

March 19, 2021

To: Long-Term Care Facility Administration
RE: Local Health Department COVID-19 Guidance

On April 18, 2020 the Ventura County Public Health Department (VCPH) issued the first, local COVID-19 guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) with several topic-specific guidance documents released throughout the year as the medical and health community gained a better understanding of the characteristics and behaviors of SARS-CoV-2. The local guidance often instituted more stringent restrictions than what was required of LTCFs per the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Quality, Safety, and Oversight (QSO) Memos, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) All Facilities Letters (AFL), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Provider Information Notices (PIN).

The early stricter local guidance proved helpful in limiting transmission of COVID-19 in LTCFs. The current state and federal guidance provide best practices and requirements for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in LTCFs as well as caring for the residents' emotional wellbeing that VCPH feels will sufficiently apply a level of preparedness across all LTCFs who adhere to these recommendations and requirements. Furthermore, all LTCFs in Ventura County have now had the opportunity to have their staff and residents vaccinated and the case positivity rate for Ventura County continues to improve. Through state and local resources afforded to all LTCFs – guidance documents, technical assistance, training, equipment, testing support – the LTCFs have now had a full year to prepare their facility and personnel.

It is for these reasons that VCPH is rescinding all local, LTCF COVID-19 guidance documents.

Although local guidance is rescinded, VCPH reminds LTCF personnel of the importance of adhering to precautionary measures still in place. The state and federal guidance provide a gradual relaxing of restrictions to continue to safely reopen while still closely monitoring the variants that pose a continued risk. The VCPH Communicable Disease program will continue to support LTCFs as questions arise regarding COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. The County of Ventura thanks LTCF personnel for your continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of LTCF residents.

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Health Officer