

# Public Health Guidance for COVID-19 in Nursing Homes

## 1. During the pandemic, all facilities must:

- Screen healthcare personnel (HCP) at beginning of every shift
  - HCP with a temperature of 100°F or symptoms should be sent home immediately
- Restrict facility access to all visitors, nonessential staff, and volunteers
- Cancel group activities and communal dining
- Practice universal masking and social distancing for all residents and HCP while in the facility
- Screen residents for symptoms and fever, at least daily
  - Be mindful of atypical symptoms including: new-onset fatigue, decreased mentation, malaise, dizziness, diarrhea, headache, sore throat, or any change from baseline. Residents taking fever-reducing medications should be evaluated carefully for these uncommon symptoms.

## 2. If a resident or healthcare worker with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is identified in a facility:

Facilities must notify the local health department. Contact San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (DPH) at 1-800-722-4794 **and** email [HealthMonitor@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:HealthMonitor@dph.sbcounty.gov).

## 3. If a COVID-19 resident is identified in a facility:

- a. The facility should temporarily halt admissions, until they have consulted with DPH.
- b. The resident should be restricted to their room; HCP caring for these residents should use N95 respirator and full PPE (use surgical mask if fit-tested N95 not available). This restriction should last for 14 days, or if symptomatic, 10 days after symptoms onset AND 3 days since last fever without the use of fever-lowering medication.
- c. Other residents on the affected unit should restrict themselves to their room, until DPH has completed contact tracing and risk assessment exercises
- d. Residents identified as contacts to the ill resident should be isolated from and treated as Persons Under Investigation (PUI). Caregiving HCP should wear full PPE (with N95 if available).
- e. Cases and PUIs should be screened for vitals and status changes **at least once per shift. In facilities with evidence of widespread transmission, PPE including gown, gloves, N-95 mask, and face shield should be worn with every resident, until all residents and staff are tested and can be cohorted.**
- f. Reinforce infection control practices via education sessions or handouts with staff, including hand hygiene; proper PPE use/donning/doffing technique; housekeeping procedures and disinfectant use.
- g. HCP caring for known cases or PUIs should avoid contact with other residents if possible
- h. Remember, **new cases are evidence of community-based spread in your facility.** If Covid-19 is identified, ideally consider full PPE precautions and every shift surveillance of all residents, until no new cases have been identified on site for 14 days.
- i. Cohort known COVID-19 cases together, and PUIs together, with staff who only work with COVID positive residents and PUIs. When working with only COVID positive residents,



strategies for PPE use can be employed, but gowns cannot be safely reused when working with PUIs, or with PUIs and COVID positive residents.

**4. If a HCP worked with symptoms consistent of COVID-19:**

Residents should be treated as PUIs, as above in 3 b-e. This restriction should last for 14 days, or until Covid-19 is ruled out as the cause of illness. The ill HCP should be prioritized for Sars-CoV-2 testing.

**5. Use of testing**

- Testing of symptomatic HCP and **residents** is of highest priority.
- Testing of PUI/contacts of known cases (HCPs and residents) should also be prioritized
- If a new case is identified in the facility in a resident with no known risk, facility is strongly advised by the local Health Officer to promptly test all residents in the facility.
- Remember, persons at risk do NOT need to be symptomatic in order to be tested.
- If there is evidence of community-based transmission in your facility, testing of all staff may be indicated.

**Other resources:**

Guidelines for COVID-19 testing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

Request for help with testing kits: [DOCOperations@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:DOCOperations@dph.sbcounty.gov)

Requests for PPE: [ICEMADutyOfficer@cao.sbcounty.gov](mailto:ICEMADutyOfficer@cao.sbcounty.gov)

*Adapted from Department of Public Health Guidance for the Public Health Response to Residents with Covid-19 in Nursing Homes, online at SBCovid19.com*