



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 for Long-Term Care Facilities

Situation Update

There are now 53 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Marin County. Due to limited testing, this number is an underestimate of the prevalence of COVID-19. Newly diagnosed cases show that local transmission is increasing. Outbreaks of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities (LTCF), including skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, independent living facilities, and residential care homes (i.e., board and care facilities) will have a critical impact on vulnerable older adults. Older residents of LTCFs appear to be particularly at risk for rapid transmission of and severe disease from COVID-19, including death.

Recommendations

Marin County Public Health recommends that all long-term care facilities take immediate steps to increase readiness for COVID-19 outbreaks by activating emergency operations and rapidly implementing the following actions:

1. Plan and Prepare for COVID-19
 - a. Assign a person(s) responsible for implementing the following COVID-19 prevention activities and reporting to Public Health. Update contact information in California Health Alert Network (CAHAN). If you need assistance, email MHOAC@marincounty.org.
 - b. Review Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Preparing for COVID-19: Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes](#) and immediately implement recommendations.
 - c. Review your facility's emergency operations, medical surge, pandemic influenza plans/flu plans.
 - i. Put alcohol-based hand sanitizer in every resident room (ideally both inside and outside of the room) and ensure a stable supply.
 - ii. Make sure tissues, wipes, and waste receptacles are widely available and all sinks are well-stocked with soap and paper towels for hand washing.
 - iii. Post signs on the door or wall outside of the resident room that clearly describe the type of precautions needed and required PPE.
 - iv. Make PPE, including facemasks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves, available immediately outside of the resident room.
 - v. Position a trash can near the exit inside any resident room to make it easy for employees to discard PPE.
 - vi. Discourage Non-Essential Resident Movement. Whenever a Residential Facility resident must leave the Residential Facility

Premises, the resident is ordered to comply with the [Marin County Public Health Shelter-In-Place order](#).

- vii. Suspend recreational activities and congregational dining. Provide in-room/apartment dining if feasible.
 - viii. Implement plan to restrict COVID-19 cases to certain rooms, dedicated wings or areas.
2. Resident, Staff and Essential Visitor Management
 - a. Exclude Visitors and Non-Essential Personnel including visitors of residents (includes family members of residents and authorized decision-makers).
 - b. Staff and Essential Visitors (e.g., medical personnel) should wear surgical / isolation masks. Staff should wear a mask when within 6 feet of residents. Require Essential Visitors to wear a mask throughout their visit.
 - i. [Conserve personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) [e.g., reuse masks].
 - c. Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
 3. Screening and Surveillance
 - a. Implement a screening program where all Staff and Essential Visitors are actively checked prior to entry for temperature and symptoms of respiratory infection.
 - i. Staff with any symptom (even just cough) should not report to work or enter the facility until 3 days after their symptoms have resolved.
 - b. Actively monitor and assess all residents daily, including new residents, for symptoms of respiratory infection, temperature, and oxygenation.
 - i. Maintain list of primary care providers for all residents.
 - ii. Ensure supply of thermometers, pulse oximetry, and blood pressure monitors.
 - iii. Confirm residents' and/or their authorized proxies know how to contact their primary care provider.
 - iv. Contact residents' primary care provider if patient develops signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Provide care at the Facility unless it is a medical emergency.
 - v. If transport is thought to be needed, contact appropriate hospital immediately to discuss transfer.
 - vi. Ensure POLST updated and available for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responders.
 4. Infection Control Procedures
 - a. Restrict residents with fever or acute respiratory symptoms to their room. They should be moved to a private room if not in one. If they must leave the room for medically necessary procedures, have them wear a facemask.
 - b. Any resident with respiratory symptoms should receive care from dedicated staff using appropriate infection prevention practices.
 - c. Adhere to infection control guidelines for any resident with respiratory illness. Use Standard, Contact, and Droplet Precautions with eye protection unless suspected diagnosis requires Airborne Precautions (e.g., tuberculosis).

- d. Identify dedicated Staff to care for COVID-19 cases and provide these employees with infection control training.
5. Education and Training
 - a. Provide education for residents, families, authorized proxies, and staff on advanced care planning, including Advance Directives, Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST), and palliative care.
 - b. Ensure core infection control staff complete Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Nursing Home Infection Preventionist Training](#).
6. Notify and Communicate
 - a. If a resident becomes ill with respiratory illness, consult their primary care physician prior to transferring (unless it is medical emergency).
 - b. Notify facilities prior to transferring a resident with any acute respiratory illness, including suspected or confirmed COVID-19, to another facility, including a higher level of care.
 - c. Report any possible COVID-19 illness in residents or employees to Marin County Public Health.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Guidance

- [Guidance for Healthcare Facilities on Preparing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Guidance for Limiting the Transmission of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Adult Day Health Centers \(AFL 20-27\)](#)
- [Guidance for Limiting the Transmission of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities \(AFL 20-22.1\)](#)
- [Preparing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in California Skilled Nursing Facilities \(AFL 20-25.1\)](#)

Additional Information

World Health Organization (WHO). <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH). <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>

Marin Health and Human Services <https://www.marinhhs.org/coronavirus-health-care-providers>

Sincerely,

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