

March 10, 2020

To: Placer County Health Care Workers, Health Care Facilities, and First Responders

From: Dr. Aimee Sisson, Placer County Health Officer

Subject: Lifting of Health Care Worker Post-Exposure Quarantine

On March 10, 2019, Placer County Public Health announced that community transmission of COVID-19 was occurring and transitioned from a containment strategy to a community mitigation strategy that focuses on slowing the spread of COVID-19 rather than aiming to stop the spread of COVID-19. In its updated [guidance](#) for risk assessment of healthcare personnel with potential workplace exposure to COVID-19 released March 7, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention added a section titled, "Additional Considerations and Recommendations." This new section outlines changes in health care provider work restrictions after a potential COVID-19 exposure in the setting of community transmission of COVID-19.

In the setting of community transmission, all health care providers are at some risk for exposure to COVID-19, whether in the workplace or in the community. Continuing the previous 14-day work exclusion and home quarantining guidance in the setting of community transmission would quickly result in a deficit of health care workers (HCWs) to treat the growing number of COVID-19 patients and all other patients.

Therefore, beginning March 10, HCWs, including first responders, in Placer County who have been exposed to a possible or confirmed case of COVID-19 no longer need to be excluded from work and quarantined at home for 14 days. Instead, health care facilities and first responder agencies should do the following:

- Develop a plan for how they will screen for symptoms and evaluate ill HCWs.
 - This could include having HCWs report absence of fever and symptoms prior to starting work each day.
- Ask HCWs to report recognized exposures.

- In consultation with their occupational health program, consider allowing asymptomatic HCWs who have had an exposure to a COVID-19 patient to continue to work.
 - These employees should report temperature and absence of symptoms each day prior to starting work.
 - If there is a sufficient supply of facemasks, consider having exposed HCWs wear a facemask while at work for 14 days after the exposure event.
- If HCWs develop even mild symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must cease patient care activities immediately, don a facemask (if not already wearing), and notify their supervisor or occupational health services prior to leaving work.
 - Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and fever. Less common symptoms can include muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, headache, runny nose, and fatigue.

This memo does not preclude an individual organization that wishes to implement guidance stricter than recommendations stated here from doing so.

The full text of the CDC's March 7, 2020 Interim Guidance of Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assessment-hcp.html>.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aimee Sisson".

Aimee Sisson, MD, MPH
Health Officer and Public Health Director
Placer County Health and Human Services Department