

ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER FOR CONTROL OF COVID-19 Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission in Skilled Nursing Facilities

Revised Order Issued: October 5, 2020

This Order supersedes the April 24, 2020 Prevention of COVID-19 Transmission in Licensed Congregate Health Facilities Order, as it relates to Skilled Nursing Facilities.

This Order is in effect until rescinded by the Health Officer.

Summary: During a State of Emergency, California law empowers the County of Los Angeles Health Officer (Health Officer) to take protective measures necessary to protect the public from a public health hazard. The spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) remains a substantial danger to the health of the public and to patients/residents in licensed skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) in Los Angeles County.

Infection control and social (physical) distancing measures are needed to stem or slow the spread of COVID-19 and decrease the risk of transmission to vulnerable patients/residents in high-risk health care settings. Accordingly, the Health Officer hereby orders all licensed skilled nursing facilities ("Facility"), operating within the Los Angeles County Public Health Jurisdiction, to comply with all measures required by this Order. The required measures are intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in these facilities and to protect vulnerable residents, as well as personnel.

This Order is effective immediately and will remain in effect until rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.

This Order continues to be based upon scientific evidence and updated best practices known to protect patients, personnel, and the public from the avoidable risk of serious illness and death resulting from COVID-19, as well as protect the health care system from a surge of cases. The required actions are consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services ("CMS"), the California Department of Public Health ("CDPH"), and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health ("County Public Health").

Compliance with this Order is required because the County Health Officer has determined that:

- There continues to be widespread community transmission of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County, which also continues to present a substantial and significant risk of harm to the health of residents. There continues to be widespread community transmission of COVID-19 in Los Angeles County, which also continues to present a substantial and significant risk of harm to the health of residents.
- The communal nature of SNFs, and the population served (generally older adults often with underlying medical conditions) put those living in SNFs at increased risk of infection and severe illness from COVID-19 if infected.
- Social (physical) distancing measures alone may not be effective in SNFs due to the concentration of individuals and the nature of the services provided to them.
- Due to the current rates of community transmission of COVID-19 within Los Angeles County, visitors to SNFs and staff may be unknowingly infected with COVID-19 (i.e., are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic) and unknowingly transmit the virus to patients/residents or staff. Limiting non-essential contact and prohibiting access from individuals with fever or respiratory symptoms

and individuals who have been in contact with people who have COVID-19 reduces the chance for exposure to COVID-19 for vulnerable patients/residents.

- In addition, influenza viruses circulate beginning in the Fall and through the Spring of the following year. Influenza can cause symptoms similar to COVID-19 and causes hundreds of deaths among Los Angeles County residents annually. Mitigating influenza transmission and morbidity will facilitate improved control of COVID-19 in SNFs.
- Not adhering to the measures required by this Order will likely impair efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within the Facility and within the County and State.

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER ORDERS THE FOLLOWING FOR ALL LICENSED SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES, IN THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH JURISDICTION:

1. Limit Entry and Access to the Facility

- a. No one other than staff, first responders, contracted healthcare professionals including consultants and service providers, and other essential workers as deemed essential by the facility medical director should be permitted entry. In addition, restrict entry and access only to permitted visitors as per latest CDPH AFL and reflected in [LAC DPH SNF Guidance](#).
- b. The Facility shall require all persons to submit to entry screening as described in the LAC DPH SNF Guidance. The only exception to entry screening is Emergency Medical Service (EMS) workers responding to an emergent medical need. Anyone with a fever or symptoms are prohibited from entering.
- c. For purposes of this Order: "Premises" includes, without limitation, the buildings, grounds, facilities, driveways, parking areas, and public spaces within the legal boundaries of the Facility.

2. Staff Return to Work

- a. All healthcare workers must follow the [Guidance for Monitoring Healthcare Personnel](#).

3. Visitation:

- a. Visitation should only be resumed and conducted in compliance with LA County Department of Public Health Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#groupactivities>

4. Communal Dining and Group Activities

- a. The Facility should only resume and conduct communal dining and group activities in compliance with LA County Department of Public Health Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#groupactivities>.
- b. The Facility must also submit a completed and signed Self-assessment and Attestation to County Public Health if it will be resuming communal dining and group activities. If a Facility has to cease communal dining and group activities, then a new Attestation is required before resuming those activities again. See Appendices 1 and 2 of this Order.

