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**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL**

**Orange County Health Care Agency  
Homeless Shelter COVID-19 Surveillance Testing Guidance  
September 23, 2020**

**These recommendations apply to all open congregate-living shelter sites in Orange County with five or more residents. They do not apply to sites with dormitory, hotel, or motel style living arrangements.**

**Routine COVID-19 testing recommendations:**

- Routine COVID-19 laboratory screening should be performed for staff and residents every 4 weeks at minimum.
- Routine testing of residents and staff should be performed concurrently to maximize efficiency of response to any positive results.
- Testing should be recommended but not mandated for any individual staff member or resident.
- Any resident testing positive should immediately be placed in isolation at a site outside the shelter. Any positive staff person should be instructed to immediately isolate at home. Any positive resident or staff will be followed up by OCHCA CHAT-H/Shelter Response staff to assure that isolation precautions are maintained for the recommended period of time.
- Nasal PCR testing is the preferred test method for large scale surveillance. Nasopharyngeal PCR testing is at least as sensitive as nasal PCR testing, but can be uncomfortable for the patient. Oral PCR testing is simple to perform but has been found in some studies to be less sensitive for detecting the COVID-19 virus compared to nasal PCR testing. COVID-19 serologic (blood) testing is not useful in these situations and should not be utilized.

**Response to confirmed COVID-19 positive test results found during the monthly testing or at any point in between (all positives should be reported to OCHCA CHAT-H/Shelter Response team):**

- **If one resident tests positive:**
  - All residents and staff should be tested to identify any additional cases occurring at the same time.
  - Testing should be performed using a laboratory which can provide results in not longer than 72 hours; within 48 hours is preferred.
  - The facility should be closed to new admissions pending receipt of the test results of the entire facility.

- Weekly repeat screening should be continued until at least one weekly screening identifies no new cases. Two consecutive negative screenings may be necessary if there are a significant number of close contacts identified in the facility.
- OCHCA can usually provide resources to assist with facility-wide screenings in response to confirmed cases.
  
- **If one staff member tests positive:**
  - A contact investigation will be performed, and any close contact staff excluded from work
  - Close contact residents should be housed at a site outside the facility during their 14 day quarantine period.
  
- **A facility should generally be closed to new admissions while weekly screenings of all staff and residents are initiated if:**
  - One or more COVID-19 positive residents are identified in a facility with 10-49 residents
  - Two or more COVID-19 positive residents are identified in a facility with 50-100 residents
  - Three or more COVID-19 positive residents are identified in a facility with more than 100 residents
  - The facility should remain closed to new admissions and testing of all residents and staff should be performed weekly until a subsequent screening results in no new cases or positive cases within the above thresholds.
  - **New admissions may be allowed and a routine testing schedule of every 4 weeks may be resumed once at least 1-2 weekly screenings identify no new cases.**