



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: April 3, 2020

From: Epidemiology and Immunizations Services Branch, Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #9: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) – Guidance for Healthcare Personnel Related to Monitoring, Isolation, and Exposures

Key Messages

- All healthcare personnel (HCP) should monitor themselves twice daily for fever and respiratory symptoms because of the potential for unidentified exposure to COVID-19.
- Symptomatic HCP can return to work after specific criteria are met, which vary depending on whether testing is conducted or not. All HCP returning to work must follow masking requirements and patient care restrictions for at least 14 days after symptom onset and all symptoms have resolved.
- Asymptomatic healthcare personnel (HCP) may continue to work, but individual facilities need to balance workforce needs with the reality of community spread.

Situation

The rate of new COVID-19 cases in San Diego County continues to increase (see [here](#) for local data updated daily). Given community spread of COVID-19, increasing [reports](#) supporting [asymptomatic](#) and pre-symptomatic spread, and increased risks to HCP caring for COVID-19 patients, San Diego County Public Health Services (PHS) is providing guidance for all HCP. Occupational health programs within healthcare facilities should be aware of [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 \(Interim Guidance\)](#).

Actions Requested:

1. Healthcare Personnel Monitoring

PHS recommends that all HCP self-monitor for fever and respiratory symptoms twice daily, including each day prior to starting work with patients. The goal of this screening is early identification of HCPs with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to prevent possible exposures to other facility staff and patients within the healthcare facility.

- All HCP should self-monitor twice daily, once prior to entering to worksite and the second, timed approximately 8 hours later for possible symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e., elevated temperature >100.0F and/or cough, sore throat, shortness of breath).

2. Home Isolation for Symptomatic Healthcare Personnel

- If HCP note any symptoms, they should contact their supervisor immediately and isolate at home unless medically necessary to seek care.

- If any HCP develops a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat while at work, they should immediately stop working and self-isolate at home.
- Any HCP who worked while symptomatic in an acute or long-term care facility should be tested for COVID-19 through their facility. If testing is not available through their facility or primary care physician then they should email MCSDCallCenter.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov to request testing.
- Any HCP who are medically stable but not able to isolate at home, can be referred by their primary or occupational health provider to the County's Temporary Lodging Program by calling 858-715-2350 from 7am to 7pm.

3. Discontinuation of Home Isolation and Return to Work for Health Care Workers

HCP may discontinue home isolation when both of the following time-since-symptom-onset and time-since-recovery conditions are **ALL** met:

- **No testing conducted:**
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptom onset **AND**
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat).
- **Testing conducted:**
 - Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat) **AND**
 - Negative test (Of note this is distinct from CDC which recommends 2 negative tests. Current guidance is based on testing limitations and may be revisited later)

After returning to work HCP should:

- Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen;
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g. cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles);
- Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after symptom onset, whichever is longer; and be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after symptom onset.

For additional information, see [CDC Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19](#) (Interim Guidance).

4. Response to Workplace Exposures Depends on Exposure Risk Level

[CDC guidance](#), in addition to Governor Newsom's [3/16 Executive Order](#), allows for asymptomatic healthcare workers who have had an exposure to a COVID-19 patient to continue to work.

Individual facilities should, however, take into consideration the dynamic balance between the need for an adequate workforce, HCP and patient safety, and the reality of community spread of COVID-19.

- HCP who have had medium or high-risk workplace exposures should not work for 14 days after contact with the case, with considerations made for critical staffing shortages.
- HCP with low risk or negligible workplace exposures should continue to work with daily symptom self-monitoring.
- HCP who are close household contacts to a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case should inform their workplace for return to work guidance and should be assumed to have medium-risk exposure.

Enroll in the [Medical Reserve Corps](#) and the [California Health Corps](#) to be notified about volunteer opportunities.

General public inquiries about COVID-19 should be directed to [2-1-1 San Diego](#) or to the [County COVID-19 website](#).

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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