
Guidance for Transfer of Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) April 8, 2020

Purpose: To provide COVID-19-specific guidance on moving patients from Hospitals to Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs), including Skilled Nursing Facilities, and acceptance of patients by LTCFs.

Guidance for hospitals proposing to discharge a patient to a LTCF:

1. For patients with fever or respiratory symptoms in the past 7 days who have not yet been tested for COVID-19:
 - a. Hospitals should test patient for COVID-19; and
 - b. Once the test result is available, discharge planning can be pursued with the LTCF following the guidance below, based on the test result.
2. For patients who had tested positive for COVID-19:
 - a. Hospitals should contact accepting facility and discuss with Public Health for their readiness to accept the patient. LTCF is to follow appropriate guidelines as stated below.

LTCFs should accept the following types of patients:

1. Patients who were tested for COVID-19 because of compatible symptoms, but COVID-19 has been ruled out based on a *negative* test result and clinical assessment.
2. Patients who did not have fever or respiratory symptoms during the hospitalization (i.e., admitted for another reason) and COVID-19 testing was not ordered by the hospital's physicians. LTCFs should not require a negative COVID-19 test to accept these patients.
3. Hospitals and congregate settings such as LTCFs (e.g., skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, board and care, etc.) have a higher than average risk population and it is therefore reasonable to apply criteria similar to those used for immunocompromised COVID-19 patients. Patients ready for discharge to a LTCF who tested *positive* for COVID-19 on the most recent (or only) test do not need repeat COVID-19 testing. For such patients:
 - a. Isolation/Precautions at the LTCF may or may not still be required, depending on the following:
 - Patients who tested positive should be isolated for a total of 14 days after date of lab result or 7 days after fever is gone and other symptoms are improving, whichever is longer. The total number of days is inclusive of the duration of hospital isolation.
 - If isolation is still needed, the LTCF should provide isolation for the COVID-19 patient until the end of the isolation period, as defined above. Ideally, such patients should be placed in designated units to care for COVID-19 patients and staff dedicated to care of COVID-19 patients.

- If ideal situation is not possible, patients on isolation can be placed in a single room and be restricted to their room until resolution of symptoms.
- If the isolation period is over and symptoms have resolved, the LTCF should receive the COVID-19 patient without requiring a negative COVID-19 test result and without the need for transmission-based isolation/precautions.

Resources

1. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-33.aspx>
2. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-25-1.aspx>
3. Santa Clara County – guidance Discharge to LTCF
4. San Mateo county Health COVID – 19 Hospital Discharge Criteria

Sincerely,



Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS
Public Health Officer