



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants  
Date: October 7, 2020  
From: Public Health Services

**Health Advisory Update #18: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance and Resources to Support Management of Children with COVID-19 Symptoms Who Attend Daycare or In-Person School**

**Key Messages**

- The attached decision trees have been established with local stakeholders to guide management of children with COVID-19 symptoms who attend in-person instruction at [daycares](#) and [K-12 schools](#).
- Providers should prioritize PCR testing of children with COVID-19 symptoms who are in daycare or in-person school settings. PCR tests are strongly recommended for symptomatic testing. Antigen and antibody tests should not be used to make decisions regarding school attendance due to false negative potential and lack of indication for diagnostic use respectively. Symptomatic children who are not tested and all those diagnosed with COVID-19 will be excluded from these settings for a minimum of 10 days. Children with negative tests will be able to return to school or daycare three days after symptoms resolve.
- Resources to test children for SARS-CoV2 are available within the county and listed in this advisory.
- Children with confirmed COVID-19 [do NOT need re-testing](#) to return to school or daycare and need to complete Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) isolation criteria [See also [CAHAN #17](#)].
- Providers should [strongly encourage](#) influenza vaccination to everyone six months of age or older.
- Patients with respiratory symptoms should be evaluated for both SARS-CoV2 and influenza as coinfection can occur and was reported in San Diego County during the last influenza season.

**Situation**

- Current information for pediatric healthcare providers from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) states that children may have similar to higher detectable viral loads in their nasopharynx compared with adults. Children can spread the disease in households and congregate settings including [daycare](#), [camps](#), and schools. Children may have non-specific COVID-19 symptoms as well as poor appetite or poor feeding. CDC also [recommends](#) that school-aged children with COVID symptoms who are close contacts or live in communities with substantial transmission should be prioritized for viral testing.
- Daycares have CDC guidance – [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#); California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [COVID-19 Update Guidance: Child Care Programs and Providers](#); and multiple [Provider Information Notices \(PIN\)s](#) from the Child Care Licensing Program (CCLP), California Department of Social Services.

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) COVID-19 released Industry Guidance for [Schools and School-Based Programs](#), a [Framework for Reopening K-12 Schools in California](#), and [Schools Guidance FAQs](#) to help school and community leaders prepare to resume in-person instruction.
- As daycares open and schools resume or prepare to resume in-person instruction, clear and consistent guidance is needed for COVID-19 exclusion criteria. These decisions have to be made quickly and consistently across schools and daycares in order to stop the spread of COVID-19 to prevent transmission in [childcare](#) and school settings, which can also impact parents, caregivers, teachers, school staff and the broader community.
- Providers play a critical role in preventing spread and outbreaks in these settings and thus lowering risk of long-term outcomes such as Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C). To date, there have been 11 cases of MIS-C among San Diego County residents.
- Resources for providers who are NOT able to test children within their organizations are noted below, including testing via the Rady Children’s Collaborative or at County-coordinated testing sites.
- As per CDPH [guidance](#), children who test positive with COVID-19 do NOT need re-testing to return to school or daycare and only need to complete CDC isolation criteria [See [CAHAN #17](#) for additional details and information].

### **Actions Requested**

- Pediatric providers should:
  - Become familiar with the decision trees for [K-12 schools](#) and [daycare](#) settings respectively, both intended to prevent spread of COVID-19 within these congregate settings,
  - Consider providing letters to document pre-existing chronic conditions, especially if these symptoms mimic COVID-19,
  - Isolate and workup children with COVID-19 related symptoms to the extent possible, including prioritization of PCR testing. Antigen and antibody tests should not be used to make decisions regarding school attendance due to false negative potential and lack of indication for diagnostic use respectively.
    - Children in these settings who have one or more symptoms of COVID-19 will be excluded from campus and isolated. If PCR testing is performed and is negative, children can return to school or daycare 3 days after symptoms resolve, as per CDPH [school guidance](#).
    - Symptomatic children with one or more symptoms of COVID-19 who are not tested or laboratory confirmed COVID-19 positive children will be excluded from daycare settings or in-person school settings for a minimum of 10 days.
    - In addition, a positive test can enhance public health efforts to quarantine close contacts and minimize further spread.
  - If testing can NOT be performed in the provider office, three options are available:
    - COVID Collaborative for Children partnership with Rady Children’s Hospital (Rady): non-Rady affiliated providers should ask patients to visit the [Non-Rady Patient COVID Testing Registration](#) site to request a COVID test or email [covidcollaborative@rchsd.org](mailto:covidcollaborative@rchsd.org) to be scheduled at Rady’s outpatient lab or COVID test drive up location in Kearny Mesa. Rady is working to expand COVID testing for those whose providers are non-Rady-affiliated. Provider referrals are NOT needed.
    - County-coordinated testing sites can currently accommodate those in grade Kindergarten and older and by the middle of October will be able to test those 6 months and older. Most sites do not require appointments. A listing of all sites can be found at [211Sandiego.org](#). Provider referrals are NOT needed.

- Providers who perform COVID-19 tests and counseling should be aware that:
  - As noted [previously](#), [reporting](#) testing outcomes should be followed by providers and healthcare facilities as mandated by the Health Officer Order.
  - Providers should give patients who test positive a [Health Officer Order for Isolation](#), as well as [Home Isolation Instructions](#), and tell parents to alert their daycare or schools. Parents should also be instructed to alert other non-daycare/school close contacts about the need to quarantine and share [quarantine Instructions](#), if not an essential worker (See [CAHAN #11](#)).
  - As per CDPH [guidance](#), children confirmed positive with COVID-19 do NOT need re-testing to return to school or daycare and only need to complete CDC isolation criteria [See [CAHAN #17](#) for additional information].
  - The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently [announced](#) that providers can be reimbursed for patient counseling at time of COVID-19 testing using existing evaluation and management (E/M) payment codes (see counseling checklist [here](#)).
  - If needed, requests for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can be directed towards [MOC.LOGS.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:MOC.LOGS.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov).
  
- Providers should also follow [CDC guidance](#) and strongly encourage influenza vaccination to patients and their families to minimize risk of developing flu symptoms, many of which are consistent with COVID-19. Of note, an influenza diagnosis does not exclude a COVID-19 diagnosis.

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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