



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: March 19, 2020

From: Epidemiology and Immunizations Services Branch, Public Health Services

Health Advisory Update #6: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Healthcare Guidance

This health advisory updates CAHAN participants about several important changes to recommendations for COVID-19 infection control, healthcare workers exposures, and diagnostic testing.

Current State

San Diego County now has 67 cases of COVID-19 among San Diego County residents, as well as 5 cases in federal quarantine and 8 cases among non-San Diego County residents. Among the total cases, there is evidence of community spread. The County of San Diego Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch is identifying and notifying close contacts to these cases. Please visit our website for the latest case counts which are updated daily:

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs/community_epidemiology/dc/2019-nCoV/status.html

Infection Prevention and Control

CDC infection prevention and control guidance for PPE includes the following recommendations:

- N95 respirators should be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate a high concentration of respiratory aerosols (e.g., intubation and extubation).
- Facemasks should be used in the setting of symptomatic patients not undergoing aerosol generating procedures.
- Eye protection is still recommended for use during patient care.
- Gowns and gloves are recommended for clinical care, but if gowns are in short supply, they should be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols.
- N-95 is recommended for collecting diagnostic respiratory specimens (e.g., nasopharyngeal swab) from a possible COVID-19 patient.

Aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) including intubation and extubation, bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP), bronchoscopy, sputum induction, and open suctioning of airways, pose a particular infection control risk. If performed, health care providers (HCP) in the room should wear an N95 or higher-level respirator, in addition to eye protection, gloves, and a gown. The number of HCP present during the procedure should be limited to only those essential for patient care and procedure support. AGPs should ideally take place in an airborne isolation rooms (AIIRs). AIIRs should be reserved whenever possible for patients who may necessitate an AGP.

CDC's updated guidance can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>.

Healthcare Workers

On March 16, Governor Gavin Newsom issued an [executive order](#) stating:

To address the increased demand for healthcare workers and first responders, State Departments shall authorize first responders, care providers, and workers who are asymptomatic and taking precautions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, to continue working during the period of this emergency.

This Executive Order aligns with the [latest CDC guidance](#) that allows for asymptomatic healthcare workers who have had an exposure to a COVID-19 patient to continue to work.

Diagnostic Testing

Patients with mild illness who do not belong to a high-risk population do not need to be tested.

These patients can be counseled (by phone triage if possible) to follow up if shortness of breath or other more serious symptoms develop and stay at home away from work or school, crowds and persons at high risk until at least 72 hours after fever resolves and respiratory symptoms improve.

Testing should be considered for individuals with fever and lower respiratory tract infectious symptoms who belong to one or more of the following high-risk populations:

- Severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis.
- Any resident of or provider working in a senior living facility, including skilled nursing facilities or assisted living facilities.
- Contacts to known COVID-19 cases.
- Health care workers.
- Persons who care for the elderly.
- Persons experiencing homelessness.

Those who are tested and medically stable, but cannot be isolated at home while results are pending may be eligible for temporary lodging. Staff should call 858-715-2350 from 7am to 7pm.

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch

Phone: (619) 692-8499; Fax: (858) 715-6458

E-mail: cahan@sdcounty.ca.gov

Secure Website: <http://cahan.ca.gov>

Public-Access Website: <http://www.cahansandiego.com>