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**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL**

COVID-19 Guidance for Congregate Living Facilities

Congregate living sites are at high risk for COVID-19 outbreaks. All congregate living sites should have plans to respond to suspect or confirmed COVID cases and prevent and minimize spread of COVID-19 in the facility.

The following guidance applies to congregate living facilities such as board and care facilities, sober living facilities and other similar group homes.

Recognizing COVID-19

People with COVID-19 will generally have one or more of the following symptoms:

Most common:

Fever (100.4° F or higher)
Cough
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
Loss of sense of taste or smell

Also seen:

Muscle aches
Headache
Runny nose
Sore throat

Any client or staff who has some combination of these symptoms, especially **any** of the most common symptoms, should immediately be:

Isolated into a separate room, ideally with a separate bathroom

Receive testing for COVID-19. OCHCA can assist with testing residents with suspected infection, call 714-834-8180 if you have one or more symptomatic residents and testing resources are not available.

Persons over 65 years of age and those with underlying medical conditions are at highest risk for having severe COVID-19 illness.

Keep Clients and Staff Safe

Remind clients to alert staff immediately if they have new fever, cough and/or shortness of breath.

Non-medical face coverings should be worn by staff and clients whenever they will be around other people. It is important to note that face coverings are not a substitute for always practicing social distancing and frequent handwashing.

Educate and post signs for clients and staff on the importance of handwashing and hand sanitizing.

Staff and residents can use soap and water or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Tissues should be widely available, and staff and residents should be reminded to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and then dispose of the tissue and clean hands immediately.

Restrict visitation to the facility to essential staff only.

Restrict transportation of residents to essential visits only.

Promote Social Distancing

Clients and staff need to stay at least 6 feet away from each other as much as possible:

No handshakes, no hugs, no close-up conversations

Group meetings should be canceled

Re-arrange common areas so seats are at least 6 feet apart and not facing each other

Avoid group meals

Beds should be placed at least 6 feet apart, when possible, and positioned head-to-toe, with heads positioned as far apart as possible.

If possible, separate clients at high risk even if they have not been exposed (age over 65, chronic medical problem, pregnant).

Assessing Illness in Clients or Staff

At this time, with the burden of COVID-19 in Orange County, any client or staff with symptoms of respiratory illness may have COVID-19.

Assess all clients at admission and daily for symptoms.

If able, assess client temperatures at admission and daily with a scanning or disposable thermometer. A fever is a temperature of 100.4^o F or higher.

Any person who has COVID-19 symptoms should be tested and should be immediately isolated pending testing results.

Staff with symptoms should be excluded from work until COVID-19 testing is performed.

Efforts should be made to minimize the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with clients with symptoms.

Symptomatic clients should be:

- Isolated in their room as much as possible.
- Given surgical face masks to wear whenever they have to be around other people.
- Served meals separately from persons without symptoms, preferably in room.

Clients or Staff with Confirmed COVID-19 Infection

Any client or staff who test positive for COVID-19 by nasal PCR or antigen testing are infectious for at least 10 days since symptoms began and until fever has resolved for at least 24 hours.

Persons who require hospitalization may need to be considered infectious until 20 days after symptoms began and fever has resolved for 24 hours, depending on medical provider recommendations.

Staff who are COVID-19 positive should isolate at home and be excluded from work until the above criteria are met.

Whenever possible, residents who test COVID-19 positive should be isolated in the facility with their own bedroom and their own bathroom or at an alternate location until the above clearance criteria are met.

For clients with COVID-19 who cannot be isolated onsite during their illness, OCHCA may be able to assist with finding alternate housing for isolation or quarantine needs.

Close contacts such as roommates should also be quarantined as much as possible until two weeks after their last exposure to the case.

Necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) should be available in clinical care areas for staff performing clinical duties.

COVID-19 test screening of residents and staff may be indicated, contact OCHCA for guidance.

Call the Orange County Health Agency with Questions:

Report any confirmed case of COVID-19 in residents or staff, or three or more cases of respiratory illness in a facility, to OCHCA at (714) 834-8180.