



City Manager's

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Thursday, April 23, 2020

City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley provided this update on the City of Berkeley's COVID-19 response to the City Council. The reports, which are issued most weekdays, can be viewed at cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates.

Focus on Long-term Care Facilities

City of Berkeley Health Officer, Dr. Lisa B. Hernandez, today visited one of the city's six long-term care facilities, sites that pose particular risk due to the density of people vulnerable to severe COVID-19 illness.

The nature of this virus is that there is no vaccine and no medical treatment. There will be more cases. People will get sick. The goal is to reduce the spread and prevent outbreaks.

During the visit, Dr. Hernandez and Fire Capt. Colin Arnold, who is in charge of our Fire Department's EMS Division, meet with administration, to get a personal tour, discuss the health order, and provide guidance specific to each facility and spend time answering questions. The visits are important, but it is just one piece of a systematic approach that we've taken as part of our COVID-19 pandemic response.

Both the Fire Department and Public Health have long-standing relationships with these sites, though it has intensified and grown closer during our pandemic response.

There is now a daily flow of information between Public Health staff and each facility. Public Health also coordinates weekly calls among all the facilities. The result of this work is that Public Health has gathered information on each site's patients, staff, patient monitoring, infection control plans, staffing support, protective equipment, training, signage and more. When necessary, Public Health works with the facilities to coordinate rapid testing.

The detail is so specific that Dr. Hernandez arrives with a floor plan already in hand.

We knew their rules for visitors long ago and, as a result of work with Dr. Hernandez, these sites closed off visitation in mid-March. There have been no outbreaks in any of these facilities.

By Friday, Dr. Hernandez will have visited each of the sites personally.



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Resources

Ongoing messaging about parking enforcement

Today, we put out [a community message](#) about the ongoing relaxation of many parking rules as well as the ongoing enforcement of others. It included a message about the importance of street sweeping and the role it plays in keeping our streets and the Bay clean.

State announces financial relief from debt collection and private student loans

Today, Governor Newsom [signed an executive order](#) to stop debt collectors from garnishing COVID-19 related financial assistance, including stimulus checks. Checks that have been garnished already will have to be returned.

He also announced a multi-state relief agreement with 21 of the largest private student loan services, which will benefit 1.1 million Californians. Borrowers will get a minimum of 90 days payment forbearance, waived late fees, and protection against negative credit reporting.

Alameda County Community Food Bank needs support

With many of our neighbors out of work or facing significant medical expenses due to COVID-19, food insecurity is rising. The Alameda County Community Food Bank distributes groceries to those in need. Every \$1 given to the food bank provides \$7 worth of food to neighbors in need.

We're encouraging those community members who are able to [donate online](#), or enlist friends and family to contribute with a [virtual food drive](#). Those able to help distributing food to families in the Easy Bay can contact volunteer@acfb.org using the subject line "Food Distributions."