



May 23, 2022

RE: Changes to the COVID-19 Response in San Mateo County and SPOT Reporting

Dear Congregate Care Facility Administrator,

Long-term care facilities remain at risk for COVID-19 outbreaks due to their congregate nature and the vulnerable population they care for (e.g., older adults with multiple co-morbidities). Ill healthcare workers or visitors are the most likely sources of introduction of COVID-19 into the facility. As long as COVID-19 continues to circulate in the community, residents and staff of congregate settings remain at risk. However, as the pandemic has evolved with the availability of an effective vaccine, better access to testing, and improving treatments, the COVID-19 response strategy and resource direction are shifting. As a result of this evolution, fewer resources are available for case investigations and contact tracing.

Over the past couple of years, we have done our best to support your facility, but we no longer have the staff to support you to the same degree related to COVID-19 as we have to date.

San Mateo County Health is making some changes that we'd like to bring to your attention. We are modifying our COVID-19 response as outlined below:

- Some COVID-19 dedicated resources, such as the hotel isolation program, COVID-19 swab team, and individual contact tracing will no longer be available.
- Available resources will be focused on prioritized response to outbreaks and case investigations in high-risk settings and promoting guidance and education related to management of COVID-19.
- Our guidance for COVID-19 exposures and outbreaks is entirely aligned with the California Department of Public Health's guidance. For specific guidance related to your facility, please refer to your licensing agency ([CDPH](#) or [CDSS](#)).

Going forward, please remember to use [SPOT \[Shared Portal for Outbreak Tracking\]](#) to report COVID-19 outbreaks and exposures. SPOT is a new reporting system that will be used to report COVID-19 exposures and case details to San Mateo County. You should also send any questions or updates related to exposures or outbreaks that occur in your facility through this portal. We recommend you review the [SPOT Intake Form Overview](#), [User Guide](#), and [Demo for](#)





[Liaisons video](#) to learn more about SPOT. Our hope is these changes will make it easier for you to report new individual COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 outbreaks while still allowing you to find the guidance you need. **While we were previously accepting COVID-19 reports via phone and email, due to the volume of cases and changes in our COVID-19 staffing, these are no longer viable reporting methods and will not be accepted. SPOT will allow for an easier flow of information and help us respond to the most urgent needs more quickly. Reporting requirements and communication pathways for other communicable disease cases, exposures, and outbreaks and for all urgent situations have not changed.**

Promptly identifying COVID-19 cases and immediately establishing necessary isolation and quarantine (I&Q) protocols remains critical and as such, having a robust COVID-19 testing program remains crucial. To find testing resources for your facility, please visit the [CA COVID Testing Task Force](#).

All facilities should ensure they have a clear and solid plan for testing at all times:

- i. All facilities are expected to take financial and operational responsibility for testing.
- ii. All facilities need to maintain/establish relationships with commercial or academic laboratories.
- iii. All facilities should identify or hire staff to perform specimen collection on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for partnering with us to protect the residents and staff members of congregate care facilities in San Mateo County.

Scott Morrow, MD, MPH, MBA
San Mateo County Health Officer