5. Maintain Separate Areas and Staff for Patients with or Suspected of Having COVID-19

- a. The Facility shall establish separate areas within the Facility for residents/patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and for those who are displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19, as described in the "Cohorting" section of LAC DPH SNF Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#cohorting>

6. All Facility Staff and Residents Must Wear Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- a. The Facility shall require all staff to wear appropriate PPE as described in LAC DPH SNF Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#InfectionPrevention>.
- b. The Facility is required to provide each resident daily with a clean non-medical face covering. Please refer to Universal Source Control section of LAC DPH SNF Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#InfectionPrevention>.

7. Follow Recommended Infection Control Guidelines

- a. Facilities must follow all infection control guidance in the Infection Prevention and Control Considerations section of the LAC DPH SNF Guidance: <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#InfectionPrevention>

8. Conduct Entry Screening for Individuals Entering the Facility

- a. The Facility shall require all persons to be screened prior to entering the Facility with the exception of EMS workers responding to an urgent medical need. This includes all staff, residents, and essential and non-essential visitors. See guidance at <http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm#preventionpractices>.

9. Review and Comply with Recommended Interfacility Transfer Rules

- a. The Facility shall review and comply with State and local guidelines regarding the transfer of patients to a licensed acute care hospital or another congregate health care facility and regarding the return of patients to the Facility from a licensed acute care hospital or another congregate health care facility, including Public Health's COVID-19 Interfacility Transfer Rules: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/NCorona2019/InterfacilityTransferRules.htm>. Public Health will make final determinations regarding a Facility's inability to comply with State and Public Health guidance regarding the transfer and return of patients to the Facility.

10. Facilities are Required to Take Any Additional Actions as Directed by Department of Public Health for Prevention and Mitigation of Outbreaks

- a. These additional actions may include but not limited to testing of patients/residents and staff. This may include those with and without symptoms, as requested or per guidance provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the State. All testing results should be submitted to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health within 24 hours of receipt.

11. Facilities Are Directed To Take The Following Actions To Mitigate Influenza Introduction And Transmission

- a. Offer influenza vaccination to all Facility residents.
- b. Maintain a record of the influenza vaccination status of residents; this should document the date a person was vaccinated or the reason for declination.
- c. Maintain a record of influenza vaccination status of staff; this should document the date the staff was vaccinated.
- d. Provide information on influenza vaccination status of residents and staff to Public Health if requested.

- e. Encourage all allowed, non-essential persons to get immunized for the 2020-2021 influenza season at least two weeks prior visiting the facility. This will help decrease the risk of influenza transmission to residents and staff within the facility. For influenza vaccine information, toolkits, and locations, please visit:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/influenza.htm> and <https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine>.

12. Report ALL Facility Staff and Residents with Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Illnesses and Deaths to Public Health

- a. The Facility shall report all confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases and deaths within 24 hours Los Angeles County Department of Public Health by phone at (213) 240-7941 or fax at (213) 482-4856 or during an outbreak by calling the number provided by the Public Health outbreak investigator who is managing your outbreak.

13. Additional Terms

- a. This Order does not, in any way, restrict: (i) First responder access to the site(s) named in this Order during an emergency or (ii) local, state or federal officers, investigators, or medical or law enforcement personnel from carrying out their lawful duties at the site(s) named in this Order.
- b. If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Order or any application of it to any person, structure, gathering, or circumstance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, then such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of this Order.
- c. This Order is issued in accordance with and incorporates by reference, the March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom; the March 4, 2020 declarations of a local and public health emergency issued by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Los Angeles County Health Officer, respectively; and guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health, as each of them have been and may be supplemented.
- d. The violation of any provision of this Order constitutes an imminent threat and creates an immediate menace to public health, safety, and welfare. To protect the public's health, the County Health Officer may take additional action(s) for failure to comply with this Order.
- e. Violation of this Order is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment, fine or both under California Health and Section Code Section 120275 et seq and Los Angeles County Code Section 11.02.080.

The County Health Officer will continue to monitor the rate of COVID-19 disease spread, the severity of the resulting illnesses and deaths caused, California Department of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations, and the effect of this Order. If needed, this Order may be extended, expanded, or otherwise modified to protect the public's health.

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER**



If you have any questions about this Order, please call the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at (213) 240-7941.

IT IS SO ORDERED:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.", written over a horizontal line.

Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer,
County of Los Angeles

10/5/2020

Date

RESOURCES

- **California Department of Public Health All Facilities Letters:**
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/LNCAFL20.aspx>
- **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Health Facilities Guidance:**
<http://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/snf.htm>