Movement of Patients between Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) (including Skilled Nursing Facilities) and LTCF Instructions for Acceptance of Patients

**Purpose:** Provide COVID-19-specific guidance on moving patients between Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs), including Skilled Nursing Facilities, and acceptance of patients by LTCFs.

**Guidance for hospitals receiving a patient from a LTCF:**

1. Hospitals **should test** all patients that reside or recently resided (within the last two weeks) in a LTCF with fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath or sore throat) for COVID-19 unless an alternate diagnosis has been clearly established. COVID-19 testing should be considered for patients with gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) or change in mental status without an alternate diagnosis.
   a. We prefer testing at the Santa Clara County Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for more rapid turnaround time (1-2 days).
      i. To arrange testing through the PHL, call the Health Department [(408) 885-4214, ext 3; ask for Provider Branch] **before** any specimens are sent.
   b. **Call the Health Department** [(408) 885-4214, ext 3; ask for Provider Branch] to inform us about a confirmed or suspect COVID-19 case that recently resided (within the last two weeks) in a LTCF. Call the Health Department even if COVID-19 testing will be performed through a private laboratory.
      i. We will call the facility to assess the situation.

**Guidance for hospitals proposing to discharge a patient to a LTCF:**

1. For patients with fever or respiratory symptoms in the past 7 days who have not yet been tested for COVID-19:
   a. Hospitals should test patient for COVID-19; and
   b. Once the test result is available, discharge planning can be pursued with the LTCF following the guidance below, based on the test result.
2. For patients who had tested positive for COVID-19:
   a. Hospitals should call the Health Department [(408) 885-4214, ext 3; ask for Provider Branch] 24-48 hours before the proposed discharge:
      i. Before discharge occurs, we need to assess the facility for their readiness to accept the patient following appropriate guidelines.
      ii. We will then call you back (within 24 hours) with our assessment on whether the discharge can proceed as proposed.

Note: No Health Department notification is needed for transfers between hospitals.
LTCFs should accept the following types of patients:

1. Patients who were tested for COVID-19 because of compatible symptoms, but COVID-19 has been ruled out based on a negative test result and clinical assessment.
2. Patients who did not have fever or respiratory symptoms during the hospitalization (i.e., admitted for another reason) and COVID-19 testing was not ordered by the hospital’s physicians. LTCFs should not require a negative COVID-19 test to accept these patients.
3. Patients ready for discharge to a LTCF who tested positive for COVID-19 on the most recent (or only) test do not need repeat COVID-19 testing. For these patients:
   a. Isolation/Precautions at the LTCF may or may not still be required, depending on the following:
      i. Patients who tested positive should be isolated for a total of 14 days after date of lab result* or 7 days after fever is gone and other symptoms are improving, whichever is longer. The total number of days is inclusive of the duration of hospital isolation.
         1. If isolation is still needed, the LTCF should provide isolation for the COVID-19 patient until the end of the isolation period, as defined above.
         2. If the isolation period is over and symptoms have resolved, the LTCF should receive the COVID-19 patient without requiring a negative COVID-19 test result and without the need for transmission-based isolation/precautions.

*Providers may use date of specimen collection instead