



NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE  
AGENCY DIRECTOR

# County of San Diego

WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.  
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES  
3851 ROSECRANS STREET, MAIL STOP P-578  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92110-3134  
(619) 531-5800 • FAX (619) 542-4186

March 19, 2020

TO: Homeless Service Providers

FROM: Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.,  
Public Health Officer & Director,  
Public Health Services

RE: **COVID-19 DIRECTIVE TO HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The global novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is impacting many populations throughout the world, most notably older adults and those with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of more severe outcomes. Additionally, our community is concerned about individuals experiencing homelessness and transmission and/or outbreaks within our homeless shelters. Enhanced education, hygiene, and cleaning procedures are all necessary to help minimize chances of transmission.

As per the current Health Officer Order, homeless shelters are permitted to continue operations and must take precautions to follow federal, State, and local public health guidance regarding COVID-19. In accordance with the Order, the Public Health Officer directs homeless service providers to 1) immediately review, enhance, and retrain staff on infection control processes and procedures, including following [disinfection guidance](#) specific to COVID-19, and limiting gathering around mealtime to allow dining of no more than ten individuals at once, and to facilitate social distancing; 2) ensure isolation plans within or accessible to the shelter exist if ill individuals are identified; 3) share isolation plans with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency and applicable Housing Authority; and 4) utilize the [temporary lodging assistance process](#), as needed, to isolate or quarantine necessary individuals.

Dedicated areas for isolation of ill individuals, where they can remain pending telephonic or in-person medical follow up are required at homeless shelters. Shelters without dedicated isolation areas must establish such spaces inside or have them accessible. It is recommended that isolation spaces be separated physically from the rest of the shelter by permanent or temporary walls and a door, ideally with separate restroom and sink access. If this is not possible within existing facilities, makeshift areas outside or nearby, or permanent off-site locations may be acceptable if approved by the jurisdiction's Housing Authority. Isolated guests should be masked and staff entering should use the recommended personal protection equipment for COVID-19. Staff who work with guests in isolation should minimize working with other guests and guest areas. This information can be referenced in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance COVID-19 [Interim Guidance for Homeless Shelters](#), [HUD Infectious Disease Toolkit for Shelters](#), as well as by [King County](#) Healthcare for the Homeless Network COVID-19 Resources.

Action by your organization to immediately comply with this Directive is essential to prevent, contain, and mitigate the further spread of COVID-19 amongst some of our most vulnerable residents. You are

COVID-19 Health Officer Directive to Homeless Providers

March 18, 2020

Page 2 of 2

directed to respond as soon as possible, and no later than Monday, March 23, 2020, with details regarding what actions you will take to be in full compliance.

The County is here as a resource. Up-to-date information about COVID-19, including resource documents, such as frequently asked questions, informational posters, and guidance, is available at [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com). Please also reference the letter sent on March 17, 2020 to Community Clinics, Hospitals, Pharmacies, Healthcare Providers, Emergency Medical Services and Homeless Housing Providers regarding Temporary Lodging for Persons Requiring Isolation COVID-19. Thank you for your continued cooperation and diligence in keeping our most vulnerable populations healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.

Public Health Officer & Director

Public Health Services

Cc: Helen Robbins-Meyer, County of San Diego, Chief Administrative Officer

Nick Macchione, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Director