



Health Advisory

April 28, 2020
COVID-19

This is a health advisory for the Fresno County medical providers containing medical updates related to COVID-19. At the time of this writing, there are 498 cases confirmed in the county, which is approximately 7.5 % of all patients tested. Beyond the numbers, we brace ourselves for a long road ahead to a “new normal,” which means sustained, sustainable, and possibly long-term adjustments in the way we deliver health care and conduct our social lives with lessons learned and shared from many disciplines and sectors.

This advisory shares steps that Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) is taking currently in response to the pandemic, along with action steps that may apply to medical providers working with patients in primary care, hospital settings, and congregate/ long-term care settings.

1. **Testing Priorities have been updated** by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) via an All Facilities Letter (AFL) dated April 19, 2020 and can be found at this link:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-44.aspx>

CDPH Testing Priorities (updated April 19, 2020)
Priority 1:
Hospitalized patients
Symptomatic healthcare workers
Persons identified for testing by public health contact investigations and disease control activities in high risk settings, including both residents and staff (E.g., congregate living facilities, correctional facilities)
Priority 2:
Screening of asymptomatic residents of congregate living facilities prior to admission or re-admission to congregate living facility (E.G., a hospitalized patient will be screened for COVID-19 prior to discharge to a congregate living facility)
Screening of asymptomatic healthcare workers (E.G., skilled nursing facility workers, hospital workers)
Symptomatic persons in essential health and public safety occupations (E.G., first responders, law enforcement, congregate living facility workers)
Symptomatic persons >65 years of age or with chronic medical conditions
Priority 3:
Symptomatic persons in essential infrastructure occupations (E.G., utility workers, food supply workers, other public employees)
Priority 4:
Community-based testing of all low-risk symptomatic persons (Surveillance testing of asymptomatic persons)



Health Advisory

April 28, 2020
COVID-19

2. **Fast, broadly available testing and aggressive contact tracing** will be the most important components to the eventual reopening of many currently closed sectors in school, business, and nonessential medical practices. Please think ahead about how your practice can be part of this long-term change that we will need to make.
 - a. Testing sites: If you need help setting up a drive up, appointment only “swab site” at your clinical site we can provide technical assistance to you and your team. Please reach out. Employers and industries are also asking to connect to medical providers so if you are interested in occupational medicine or COVID-related industry consultations, call us.
 - b. New, high throughput testing sites are being supported statewide by the CDPH testing task force, and Fresno has been selected to have one set up. Stay tuned about this exciting development. We hope to have more information soon.
3. **Testing capacity** is improving but we are not yet at the recommended target of 152 daily tests per 100,000 population. In Fresno County that means approximately 1520 tests for our 1 million residents.
 - a. Here is where that number (152 daily tests/100K people) comes from in case you want to read further: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/17/us/coronavirus-testing-states.html>
 - b. The FCDPH has a partnership with a PCR lab at Fresno State with rapid turnaround (24 hours in most cases). For information about how to send specimens to this lab or arrange a pick-up email jprado@fresnocountyca.gov
 - c. All medical providers are encouraged to learn how to swab a patient using appropriate PPE in their clinic practice.
4. **Contact tracing:** Learn how to do this as you take a history in a patient with febrile respiratory illness. The COVID-19 epidemic is driven by close contacts in multiple settings, who are exposed to droplets, fomites, and possibly aerosols from severely symptomatic patients with coughing/sneezing.
 - a. In our experience, CLOSE CONTACTS fall into 4 broad categories and you can speed up contact tracing when you ask and document these items: household contacts, workplace contacts, social/gathering contacts, and congregate setting contacts.
 - b. Have your staff get NAMES, ACTIVE PHONE NUMBERS, and EMAIL addresses on all potential close contacts if possible.
 - c. Stopping transmission means finding every exposed contact and asking them to quarantine, tighten their hygiene and masking practices, and getting tested if needed.



Health Advisory

April 28, 2020
COVID-19

5. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **California is providing hotel rooms to frontline healthcare workers** who are exposed to or test positive for COVID-19.
 - a. By providing hotel rooms in close proximity to medical facilities, healthcare workers avoid potentially spreading the virus once leaving their shift by electing to stay at pre-identified hotel rooms that are provided at no charge or at a discounted rate. The federal and state government will cover the costs of this program.
 - b. More information and instructions are available here:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-45.aspx>

6. For congregate settings, we recommend the following layers of protection:
 - a. **ALL hospitalized or ED patients being discharged to any congregate setting (e.g. nursing home, prison, juvenile detention center, or a homeless shelter or similar accommodation) should be tested for COVID-19, to help detect and contain outbreaks as early as possible.**
 - b. **On arrival, the patient needs to stay in a “warm zone” in the destination facility where staff wearing full PPE (gown, gloves, eye protection and masks) can attend to their needs. Patients should wear cloth masks if possible, and remain separated from other patients.**
 - c. **After 14 days in the “warm zone,” the patient should be retested for COVID infection.**
 - d. If patient develops any symptoms, they should be tested for COVID infection immediately.
 - e. Note that elder individuals may present with confusion, cachexia, low grade fevers (98-100F) or other atypical features of COVID infection. CDC has updated the presenting signs and symptoms of COVID infection to include a broader array of symptoms (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>).
 - f. If positive for COVID-19 infection, patient needs to be kept isolated from other patients and common areas, and staff need to continue to use full PPE to attend to them
 - g. If possible, please expedite testing for these patients to help conserve PPE and other resources.
 - h. FCDPH now has a local COVID lab that can run specimens, and turnaround time is about 24-48 hours. For information about how to send specimens to this lab or arrange a pick-up email jprado@fresnocountyca.gov.



Health Advisory

April 28, 2020
COVID-19

Finally, a note of gratitude—you are all doing a commendable job under these singularly unforeseen circumstances. A sincere thank you for your enduring dedication to your patients, to one another, and to the health of our community during this challenging time. Let us know how we can support you in your work.

Warmly,

Rais Vohra, MD
Interim Health Officer
Fresno County Department of Public Health
rvohra@fresnocountyca.gov
www.fcdph.org

Categories of Health Alert Messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

Health Information: Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health

559 ton Street, Fresno CA 93721 • P.O. Box 11867, Fresno, CA 93775

(559) 600-3200 • FAX (559) 600-7687

The County of Fresno is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer