



To: Residential Care Facility for the Elderly Administrator or Skilled Nursing Facility Point of Contact

Date: August 11, 2020

Subject: Adequate quarantine environment including single room required for new admissions

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had disproportional impacts on our vulnerable elderly population living in congregate settings. The virus is easily transmitted, especially in congregate living, and advanced age is one the highest risk factors for death from COVID-19. Mortality has been extremely high in these settings worldwide, nationwide and within Contra Costa County. In Contra Costa County, 65% of the deaths from COVID-19 have occurred in the context of outbreaks in Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) For the past few weeks, the Health Department has been daily following 40+ outbreaks in congregate care facilities with the >90% of these occurring in our SNFs & RCFEs following congregate While enhanced infection control practices, proper use of personal protective equipment, screening and limiting visitors, and limiting group activities are important to reduce the risk to our vulnerable elderly, they likely are not sufficient to prevent outbreaks without minimizing the risk of residents spreading infection due to the close contact and proximity that occurs while residing in multi-occupancy rooms. The risk of spread is particularly acute when a resident/patient is in quarantine period as a new admit to a facility or as an exposed contact in the context of an outbreak and is unable to maintain the necessary measures for an effective quarantine. To help slow COVID-19's spread and protect vulnerable individuals, it is necessary for the Health Officer of the County of Contra Costa to direct the implementation of additional preventative measures within the Facilities where the vast majority of outbreaks and mortality is occurring as a consequence of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

For this reason, I, as the county health officer, am issuing a mandate to increase the rigor and adherence to adequate quarantine measures at SNFs & RCFEs under my authority and in alignment with the language as specified in HO COVID19-15, section 6.d.e.: "Cooperation: Facility must take steps required by the Department in relation to the operation of the Facility, including, but not limited to, placement of Residents, environmental changes, use of personal protective equipment ("PPE"), closing or re-purposing spaces, and changing staffing patterns or assignments; and enact policies or procedures required by the Department."





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Therefore, I am issuing a requirement that as a condition of accepting new admits to a Facility, a Facility must be able to provide an adequate quarantine environment which includes remaining in a single room throughout the quarantine period.

The health services department will continue to work with you and your facilities to help ensure your residents and personnel are doing all that they can to reduce the risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. I thank you for your continued partnership with us in providing care and protection to the most vulnerable in our community.

In service,

Chris Farnitano, M.D.

Health officer

Contra Costa County

