 63 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Marin County. Due to limited testing, this number is an underestimate of the prevalence of COVID-19. Older adults and persons with underlying chronic medical conditions are at greatest risk for serious illness from COVID-19, including death.

Essential home visits, including Adult Protective Services (APS), Children and Family Services (CFS), Home Health Care, Hospice Care, and In-Home Support Services (IHSS), provide critical supports for our most vulnerable populations. However, they also increase the risk of disease transmission. Marin County Public Health is committed to the protection of residents in the home care setting from the spread of infectious disease.

Recommendations

1. Review Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resources for people who are at higher risk for severe illness (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>).
2. Ensure all staff and volunteers complete appropriate level of infection control training. At a minimum staff and volunteers should review [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) How to Protect Yourself](#). Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a free on-line training course in infection prevention and control.
[Module 6A – Principles of Standard Precautions](#)
[Module 6B – Principles of Transmission-Based Precautions](#)
[Module 7 - Hand Hygiene](#)
[Module 9 - Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette](#)
3. Complete only essential home visits (e.g., statutorily mandated; acute care needs; support of activities of daily living [ADLs]). Optimize technology to support essential functions / services (e.g., teleconferencing [Skype; Zoom; Facetime; Duo])
4. Staff and/or volunteers should not conduct home visits if they [have signs or symptoms of respiratory illness](#) (fever, cough, shortness of breath).¹
 - a. Any staff that develop signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection while working should:

¹ Prompt detection, triage and isolation of potentially infectious patients are essential to prevent unnecessary exposures among patients, healthcare personnel, and visitors.

- i. Immediately stop work, put on a facemask, and self-isolate at home;
 - ii. Notify their manager or supervisor. Provide information on individuals, equipment, and locations the person encountered; and,
 - iii. Contact their healthcare provider.
- 5. Prepare for home visits in advance:
 - a. Bring hand sanitizer – sanitize hands before and after the home visit.²
 - b. Bring facemasks³. Staff / volunteers should be provided one facemask and one paper lunch bag to store mask between uses. Have small supply of facemasks for clients.
 - c. Bring disinfectant wipes to wipe down surfaces you must use during the home visit.
- 6. Identify clients at risk for having COVID-19 infection before or immediately upon arrival to the home. Ask the following questions prior entry:
 - a. Has anyone in your home tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - b. Is anyone in the home suspected of having or have been exposed to someone having COVID-19?
 - c. Are you aware of anyone in the household having had a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing in the past 14 days?

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, reschedule your visit if possible. If unable to reschedule, notify your supervisor or manager and follow infection control protocol. Advise client (if necessary, assist them) to contact their healthcare provider.

- 7. Review [CDC Guidelines](#) for non-hospitalized COVID-19 patients:
 - a. Patients must stay home except to get medical care.
 - b. They must separate from other people and animals in the home as much as possible (in a separate room with the door closed).
 - c. They must wear a facemask in the presence of others. If they cannot wear a facemask, you should wear one while in the same room with them, if facemasks are available.
- 8. Follow infection control protocol.
 - a. Keep visit as brief as possible
 - b. If possible, stay 6 feet away from clients (social distancing). If possible, ask other house members to move to a different room. If social distancing not possible at the home due to size / number of residents, consider an alternate site (if feasible).
 - c. Hand hygiene should be performed before putting on and after removing facemask using alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol
 - d. If client symptomatic, provide client with facemask (if available).
 - e. Clean surfaces with disinfectant cleaning solutions or wipes.
 - f. Avoid exposure to potentially infectious objects or materials.

² If you do not have hand sanitizer, wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after the home visit. Washing hands in front of clients is both reassuring and modelling hand hygiene.

³ N-95 respirators are not recommended except for health care workers completing high-risk procedures.

- g. Avoid touching your face.
- h. Practicing [respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette](#).
- i. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handles, handrails, keyboards, phones)

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). FAQ for COVID-19:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infectioncontrol/infection-prevention-control-faq.html>

CDC. Guidance for Preventing Spread in Home and Community Settings
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>

CDC. Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

CDC. Resources for Households.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/index.html>

Marin Health and Human Services
<https://www.marinhhs.org/coronavirus>

Sincerely,

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