

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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March 18, 2020

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR REGIONAL CENTER MONITORING STAFF

On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a Proclamation of a State of Emergency for California in response to a rising number of cases of COVID-19. The health and safety of Californians, including regional center staff, is a top priority. To keep staff safe and healthy, this guidance provides information on COVID-19 symptoms and prevention, and what staff can do before, during, and after a monitoring visit.

Required Visits by Regional Centers

Notwithstanding any local or county shelter-in-place order, regional centers shall make in-person visits to consumers living in licensed residential facilities to check on the consumer's health, safety and well-being, and such facilities shall permit such visits by regional center employees. Such visits shall constitute essential activities and essential business functions for purposes of any shelter-in-place order.

Stay Informed

It is important to stay informed. Know where to turn for reliable, up-to-date information in your local community. Monitor COVID-19 websites from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Both websites are updated daily with the latest information and advice for the public. In addition to the CDC and CDPH websites, staff may reference CDPH All-Facilities Letters for more information.

Symptoms and Prevention

Reported COVID-19 illnesses have ranged from asymptomatic (no symptoms) or mild symptoms to severe illness and even death. Symptoms may display as flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19, and the best way to prevent the illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The CDC recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash.

“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”

- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Monitoring Activities

When conducting monitoring activities, precautions are encouraged prior to, during and after the visit. Recommended precautions are outlined below.

Before entering the facility:

- Verify the home or facility is safe to enter. When making an announced visit, consider calling the home or facility prior to entry to inquire whether there are any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. If the home or facility is subject to quarantine by a local public health department, do not visit or enter the facility. Confirm with the provider that reporting was done of any presumptive or positive cases. Speak with your manager to discuss options and reschedule the visit and document your attempt to conduct your monitoring visit.
- If making an unannounced monitoring visit, upon entry to the home or facility, ask the licensee or administrator if there are any persons in the residence or facility staff that may have respiratory signs or symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, ask whether there have been staff in the home who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who were exposed to any individuals with COVID-19. If there are persons identified who are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or who may have or have tested positive for COVID-19, do not stay in the home. Obtain as much information as possible for reporting purposes such as staffing levels, precautions currently taken; visualize the residents and condition, and exit the home or facility.
- When possible, have an N95 mask and hand sanitizer with you prior to entering the home, in the event you need to use protection while obtaining information from staff.

When the determination is made that it is safe to stay on-site during a visit:

- Practice good hand hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Put on personal protective equipment if you feel it necessary during your visit.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet from other individuals while on-site.
- If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 while visiting the home or facility, contact your manager.

After the monitoring visit:

- Keep vigilant of your own well-being and watch for respiratory signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If you should feel flu-like symptoms, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath after 2-14 days, contact your local health department and health care provider.

Certificate of Medical Clearance

Staff with confirmed COVID-19 should be in frequent communication with a healthcare provider and the local public health department. If you have been instructed by your healthcare provider or the local public health department to quarantine or self-monitor, a certificate of medical clearance must be obtained from your healthcare provider or the local public health department before returning to work or conducting facility visits.

Monitoring staff may also recommend licensees visit the following websites for current information regarding COVID-19:

- The World Health Organization
www.who.int
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov
- California Department of Public Health
www.cdph.ca.gov
- Community Care Licensing Division
www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/community-care-licensing

Regional Center Executive Directors
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If you have any questions regarding this guidance, please contact Christine Gephart at (916) 698-9567 or chris.gephart@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

NANCY BARGMANN
Director

cc: Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies