To: CAHAN San Diego Participants
Date: January 11, 2022
From: Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #48: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Management of Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure

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Key Messages

- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has announced temporary guidance on Quarantine and Isolation for certain Health Care Personnel (HCP) (AFL 21-08).
- From January 8, 2022 until February 1, 2022, HCP who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 and are asymptomatic may return to work immediately without isolation and without testing. HCP who have been exposed and are asymptomatic may return to work immediately without quarantine and without testing. These HCP must wear an N95 respirator for source control.
- Assigning COVID positive staff to the care of COVID positive patients is recommended when practicable.
- The HCP covered by AFL 21-08 is limited to General Acute Care Hospitals (GACHs), Acute Psychiatric Hospitals (APHs), Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.
- The San Diego County Health Officer Order on Quarantine issued January 3, 2022 allows asymptomatic HCP not covered by AFL 21-08 to return to work seven days after close contact with negative diagnostic test results if they remained asymptomatic throughout quarantine.

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Situation

On January 8, 2022, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated All Facility Letter (AFL) 21-08 Guidance on Quarantine and Isolation for Health Care Personnel (HCP) Exposed to SARS-CoV-2 and Return to Work for HCP with COVID-19. Due to the critical staffing shortages currently being experienced across the health care continuum because of the rise in the Omicron variant, effective January 8, 2022, through February 1, 2022, CDPH is temporarily adjusting the return-to-work criteria.

HCPs Who Are Asymptomatic
During this time, healthcare personnel (HCP) who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and are asymptomatic may return to work immediately without isolation and without testing, and HCPs who have been exposed and are asymptomatic may return to work immediately without quarantine and without testing. These HCPs must wear an N95 respirator for source control. Facilities implementing this change must have made every attempt to bring in additional registry or contract staff and must have considered modifications to non-essential procedures. HCP must follow all other isolation requirements outside of the workplace.

These HCP should preferably be assigned to work with COVID-19 positive patients. However, this may not always be possible in settings such as the emergency department, in which patients who are COVID-19 positive are not immediately identified. Planning for separate space or time for COVID-positive staff should be considered if

practicable. Returning HCP should continue to monitor symptoms (including fever) and, if symptoms develop, inform their employer and isolate.

Settings and Positions

AFL 21-08 is specific to HCP at General Acute Care Hospitals (GACHs), Acute Psychiatric Hospitals (APHs) and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs). In addition, Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) of California issued a statement on January 8, 2022, adding Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel (including emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and 911 dispatchers) to the temporary waiver in AFL 21-08.

Other Health Care Personnel

CPDH has previously defined HCP as all paid and unpaid individuals who work in indoor settings where (1) care is provided to patients, or (2) patients have access for any purpose. For HCP not covered by AFL 21-08, the San Diego County Health Officer Order (HOO) on Quarantine issued January 3, 2022 allows return to work seven days after exposure, if HCP have a negative diagnostic (PCR or antigen) test result following notification of exposure and within 48 hours before return, remain asymptomatic, and follow all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions through the 10th day following that exposure. Social service workers providing face-to-face services to clients in the child welfare or long-term care setting may also follow this guidance. Individual facilities may choose to have stricter requirements.

Actions Requested

1. Check with your healthcare employer to be clear on current staffing needs and assignments.
2. If AFL 21-08, the EMSA expansion of waiver, or the County HOO apply to you, become familiar with them and monitor them for changes.
   - For HCP subject to AFL 21-08, wear an N-95 respirator through day 10 following the positive test when returning to work.
3. Monitor symptoms, including fever, daily, isolate and inform employer if symptoms develop.
4. Outside of the workplace, follow all other requirements of isolation or quarantine.
5. When not working, COVID-19 positive staff and those with a close contact should take all recommended steps to protect yourself and others from SARS-CoV-2 infection to decrease the risk of introducing new transmission into the healthcare setting.
6. Get all doses of COVID-19 vaccines, including additional and booster doses as recommended by CDC, as well as influenza vaccine to protect yourself, your family, and your patients.

Resources

- Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know | CDC
- Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages | CDC
- Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 | CDC
- Guidance on Quarantine and Isolation for Health Care Personnel (HCP) Exposed to SARS-CoV-2 and Return to Work for HCP with COVID-19

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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