

San Francisco VA Community Living Center Response to COVID-19
Based on Guidance for Community Living Center from the Central Office

Effective Date: March 6, 2020, Updated March 10, 2020

Synopsis: The priority goal in the VA response to COVID-19 is the protection of Veterans and staff. Community Living Centers (CLCs) are facilities that may be located on VA grounds or in a separate location but are part of the Healthcare System. CLCs house high risk populations for COVID-19 including Veterans requiring long stay, short stay or hospice services. Various strategies to mitigate exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 to these populations is critical. This document provides guidance to facilities providing these services.

Admissions: Effective immediately, VA facilities will institute a national priority system for new admissions to CLCs. Groups are prioritized to limit the exposure of residents of the CLCs to new residents. The priority groups are:

1. Veterans who are transferring from an inpatient ward at the facility where there are NO patients with COVID-19. This will apply mostly to hospice admission.
2. No respite admissions for now.
3. No CLC admission from the community

These Veterans would be admitted under quarantine restrictions (see below). Veterans with COVID-19 or suspected of COVID-19 from outside of the CLC will not be admitted to the CLC.

Staffing: Whenever possible, dedicated CLC staff should be used. However, for now we will continue to have registry staff come to work as long as they are not ill. **All staff will be screened daily and only those who are without symptom can work at the CLC.** Facility staff should not have duties that require them to enter a COVID-19 area at the facility. Essential outpatient visits can continue if it is within the SFVAMC (San Francisco VA Medical Center). No visits outside of the VA (example acupuncture visits outside of the SFVAMC)

Facility access: Access to the CLC should be limited and able to accommodate screening of all visitors and staff. Appropriate signage will be in place to direct visitors to the access point. We will limit entrance through the front door of the CLC. We will not allow non-staff from going in and out of our basement door. We are working on limiting access through the basement. **VA staff will screen all visitors each time they enter the CLC.** Symptom checks will be documented daily by the front door staff. Screening criteria may change as information about COVID-19 evolves. As of the effective date, screening should include the following information:

- Taking temperature. Fever (100.4F or 38C) is considered positive
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The goal is to approve access to individuals with no fever and no symptoms. Visitors who screen positive, will not be granted access to the CLC. Visitors with additional questions about their symptoms should be referred to their medical professional.

Surveillance: Veterans residing currently in the CLC will undergo daily assessment for fever and symptoms of COVID-19. The information collected should be entered in CPRS. Any resident who screens positive must be assessed for possible infection. Existing protocols that rule out other viral disease (e.g. influenza) should be performed **prior to any COVID-19 testing. Not every veteran who tests positive**

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for screening questions will require COVID-19 testing. Please inform the primary physician and medical director if any veteran is positive for screening process so that we can keep track.

Isolation Plan: The facility should have a plan to isolate any resident that is suspected of having COVID-19. For now, any CLC veteran suspected of COVID-19 will be placed on facemask and transferred to the ED. CLC has no negative airflow rooms and we would like to minimize the risk of spreading the virus.

Current residents residing in the CLC will not be relocated to other locations in the facility to accommodate potential receipt of Veterans with COVID-19.

Visitors: Visitor access will be greatly limited. Only visitors (family and friends) of Veterans in hospice unit will be allowed to enter the CLC as long as they are not sick and they pass the screening process. For now, regular volunteers and paid personal attendants can still enter the CLC as long as they are not ill. All visitors should be screened for COVID-19 as described above.

Social Distancing: No group outings or passes at this time. Veterans will not be allowed to go outside of the CLC unless it is for medical or surgical appointments. Group activities that involve the CLC staff can continue (example Bingo, PLIE, LIM). Other group performances will be on hold. For now, we can still continue with communal dining.

Quarantine restrictions: All Veterans who are admitted to the CLC during this period will be placed under quarantine restrictions regardless of their symptoms. The Veteran will be isolated from others in the CLC, minimizing interactions with other residents. They will be placed on **droplet and contact precaution**. Surveillance monitoring will require three-times-a-day screening for fever and symptoms. The quarantine period will last for a total of 14 days including the time already spent in the hospital for Veterans transferring from a ward at the facility. Staff taking care of the veteran on droplet and contact precaution will wear the appropriate personal protective equipment.