



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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Recommended Preparatory Actions for Long Term Care Facilities Related to COVID-19
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Recommended Preparatory Actions for Long-Term Care Facilities Related to COVID-19

Based upon data that has emerged from China's experience with COVID-19, as well as the state of Washington's experience, it is clear that older adults and individuals with chronic medical medications are at increased risk of severe illness with COVID-19 infection. Thus, long-term care facilities are of particular concern as we prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic to reach our community. Long-term care facilities in the County of San Luis Obispo are directed to take action now to prepare.

Reporting cases or suspected cases

Please contact the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department at **(805)781-5500** immediately if you suspect a case of COVID-19 or have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your facility.

Prevent the introduction of respiratory germs into your facility

Do not allow any visitors with respiratory symptoms (coughing, sneezing, wheezing, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat) or fever (including subjective fever) into your facility.

Do not allow any visitors who have had contact with a known case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days.

Do not allow any visitors with international travel within the last 14 days to countries with sustained community transmission. Long term care facilities should

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check for the most up-to-date locations of concern daily through the Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>

Do not allow any visitors who reside in a community in California or the United States where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring. The most current information is available through the California Department of Public Health <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx> as well as through the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Ensure that sick-leave policies allow employees to stay home if they have symptoms of respiratory infection. Insist that employees stay home if they have respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) or fever ($T \geq 100.4$ F); sick employees should remain home until they are fever-free for 24 hours with no antipyretics, and are free of any respiratory symptoms. Employees should not be penalized for staying home when they are sick.

Starting now, all visitors should be screened for fever and respiratory symptoms upon entry to the facility. Please determine your location for where that screening will occur, and which staff will be responsible for conducting that screening.

Prevent the spread of respiratory germs at your facility

Encourage frequent hand hygiene amongst residents, visitors, and staff. Avoid hand-shaking. Have ample supplies of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) on hand for locations without ready access to sinks. Post signs that support hand hygiene and proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing. Have plenty of tissues available throughout the facility.

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects (including keyboards and mice) with EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectants. Check the label to make sure the disinfectant is effective against SARS-CoV-2 or human coronavirus.

Where possible, isolate patients with fever or respiratory symptoms in their own rooms with their own bathrooms and the door closed. If it is not possible to isolate those patients, then cohort all patients with fever or respiratory symptoms. Patients with confirmed COVID-19 do NOT require isolation in a negative pressure room. A patient with confirmed COVID-19 should not be housed in the same room as a patient with an undiagnosed respiratory infection.

Only essential staff should enter working areas where patients are experiencing fever or respiratory symptoms. Exclude all other staff from those areas.

Restrict residents with fever or respiratory symptoms to their rooms. If they must leave their room to enter a common area, they should wear a facemask.

Dedicated medical equipment should be used when caring for patients with known or suspected COVID-19.

Residents with confirmed COVID-19 should remain in isolation (or cohort) until they are cleared for release from isolation (or cohort) by the Public Health Department. Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should not be permitted visitors. Patients with confirmed COVID-19, and patients with fever or respiratory symptoms should be encouraged to use video-call applications, cell phones, and tablets rather than in-person visits.

If our county experiences community transmission, then long-term care facilities should consult with the local Public Health Department for additional guidance. In that scenario, be prepared to eliminate congregate activities and prohibit outside visitors.

Create a staffing contingency plan and ensure registry contracts are in place and ready to be mobilized in the event that you face staffing shortages.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The appropriate PPE for caregivers looking after individuals with known *or suspected* COVID-19 consist of:

N95 respirators (or PAPRs)*

Eye protection

Gown*

Gloves

*If N95s are in short supply at your facility, then available N95s should be reserved for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols (e.g., nebulizer treatments, sputum induction, suctioning of the airway, intubation). Standard facemasks are a suitable alternative to N95s until N95s are more readily available. Likewise, if there are shortages of gowns, those may also be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols.

Reusable respirators must be cleaned and disinfected prior to re-use.

Please make arrangements NOW to have your healthcare staff fit-tested for N95 respirators if they have not already done so. There are two options available for fit-testing locally for a fee:

1. MedStop
283 Madonna Road, Suite B
San Luis Obispo, CA
(805) 549-8880
2. County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department
2191 Johnson Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA
(805)781-5500

Resources

Department of Social Services Guidance on 2019 Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19
https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCLD/PINs/PIN_20-04-CCLD_CoronavirusEO.pdf

Guidance for Limiting the Transmission of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-22.aspx>

Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control FAQs for COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/infection-prevention-control-faq.html>

Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

Selected EPA-Registered Disinfectants
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>