Memo Re: Long-Term Care Facilities and Residential Care Facilities Guidance for Visitation, Activities, and Outings Based on County Tier

Date: March 9, 2021

From: Chris Farnitano, MD, Health Officer, Contra Costa County

COVID-19 has disproportionally impacted the vulnerable elderly population within long-term care facilities and residential care facilities. As the county sees variations in cases numbers it remains important to maintain preventive measures, regardless of vaccination status, like social distancing, universal masking of staff and residents, increase ventilation of communal spaces, as able, and continued frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces to continue to protect the vulnerable population that resides in these facilities. Additionally, as we learn more about COVID-19 and as facilities begin to get their population vaccinated it continues to be paramount to also consider the wellbeing, including mental health, of residents within these facilities and how to take a safe stepwise approach to meet these needs in safest possible environment for staff and residents. Guidance has been released by both Department of Social Service (CDSS) Provider Information Notice (PIN) 20-38-ASC and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) All Facilities Letter (AFL) 20.22 that has given further recommendations for the safety of residents within these facilities, taking into consideration the community’s prevalence of COVID-19 as noted by the county’s tier designated in a Blueprint for a Safer Economy, while also considering residents wellbeing and continuing to open these facilities up to visitations, activities, and outings in a safe stepwise approach that also takes vaccination status into consideration.

Contra Costa’s County Public Health has aligned with both CDPH and CDSS guidance on visitations, communal dining, and group activities with additional county guidance, below, that focuses on appropriate safety measures in place for visitors, staff, and residents within these facilities. All visitation, communal dining, and group activities policies or activities must adhere to core principles of decreasing chance of transmission such outdoor visitations, when can, limiting number of visitors, social distancing, masking, etc. as laid out within the PIN and AFL above.

Currently available COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in the prevention of severe and symptomatic COVID-19, but there is still limited information on how much the vaccines reduce transmission and how long protection lasts. In addition, the efficacy of the vaccines against emerging COVID-19 variants is not known; therefore, at this time, vaccinated residents and staff still need to continue to follow current guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, as able, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, and following guidance for personal protective equipment use based on resident COVID-19 status and COVID-19 testing. Given this, a cautious and gradual lifting of certain restrictions based on resident vaccination status, while continuing to remain vigilant for breakthrough infections after vaccination and transmission in long term care facilities through ongoing staff surveillance testing, monitoring for symptoms, and response testing after positives or for symptomatic staff or residents.
If your facility had a COVID-19 exposure or positive case within the facility or is experiencing an outbreak please report any positives as noted in Contacting Public Health for Notification of COVID-19 Positive Case in Facility, and review Contra Costa County Outbreak Guidance COVID-19 Facility Outbreak Prioritized Checklist, Visitor Guidance for Facilities During an Outbreak, Outbreak Closure to New Admissions and Communal Dining or Group Activities Guidance, and other guidance found on https://cchealth.org/covid19/clf/ for LTCF during an outbreak.

**Visititation**
Facilities should continue visitation for residents in Long-Term Care Facilities in accordance with all guidelines set forth by their licensing agency and while adhering to core principles of infection control such as visitor screening upon entry, social distancing, and masking. Facilities should limit the number of visits per resident at one time, limit the total number of visitors in the facility at one time (based on the size of the building and physical space), consider scheduling visits for a specified length of time to help ensure as many residents as possible are able to receive visitors, and limit visitor movement in the facility (ie. visitors should keep six feet distance from others and go directly to and from the resident's room or designated visitation area and not walk around different halls of the facility). Additionally, vaccinated visitors of fully vaccinated residents may have brief physical contact with the resident (e.g., a brief hug, holding hands, assisting with feeding or grooming.

**Outdoor and Indoor Communal Visitation**
Visitation should take place outside, when feasible. If outdoor visitation is not possible (e.g., inclement weather, poor air quality, resident inability to be moved outside, etc.), facilities shall accommodate visitation in large communal indoor spaces such as a lobby, cafeteria, activity room, physical therapy rooms, etc. where 6-ft distancing is possible, and may need to rearrange these spaces or add barriers to separate the space to accommodate the need for visitation of multiple residents.

**Indoor, In-Room Visitations**
In-room, in-door visitation can be considered for residents who are fully vaccinated (individual residents who are ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine), in the purple tier, and for all residents, regardless of vaccination status, in the red, orange, and yellow tier. In-Room visits for residents who share a room should be conducted in a separate indoor space or with the roommate not present in the room (if possible), regardless of the roommate’s vaccination status COVID-19.

