

Outreach

- 1. If I encounter an individual experiencing homelessness who has symptoms of COVID-19 during outreach what is my first step to getting them help?**

Always observe the 6-foot social distancing guidelines. Do not send anyone to the Emergency Department unless their illness warrants. The first step is to administer the [Universal Screening Tool](#) (the instructions are on the [Universal Screening Tool Guide](#)). If the person is symptomatic, based on results of the screening tool, then assist them in calling their medical provider. If they do not have a medical provider, call the 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line, for a telehealth and/or referral to the nearest community clinic. This line is available seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. After hours, callers can leave a voice mail and a nurse will return the call within 24 hours.

- 2. How are outreach workers to know if an unsheltered individual is in fact infected with COVID-19 or just "regular sick?" What is the process for an unsheltered person who is sick who doesn't have a healthcare provider or a phone? Who do we ask for when dialing 2-1-1 for a medical assessment? Is there anything specific to say to start the process of placing a client in a public health room if they are symptomatic?**

Utilize the [Universal Screening Tool](#) to determine if a person should be referred to their medical provider or the 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line. Public health nurses have joined several Homeless Outreach Teams (HOTs) and their role is screen people to determine if they are symptomatic and need further evaluation. When calling 2-1-1, there is a selection for the County of San Diego Public Health Nurse Help Line that can be selected in order to speak with a registered nurse in English or Spanish. For assessment by a medical provider, advise the provider you are requesting a telehealth/video encounter to determine if the person needs to be isolated or quarantined in one of the County's public health rooms.

- 3. Are all County HOT Teams able to take unsheltered clients to the Convention Center? How do we find the Homeless Access Site closest to our community?**

Currently the Convention Center is only available to outreach teams operating within the City of San Diego. Information on access sites for your community can be found at [RTFH Access Sites](#) and information is available at 2-1-1.

- 4. How do we notify people who may be undocumented that they can be tested and treated as necessary?**

Outreach workers are trusted resources in the community. Anyone who is symptomatic can access the 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line.

- 5. How do we ensure a complete handoff of unsheltered symptomatic clients to the proper health provider? If transportation can be arranged for someone who is symptomatic and they say that they are going to the clinic after the screener, is that sufficient?**

Utilize the [Universal Screening Tool](#) to determine whether to refer the individual to their healthcare provider or 2-1-1 Nurse Help Line. When working with a symptomatic individual arrange for tele-health or transportation directly to the clinic whenever possible.

6. Are there suggestions for meeting locations for clients without phones?

During these unprecedented times, it can be difficult to maintain rapport when you can't always have a face-to-face conversation or provide that human touch. We are still encouraging that in-person outreach continues to take place when it is possible to follow the Public Health guidelines of using facial coverings and maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet. Some grocery stores have seating areas that might be utilized for this purpose. And additional venues such as libraries will become available.

7. Is there a map that shows where the efforts in the county have occurred to identify highly vulnerable individuals in the homeless populations? Will the outreach map be sent to those in the homeless sector email group?

Yes, the outreach map will be distributed to the regional homeless outreach workers for use.

8. What entities are conducting outreach in the East Village area?

The following organizations are working in East Village: SDPD HOT, Serving Seniors, NAMI, Family Health Center of San Diego's Navigation Center, Father Joe's, Alpha Project, Downtown Partnership and PATH. Outreach is constantly evolving and an outreach map will be made available that will provide real-time information on which entities are working in which ZIP codes on what days.

9. How do we find out where the Homeless Outreach Teams have been dispatched to if your area does not have their own?

To connect with your area's homeless outreach resources, please submit a request through COVID-homeless@sdcountry.ca.gov. The Homeless Outreach Teams (HOTS) are comprised of law enforcement paired up with Human Services Specialists and other health and social service professionals. In addition, there are homeless outreach workers through the various community-based organizations in your community, that operate in tandem with the Homeless Outreach Teams. Typically, Homeless Outreach Teams only work within their law enforcement jurisdiction, whereas homeless outreach workers span a variety of communities and cities.

10. Regarding the public health order requiring all San Diego County residents to wear a face covering while in public, how will the County be addressing this need for the homeless population?

In the event that unsheltered individuals don't have a facial covering, bandanas, cloths, and t-shirts can be used as an alternative. Facial coverings are also included in the hygiene kits that are being distributed through the homeless outreach workers.

11. How do we address the following situation or similar situations "I have a patient who will be discharged from a skilled nursing facility back to the streets in the very near future. He is not COVID positive, never tested, and has no symptoms but is certainly at risk if he returns to the streets. He is a 52-year-old male. Any suggestions or help appreciated".

A possible option is the County Whole Person Wellness program. Whole Person Wellness is a long-term care coordination program for Medi-Cal recipients who are high utilizers of hospitals and emergency departments who are homeless, and have other high needs such as behavioral health, substance use or chronic physical health conditions. Referrals are accepted from hospitals or social service providers. The referral form can be found [here](#).

12. What if the agency tells the Homeless Outreach Workers to discontinue outreach?

Agencies need to consult with their funder or Contracting Officer Representative (COR) prior to discontinuing outreach.

13. Should outreach be conducted at the shelters where we have normally provided outreach?

Yes, unless directed otherwise by your Funding Agency.

14. Will public health nurses continue to be part of the Homeless Outreach Teams once the COVID-19 crisis is over?

Some HOT's were working with a Public Health Nurses prior to the pandemic and as we move into recovery, the feasibility will be continually assessed.