

Due to risk factors such as advanced age, congregate living environment and underlying chronic medical conditions, residents of Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) are at the highest risk of being negatively impacted by COVID-19. The Ventura County Public Health Department (VCPH) seeks to protect vulnerable populations and has been committed to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) since the onset of the pandemic. Due to a surge of COVID-19 cases in the summer months, the COVID-19 holding unit capacity has been expanded.

The following guidance outlines the strategy for holding patients in the COVID-19 Holding Unit within a Skilled Nursing Facility¹. This document applies to all residents of LTCFs in Ventura County who are confirmed COVID-19 positive and will, therefore, be transferred to a COVID-19 Holding unit². LTCFs from which the resident originated must repatriate the resident when discharge criteria have been met.

For the purpose of this document, LTCFs refers to skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities, assisted living facilities, continuing care communities, residential care facilities, adult residential facilities, social rehabilitation facilities, and congregate living facilities that are licensed by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and/or the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Receiving Patients from Long-Term Care Facilities

LTCFs should have a mechanism for obtaining COVID-19 testing kits and are expected to provide testing for their residents and staff in accordance with CDPH All Facilities Letters and CDSS Provider Information Notices. If a LTCF resident is reported to be positive for COVID-19, the LTCF will immediately contact VCPH Communicable Disease to report the positive case(s) and determine if the resident will be transferred to a COVID-19 holding unit. Ventura County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency will arrange for ambulance transfer. The LTCF will maintain the resident's bed for repatriation after the holding unit stay.

Upon the resident's arrival to the SNF COVID-19 holding unit:

- The LTCF resident should be isolated with standard, contact, and droplet precautions.
- The LTCF resident should remain in the SNF COVID-19 Holding Unit until **LTCF discharge criteria** are met.

¹ While Ventura County is committed to stopping the transmission of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities, an overwhelming surge will result in a change to this guidance.

² In consultation with VCPH, exceptions may be made for residents whom the LTCF can properly isolate and provide appropriate care or when an exposure within the LTCF has led to several positive cases.

Discharge to Originating Long-Term Care Facilities

SNF Holding Unit(s) should be prepared to maintain positive COVID-19 residents until **LTCF discharge criteria** have been met.

- Standard, contact and droplet precautions should be implemented.

LTCF Discharge Criteria

- 14 days have passed since symptom onset
 - If asymptomatic throughout isolation, 14 days since specimen collection **and**
- No fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms

Patients with **severe to critical illness** who are severely immunocompromised

- 20 days have passed since symptom onset
 - If asymptomatic, 20 days since specimen collection **and**
- No fever for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) **and**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms

Discharge Approval Process

- The SNF Holding Unit – in consultation with VCPH Communicable Disease and VC EMS Agency – is responsible for tracking the number of days since specimen collection.
- When the SNF Holding Unit believes that discharge criteria have been met, the SNF Holding Unit must notify VCPH Communicable Disease at (805) 981-5201.
- VCPH Communicable Disease will review the discharge criteria with the SNF Holding Unit and if met, will approve discharge. VCPH Communicable Disease will coordinate transport back to the originating LTCF in collaboration with Ventura County EMS.