



MICHELLE BAASS
DIRECTOR

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

DHCS BH All Provider Call

Brief Summary 02/2/2022

[BH all provider COVID-19 Updates](#)

To get on the mailing list for updates, email DHCSBHLicenCert@dhcs.ca.gov

Moderator: Kelly Pfeifer, MD, Deputy Director, Behavioral Health, DHCS

CDPH Updates –

1. Trudy Raymundo, Lead for External Affairs CDPH COVID-19 Response; CDPH

- Current orders for visitation to long-term care facilities ending 2/7/22. Updated guidance will be posted 2/7/22 – reverting back to previous requirements (prior to December 31st) for entry into Acute Care and Long-Term Care Settings.
- 2 weeks ago we updated 3 public health orders for boosters, [extended deadline](#) from 2/1 to 3/1/22, acknowledged the difficulty people had accessing their booster doses.
- The 3 orders are for healthcare workers in variety of settings including [BH clinics](#), long term care facilities including [correctional settings](#), and [direct care workers](#).

2. Erin Epton, Medical Director & Chief of HAI, CDPH

- For acute hospitals, temporary adjustment to allow healthcare personnel to immediately return to work after exposure ended 2/1/22 ([AFL-21-08.7](#))
- CDPH working on update criteria return to work, will go back to AFL-21-08.6, facilities should refer to this current guidance

DSS Updates –

Kevin Gaines, Deputy Director, Community Care Licensing, CDSS

- Here's the [website](#) address where we reorganized all of our COVID-19 guidance and Notices for DSS/CCL licensees to make it easier to find info.
 - Most of the guidance apply to adult and senior care licenses, but there is info for child/youth which is only strong advisory, not a mandate.
 - CalOSHA guidance that applies to all workplaces applies to STRTPs as well.
 - Test kits have begun shipping to local organization offices, distribution happening this week.
-

**DHCS Updates –
Dr. Kelly Pfeifer and Janelle Ito-Orille, Chief, Licensing & Certification, Behavioral Health Division**

If positive COVID result, reminder to provide that info to the Licensing and Certification Division in a timely manner. Please contact your licensing analyst directly or send information to MHLC@dhcs.ca.gov, LCDQuestions@dhcs.ca.gov, DHCSNTP@dhcs.ca.gov.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STRTPs

Q: *Specific guidance on vaccination and booster for STRTPs?*

A: *No guidance has been published by DSS that is specific to STRTPs, related to vaccination, other than those imposed by Cal-OSHA, which apply to most/all employers. However, the Adult and Senior Care program licensees have been [issued instructions](#) that are an excellent practice guideline for children's residential providers.*

Q: [PIN 21-53](#) on page 5 states in bold that licensees must begin testing. Does this mean we are required to begin the testing ourselves?

A: The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has released a new Provider Information Notice (PIN), [PIN 22-05-ASC](#), which supersedes [PIN 21-53-ASC](#). This new PIN specifies that the deadline for workers to acquire their booster dose has been **extended** from February 1, 2022 to **March 1, 2022**. Although licensees must ensure workers continue to comply with weekly COVID-19 testing if they have not met the requirements of PIN 22-05-ASC or have an exemption from the vaccination and booster requirement, **it is unnecessary for licensees to actually do the testing themselves.**

Testing and Testing supply

Q: *Where to get info on getting the different tests and comply with testing requirement?*

A: COVID-19 tests links:

- *Individuals: order free tests at www.covidtests.gov*
- *Pharmacies: At home tests will be available on Medi-Cal starting February 1, 2022*
- *Medi-Cal beneficiaries: DHCS will [reimburse beneficiaries for home kits](#) purchased between 3/11/21 – 1/31/22*
- *Providers: staff-administered antigen or PCR tests, distributed to state-sponsored sites. See [link to the onboarding process](#).*

Q: If a staff falls into the category for weekly testing, is the agency required to provide the testing, such as an antigen test, or a list for PCR tests? Is the agency required to pay for the antigen test?

A: Because of the large range of facilities covered by the orders, there is nothing specific in the Orders that would determine who (or whether) the entity is required to provide or pay for the testing. Covered facilities are encouraged to work with their respective Human Resources to determine any specific obligations on the part of the facility. Facilities are also encouraged to reach out to the links above for testing resources.

Isolation/Quarantine

Q: Is there requirement for patients coming into SUD facility, fully vaccinated, no COVID symptoms, any reason to quarantine?

A: Recommendations are in flux as CDC update their guidance – for now, new admissions with no known close COVID-19 contact, negative test, up to date on vaccine including booster, no need to quarantine

Q: Is there different reporting requirement for provider-administered test vs self-reported home test?

A: Check with local health department

Q: Can a hospital deny visitors due to the patient being COVID positive?

A: CDPH requirement for visitation regarding vaccination status of visitors [AFL21-31](#). No specific allowances for prohibiting visitors for COVID positive patients, that falls under hospital policy.

Vaccine guidance

Q: If healthcare provider co-located with social service staff, are social service staff required to follow vaccine/booster requirement?

A: Vaccine requirements apply to specific settings, and making sure clients are protected from transmission. Example: if CHWs doing eligibility work in the facility that provide care for clients, they fall under the community care clinic setting. Anyone working in the areas that clients have access to, and there's risk of transmission, e.g. cafeteria, must follow vaccine/booster requirements. Refer to each Order and associated FAS' for more information on who is considered a "covered worker".

Q: Does having COVID change your booster requirements?

A: Get your booster as soon as you come out of isolation

Q: Timing of booster, if a person becomes eligible for a booster on Feb 28, is their due date 3/1 or 3/15?

A: The vaccine requirement is effective as of 3/1/22. Therefore the booster is due on 3/1/22.

Q: Recommendation for 2nd booster?

A: CDC has current recommendations for a 4th dose for those that are immunocompromised. However, in terms of the Orders or CDPH guidance, we have not made any recommendations yet for 2nd booster doses.

Q: Will counties align with booster deadlines?

A: Counties are required to follow public health orders.

Q: Is there guidance on immuno-compromised individuals and booster?

A: Follow [CDC guidance](#), recommendation of 4th dose for immuno-compromised individuals 5 months after their 3rd. In terms of compliance with the vaccine order, we're only requiring the current booster for mRNA vaccines and the 2nd dose for the J&J.

Q: What are the consequences for not following the 3/1 deadline for booster?

A: The public health order is mandatory, and licensing entities have the authority to enforce it. Each entity has to develop reporting mechanism to track vaccine or testing results. Local health department has authority to request reports. Consequences for individuals depend on the individual employer; the State expects the providers to comply with the health order.

Q: Who's responsible for monitoring? The contractor or county?

A: The provider is accountable to maintain records complying with public health orders for all their staff and their contractors.

Vaccination Exemptions

Q: Do staff who do not want a booster need medical or religious exception approved and then test weekly, rather than just don't get a booster and testing weekly?

A: Staff who refuse a booster must have a qualifying medical reason or religious exemption. If they have the exemption, then the staff is required to get testing regularly. Testing will be an alternate means for satisfying this Order only for those who are granted an exemption pursuant to the Order.

Q: With other immunization requirements like MMR and varicella, healthcare workers are typically allowed to show proof of vaccination OR titers (blood work showing sufficient immunity to the disease). Are there plans to start accepting titers showing sufficient immunity to the disease, as is done with other diseases?

A: We're still learning about hybrid immunity, which is immunity built between vaccines and having prior infection(s). Currently, titers are not acceptable as proof of immunity, or in lieu of meeting the vaccine or testing requirements of the Orders.

Q: Are there exception if BH providers work in school setting?

A: All BH providers regardless of settings are required to follow public health orders. Only exception is if you work entirely remotely (such as 100% telework) and have no in-person contact with clients or other staff.

Staffing Issues

Q: Guidance on addressing staffing shortages for CDSS?

A: The guidance we have is a year old; we're working with DPH for assistance on help with shortages, tapping into home care organization to provide staffing. Contact regional CDSS offices for support, we're prepared to help.

Q: Authority to waive staffing requirements?

A: Reach out to your licensing analyst to identify options. DHCS has no authority to do blanket waivers for staffing.

Q: Any resources for staffing for Opioid Treatment Programs?

A: No, unfortunately.

Other

Q: Any guidance for in-person inspection?

A: We are doing in-person inspections. The blanket waiver for DHCS for virtual inspections has expired.

Q: Earlier this week the Governor hinted at an Endemic plan, is there an information you can share as to what we can expect?

A: We are in active discussion but we don't have guidance yet.

References on sick leave:

[Governor Newsom signs paid sick leave extension](#). SB 114 ensures employees have access to COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave through September 30, 2022.