**Allowable Visititation by Type and County Tier**
(Note: Family caregivers who are part of care team of the resident are not considered visitors but an essential part of the resident’s care and should not be excluded from caring for the resident.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISIT TYPE</th>
<th>Outbreak*</th>
<th>Purple Tier</th>
<th>Red Tier</th>
<th>Orange Tier</th>
<th>Yellow Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoors</td>
<td>Green/Yellow Zone Residents Only **</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor/ Open space - if outdoor not feasible</td>
<td>Green/Yellow Zone Residents Only **</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor / In-room</td>
<td>No**</td>
<td>Yes, for Fully Vaccinated Residents</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Must otherwise follow tier guidance for visitations. Compassionate care visitation should always be allowed. Please also view Visitor Guidance during an outbreak for further guidance and information.

**Visitations for Yellow Zone Residents maybe allowed during an outbreak in certain circumstance after consultation with Public Health, in-room with appropriate PPE for cohort (full PPE).
**Communal Dining, Group Activities, and Outings**

Further considerations for the county’s tier is needed for activities and outings given the concern for a higher chance of exposure when in the community, particularly when a resident is on a non-essential outing or on an overnight stay with a loved. No matter the county’s tier or resident/staff vaccination status it remains important that residents, staff, and facilities continue to take all preventive measures to decrease chance of exposures such as having activities or dining outdoors, when feasible, social distancing, mask wearing for all, frequent hand hygiene, increase ventilation of indoor spaces, as able, and frequent cleaning of areas used, along with guidance laid out in the appropriate AFL and PIN. Facilities should also limit the number of residents participating in communal dining and group activities to allow for proper social distancing of 6 feet or more between each resident (even for fully vaccinated residents), and exclude, regardless of vaccination status of the resident, COVID-19 positive residents clearing their infection (red zone residents) and residents who were exposed/potentially exposed and negative (yellow zone residents) while they are in quarantine.

For outings or overnight stays, it is important for residents to continue social distancing while out, wearing a mask, frequent hand hygiene, and visiting or having these outings outdoors, as much as possible. Vaccination status of residents and current county tier maybe considered when determining quarantine for residents upon return from their outing or overnight stay. When residents return from an outing or an overnight stay, risk assessment for possible exposures will need to be performed along with a symptom and temperature screen.

After an overnight stay in a household where household members have not been fully vaccinated when the county is in the Purple, Red, or Orange Tier, regardless of the resident vaccination status, the resident should be placed on a 14-day quarantine, monitored in their room/apartment, and tested after the 14-day period, before the resident is taken off quarantine.

When the county is in the red and purple tier, residents after a non-essential outing that is greater > 1 hour, who are not fully vaccinated (not ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine), regardless of masking or social distancing, should be placed on a 14-day quarantine, monitored in their room/apartment and tested after the 14-day period, before the resident is taken off quarantine. Additionally, if there are any concerns after a non-essential outing > 1 hour, such as there was a concern for an exposure during the outing because the resident could not maintain social distance from others, all individuals at the outing did not wear a mask (please also review [CDC’s Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/online-tools/fully-vaccinated-people-exposure-concerns.html) for exposure concerns based on vaccination status), or there was concern for a COVID-19 exposure, residents should be placed on a 14-day quarantine, regardless of their vaccination status, monitored in their room/apartment, and tested after the 14-day period, before they are taken off quarantine.

Residents who are vaccinated and do not need to quarantine should still have their symptoms monitored/monitor their own symptoms closely upon return from a non-essential outing or overnight stay. Facilities may also consider adding residents who go on non-essential outings or overnight stays to
the staff surveillance testing. Resident who develops symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status, should be placed on isolation and tested.

Residents who participate in low-risk outings while taking appropriate preventive steps such as walks outdoors alone, outdoor activities that is socially distant from other residents wearing masks, planned facility outings with the residents with appropriate preventive measures in place, or other low risk outdoor outings such as these do not need to quarantine unless other concerns have arose during their screening.

**Allowable Activities by Type and County Tier:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>During Outbreak</th>
<th>Purple Tier</th>
<th>Red Tier</th>
<th>Orange Tier</th>
<th>Yellow Tier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On site Group Activities &amp; Classes</td>
<td>Green Zone Residents only</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregate Dining</td>
<td>Green Zone Residents only</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Essential Outings (off Campus &gt;1 hr.), Outside essential activities - clinic visits, needed appointments, ED visits, grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions, etc</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight or extended non-essential outing not a hospitalization, ED visit, etc</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes ^</td>
<td>Yes ^</td>
<td>Yes ^</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If Resident is not fully vaccinated (not ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) should quarantine along with testing, as noted above, after non-essential activities in the purple, red, and orange tiers.**

^Regardless of vaccination status, residents should always quarantine along with testing, as noted above, after overnight stays in households were all the household members presents are not fully vaccinated in the purple, red, or orange tier.