

COVID-19 Guidance for Santa Cruz County Homeless Services Providers (including Shelter Providers)

Contacts & Info

For up-to-date information:

- Santa Cruz County Website: <http://www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus>
- California State Website: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
- Federal Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Weekly Health Services Agency (HSA) Departmental Operations Center (DOC)
 - COVID-19 Response for Community Partners (Tuesdays 8am-8:25am)
 - COVID 19 Response for Health Care Providers (Wednesday 7:30 am)
- COVID 19 Call Center: 454-4242 (8 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday-Friday)
- Local Resources: Call 2-1-1 OR text "COVID19" to 211-211 for Coronavirus Information
- Medical Resource requests: HSADOC.Coordinator@santacruzcounty.us
- All Other Resource Requests: HSCO@santacruzcounty.us

Healthcare facilities and alternative care sites where participants with respiratory illness can receive appropriate care. Please call clinics in advance before visiting.

- Homeless Persons Health Project (Hours: M-Th 8am-5pm; Friday 8am-3pm)
 - Location: 115-A Coral Street, Santa Cruz
 - 831-454-2080
 - After hours: 831-454-5146
 - Email: HPHPreferral@santacruzcounty.us
- Emeline Health Center (Hours: M-F 8am-5pm)
 - Location: 1080 Emeline Ave
 - 831-454-4100
- Watsonville Health Center (Hours: M-Th 7:30am-6:30pm; F 7:30-5:00)
 - Location: 1430 Freedom Blvd, Suite C
 - 831-763-8400

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- County Clinic After Hours (Hours: after clinic normal business hours)
 - 831-763-8227

If you identify a participant with primary symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), or other health concerns, arrange for the participant to contact their medical care provider as soon as possible. **(If this is a participant with suspected COVID-19, notify the participant's medical facility before transfer.**)

To transport persons with severe illness to medical facilities, call 911.

Key Prevention Strategies for Providers

Preventive actions:

- Stay home if you are sick. Avoid close contact with others who are sick.
- If you cough or sneeze, do it into the corner of your shirt. If you use a tissue, dispose of it immediately, and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds on a regular basis, as well as after contact with others.
- The best defense for the entire community is to avoid crowds and keep “social distancing” of 6 feet when with anyone.

Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization:

- Soap
- alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol
- tissues
- trash baskets
- disposable facemasks for those that are sick. Plan to have extra supplies on hand during a COVID-19 outbreak.

Plan for staff and volunteer absences.

- Develop flexible attendance and sick-leave policies. Staff (and volunteers) may need to stay home when they are sick, caring for a sick household member, or caring for their children in the event of school dismissals. Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff members.

Note: Use a process similar to the one you use when you cover for staff workers during the holidays.

If possible, identify space that can be used to accommodate participants with mild respiratory symptoms and separate them from others.

- Most persons with COVID-19 infections will likely have mild symptoms and not require hospital care. Furthermore, it might not be possible to determine if a person has COVID-19 or another respiratory illness.
- Designate a room and bathroom (if available) for participants with mild illness who remain at the shelter and develop a plan for cleaning the room daily.

Identify participants who could be at high risk for complications from COVID-19 (those who are older or have underlying health conditions) to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.

- People 60 years or older, and people with compromised immune symptoms, such as if you have diabetes, are at greater risk.

Identify each participant's clinic information, in case you need to contact them.

Plan for higher shelter usage during the outbreak.

- Identify short-term volunteers to staff shelter with more usage or alternate sites.
- Consider the need for extra supplies (e.g., food, toiletries, etc.) and surge staff, ensuring they have personal protective equipment. **Contact the HSA DOC if more supplies are needed: HSADOC.Coordinator@santacruzcounty.us**

Staff Communication and Response Plan

Create a communication plan for distributing timely and accurate information during an outbreak.

- Establish systems for sharing information.
- Update contact information for everyone in the chain of communication.
- Identify platforms, such as a hotline, automated text messaging, and a website to help disseminate information to those inside and outside your organization.

Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to workers, volunteers, and those you serve.

If a staff person has a cough, fever, or shortness of breath, they should not report to work and contact their medical provider.

If a staff person has been exposed to somebody with known COVID-19 and is experiencing symptoms, they could be tested, but the current advisement is to manage symptoms from home and contact their medical provider.

During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Put your emergency operations and communication plans into action

Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.

- **Up to date County information can be found here:**
www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus
- **California Guidance for Homeless Assistance Providers on COVID-19:**
https://www.bcsd.ca.gov/hcfc/documents/covid19_homeless_guide.pdf

Implement everyday preventive actions and provide instructions to your workers about actions to prevent disease spread.

- Meet with your staff to discuss plans to help participants implement personal preventive measures.
- If you would like a public health official to visit and provide information, please contact:
 - Homeless Persons Health Project (Hours: M-Th 8am-5pm; Friday 8am-3pm)
 - 831-454-2080
 - After hours: 831-454-5146
 - Email: HPHPreferral@santacruzcounty.us

If you are concerned that a participant might have COVID-19.

- Call the participant's clinic or the Homeless Persons Health Project. **Do not send participants to the clinic without calling.**

People experiencing homelessness may be at increased risk of adverse mental health outcomes.

- Contact participant's clinic to request counseling or integrated behavioral health services.

Download COVID-19 posters and CDC Fact Sheets and keep your participants and guests informed about public health recommendations to prevent disease spread and about changes to services that might be related to the outbreak: www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus

Minimize the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with participants with respiratory symptoms.

- Install a sneeze guard at the check-in desk or place an additional table between staff and participants to increase the distance between them.

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- Disposable facemasks should be reserved for use by participants who exhibit respiratory symptoms. Participants who become sick should be given a clean disposable facemask to wear while staying at the shelter.
- Staff and volunteers at high risk of severe COVID-19 (those who are older or have underlying health conditions) should not be designated as caregivers for sick participants who are staying in the shelter.

If staff are handling participant belongings, they should use disposable gloves.

Limit visitors to the facility.

Participant Care Practices

In general sleeping areas (for those who are not experiencing respiratory symptoms), ensure that beds/mats are at least 3 feet apart, and request that all participants sleep head-to-toe to allow for 6 feet of distance between participants.

Provide access to fluids, tissues, plastic bags for the proper disposal of used tissues.

Ensure bathrooms and other sinks are consistently stocked with soap and drying materials for handwashing.

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol (if that is an option at your shelter) at key points within the facility, including registration desks, entrances/exits, and eating areas.

At check-in, provide any participant with respiratory symptoms (cough, fever) with a surgical mask.

- Plan, develop workflow to greet clients and screen for symptoms, and respond if they do have symptoms
- Have a greeter wearing gloves and face shield ask clients if they have fever or cough, check temperatures, and provide face masks if you have them

If you are in need of a handwashing station, soap, gloves, tissues, plastic bags and/or face shield masks, please email the HSA DOC and submit a request:

HSADOC.Coordinator@santacruzcounty.us

Monitor participants who could be at high risk for complications from COVID-19 (those who are older or have underlying health conditions) and reach out to them regularly.

Confine participants with mild respiratory symptoms and or fever to individual rooms, if possible, and have them avoid common areas.

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- If individual rooms for sick participants are not available, consider using a large, well-ventilated room.
- In areas where participants with respiratory illness are staying, keep beds at least 3 feet apart and use temporary barriers between beds, such as curtains, and request that all participants sleep head-to-toe.
- If possible, designate a separate bathroom for sick participants.
- Consider reducing cleaning frequency in bedrooms and bathrooms dedicated to ill persons to as-needed cleaning (e.g., of soiled items and surfaces) to avoid unnecessary contact with the ill persons.

☐ Ensure that all common areas within the facility follow good practices for environmental cleaning.