



City Manager's

# COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Tuesday, May 19, 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](http://cityofberkeley.info/covid19-city-manager-updates).*

## **First COVID-19 Case at a Skilled Nursing Facility**

City of Berkeley Public Health was notified on Monday May 18 that a person who had spent time at a skilled nursing facility in Berkeley tested positive for COVID-19.

Using plans that staff had already developed in anticipation of such an instance, City staff immediately began an investigation to identify close contacts, to quarantine contacts and to test all residents and employees.

As you know, an EOC task force consisting of staff from Fire EMS, Public Health Preparedness, and Public Health Communicable Disease has taken a systematic approach to work closely with nursing facilities to assess their needs, help them prepare, and provide supplies and PPE when needed. Our efforts have been helped considerably by the fact that both Public Health and Fire/EMS have long-standing relationships with each of the skilled nursing facilities in the City.

The City of Berkeley had been tracking rules for visitors long ago. As a result of work with Dr. Hernandez, these sites closed off visitation in mid-March. In mid-April, Dr. Hernandez also issued an order imposing [new requirements on skilled nursing facilities](#). Temperature and symptom screenings were required for all staff and visitors before entry. Because of the order, staff wear masks at all times, and residents must wear masks when outside their rooms.

Our Health Officer and our Fire/EMS captain have also visited each facility to meet with administration, to get a personal tour, discuss Health Orders, and provide guidance specific to each facility and spend time answering questions. The detail is so specific that Dr. Hernandez arrives with a floor plan already in hand.

There is a consistent and frequent (at least weekly) 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.



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As part of our work to assist skilled nursing facilities, Public Health also recently conducted a pilot test of everyone – including patients and employees – at a particular skilled nursing facility. The goal was to see if there were asymptomatic cases in that facility. The tests all came back negative.

While we have been anticipating a positive case in one of the facilities, this was the first instance of such a case in Berkeley. It is inevitable that there will be future cases as well. The nature of COVID-19 is that there is no treatment, and it is in our community, region and state.

Our goal is to take action to limit the spread.

## State eases reopening requirements for counties

On Monday, Governor Newsom announced that some criteria have been relaxed for counties moving to reopen economies faster than the state. The revised criteria consider:

- Case metrics: hospitalization levels, case counts, and positive test percentage
- County preparedness: daily testing capacity, number of contact tracers, hospital surge capacity, and prevention and containment measures for outbreaks at skilled nursing facilities
- County response: temporary housing availability, PPE for healthcare facilities, detailed reopening plans, and guidance for employers

Details are available on the state's [county roadmap webpage](#), where you can also view statistics by County on case counts, testing, hospitalizations, and PPE distributions.

The Governor also said that if hospitalizations continue to decline statewide, haircuts and church services could be available in the coming weeks in areas where cases, hospitalizations and other data have not prompted tighter local rules.

## Resources

### State of California two-minute COVID-19 survey

The state is conducting an informal online survey to better understand how Californians feel about COVID-19. We encourage residents to complete the [eight question survey](#) to help



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give the state a sense of their perspectives regarding stay at home restrictions, re-opening California, and more.

## **Some Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) field offices open**

The DMV has reopened select field offices across the state to assist customers with appointments and with transactions that require an in-person visit to a field office during the COVID-19 pandemic. The closest open field office to Berkeley is the [Oakland Claremont](#) location at 5300 Claremont Avenue, Oakland.