

COVID-19 FAQs for Hospice East Bay Staff

Thursday, March 19, 2020

1. What is the expectation for clinical staff?

While we support the state's and county's decision for shelter in place, hospice remains an essential service which exempts us from the shelter in place order. Our patients and families continue to need our care, and so we continue to provide care as usual.

We follow the Medicare Conditions of Participation, which Medicare has not yet relaxed. In accordance with the CoPs, visit frequencies may only be changed in consultation with the IDT. All disciplines need to determine the level of support needed by their patients during this time, since the need may have increased.

In addition, Medicare has not yet given us an exemption from the 5-day admission visit window. All hospice disciplines are continuing to make visits based on patient/family need, and all staff are screening patients prior to making visits. If you have concerns about making visits, please direct them to Human Resources.

2. Can facilities refuse to allow Hospice East Bay staff in to see patients?

Facilities are not allowed to refuse the provision of care to patients receiving hospice services. They can screen all people entering their building, limit non-hospice visitors, and refuse entry to anyone with cold/flu symptoms.

3. Are many Hospice East Bay employees under quarantine?

Hospice East Bay is following all Center for Disease Control (CDC) and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines, and our staff are quarantined accordingly.

4. How are we keeping our patients/families informed?

A flyer has been developed and is being mailed to patients, included in our admission packets, and will be available in the office for staff to pick up and have with them to leave behind at visits.

5 Does Hospice East Bay have COVID-19 test kits?

No. There are limited tests available and they are being triaged by the county for high risk patients displaying active symptoms.

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6. If a patient is isolated with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, and a volunteer visited in the previous few days/week, will the volunteer also be asked to isolate?

We are following the daily guidance from the CDC and CDPH on all matters of testing and isolation.

7. What are the current rules regarding travel?

If you travel from anywhere outside the USA, call Marlo at the beginning of your scheduled day and she will instruct you on how to proceed based on the most current CDC and CDPH recommendations.

8. When and what PPE masks should I be using?

N95 masks should be used for any case confirmed by lab tests positive for COVID-19. Surgical face masks should be used in any situation where droplet precautions are needed.

9. I've heard that we are running low on N95 masks and I'm due soon for my annual fit testing. What should I do?

Because there is a shortage in masks, and because most providers, including Concentra, will no longer provide masks for annual fit tests, we have been authorized by OSHA to suspend annual fit testing of N95 masks for all current employees (new employees will still need to test). Employees are to carry their current mask with them and report to their manager if either of the following occurs:

- *Something affecting the fit changes - your face shape has changed, a new scar, excessive weight loss or gain in the facial area.*
- *Something has impacted the integrity of your mask (ie. the mask is torn or damaged).*

10. What do I do if the patient doesn't have a fever but is coughing?

If the patient has a cough, apply droplet precautions by using a surgical mask.

11. What do I do if the patient has a fever and no cough?

The fever threshold for Coronavirus is 100.4 or greater. Report the finding to the patient's physician. Encourage increase in fluid intake if appropriate.