Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Public Health Department
www.acphd.org

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Public Health Department: Main Line (510) 267-8000

COVID-19 Information: (510) 268-2101

Testing at Skilled Nursing Facilities

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The following questions are recommendations for testing for staff and residents for Skilled Nursing Facilities. These recommendations are aligned with the California Department of Public Health's All Facilities Letter (AFL) 20-53: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Mitigation Plan Recommendations for Testing of Health Care Personnel (HCP) and Residents at Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF).

What is Alameda County Public Health Department's (ACPHD) current testing policy for all skilled nursing facilities?
Our current policy aligns with that of California Department of Public Health (CDPH) AFL 20-53; and as long as there continues to be evidence of community transmission of COVID-19, ACPHD recommends testing of all residents and staff of a skilled nursing facility to establish a baseline of prevalence.

Is testing required when a hospital transfers a patient back to a facility?
Aligning with CDPH's guidance, hospitals are not required to test for COVID-19 at or before discharge. This ensures a resident isn't put at further or unnecessary risk of exposure and ensures hospital beds are available in the case of a surge. If the hospital has not tested at time of discharge, the facility should test and quarantine the resident for 14 days.

If a facility does not have a positive case of COVID-19, how regularly should testing occur and what are the parameters?
As long as there continues to be evidence of community transmission of COVID-19, facilities should test 25 percent of their staff every week, ensuring that 100% of staff are tested each month. Additionally, for facilities without a positive case of COVID-19, residents who frequently leave the facility (e.g. for dialysis or other medical appointments) should be tested monthly.

In the event that a resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, what is the testing recommendation for the rest of the residents and staff?
All residents and staff should be tested if a resident or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.

Additionally, regular weekly testing should take place until no person tests positive for two sequential rounds of testing (no new positives in two back-to-back weeks).

Who is responsible for implementing testing?
Skilled nursing facilities are expected to use their own resources for testing of residents.

Staff should be included in onsite testing whenever possible in order to increase the likelihood that they receive testing. If this is not possible, staff should access testing through their health care provider or be directed to a community testing site.

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What support can the Alameda County Public Health Department provide for testing?
At this time, Alameda County Public Health can support training for clinical staff so testing can occur onsite and we can provide information on community testing sites where staff can go if they aren't able to be tested through their health care provider.

Additionally, Alameda County nurses work very closely with the facilities on coordinating testing and on guiding response including isolation, cohorting, and infection control practices.

What if a facility needs additional testing materials?
If a facility has exhausted its supply of testing materials, a facility can submit a request through the Alameda County Emergency Operations Center by completing the Alameda County COVID -19 Resource Request Form, available at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScuhydKSTGrluOKktBEbDJ7ypa0MyFiF6ywXpE0g6Nhjym89A/viewform