



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) Provider Guidance: Care for Patients at 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 primary care providers who have patients in long-term care facilities take immediate steps to prepare patients, families, and authorized proxies for COVID-19.

1. Stay up to date on clinical guidance for COVID-19 (see resources below).
2. Review, understand, and follow long-term care facilities' plans for COVID-19, including infection control procedures (includes use of personal protective equipment [PPE] during essential visits).
3. Visit (if asymptomatic and using appropriate PPE) or set up telehealth visits with patients, families, and authorized proxies.
 - a. 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>).
 - b. Review National Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations' COVID-19 Shared Decision Making Tool with patients, families, and authorized proxies (<https://www.nhpco.org/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19-Shared-Decision-Making-Tool.pdf>).
 - i. Review symptoms, clinical progression and expected outcomes (e.g., Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome; mechanical ventilation).
 - ii. Confirm patients' care preferences (i.e., home with palliative or hospice care; remain at LTCF with symptom management; hospitalization for symptom management; hospitalization for full life saving measures *if available*¹).

¹ Patients, families, and authorized proxies should be informed that acute care / critical care resources may be limited during a medical surge.

- iii. Review and complete [Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment \(POLST\)](#).
 - iv. Advise patients, families, and authorized proxies to review and update [Advance Directives](#).
4. Discuss consultation protocol for patients residing in long-term care facilities (e.g., telehealth visits). Develop care plans to avoid unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

Additional Information

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations
<https://www.nhpc.org/coronavirus>

Five Wishes
<https://fivewishes.org/five-wishes-covid-19-resources>

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

UpToDate.
<https://www.uptodate.com/contents/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
<https://www.aafp.org/patient-care/emergency/2019-coronavirus.html>

American Geriatrics Society
<https://www.americangeriatrics.org/covid19>

American Medical Association (AMA)
<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/covid-19-2019-novel-coronavirus-resource-center-physicians>

Sincerely,

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