



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

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Background

As of April 27, 2020, there are 224 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Marin County, including 12 deaths. Forty-seven cases have occurred among staff and residents of Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE). On March 24th Marin County Public Health issued two Public Health Advisories updating standards of care for [providers](#) and [facilities](#). On April 6, Marin County Public Health partnered with Kaiser Permanente (KP) San Rafael Medical Center and MarinHealth Medical Center (MHMC) to launch unified, coordinated, multi-agency teams to deploy to facilities to prevent and respond to outbreaks.

Standing Order – COVID-19 Testing

The local health officer shall, after suitable investigation, take such additional steps as he deems necessary to prevent the spread of communicable disease or a disease suspected of being communicable in order to protect the public health (17 CCR § 2540).

Marin County Public Health grants temporary authority to designated licensed health care providers (i.e., Medical Doctor, Nurse Practitioner, Physician Assistant) for emergency COVID-19 testing in congregate facilities in Marin County.

This standing order authorizes any medical provider / trained personnel delegated by Marin County Public Health to collect and submit a SARS—CoV-2 RT PCR test for any individual who meets the following testing criteria:

1. Resident of a congregate living facility who verbally consents to testing¹; or
2. Staff who work in congregate living facility².

Plan of Care

Preparation

1. Ensure correct testing material. Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as

¹ Impaired decision-making is often found in nursing home residents. While decision making may be impaired, ability to express a choice is often preserved in patients. Marin County Public Health does not authorize forced testing of residents or staff.

² According to [the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC) employers may take steps to determine if [employees entering the workplace have COVID-19](#) because [an individual with the virus will pose a direct threat](#) to the health of others. Employers may choose to administer COVID-19 testing to employees before they enter the workplace to determine if they have the virus.

they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing.

2. Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Collection

1. Place swab immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 mL of viral transport media.
2. Nasal (NS)/Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab:
 - a. If using NS, insert swab through the nares. A single polyester swab with a plastic shaft should be used to sample both nares.
 - b. If using NP swab, insert parallel to the palate until resistance is encountered, indicating contact with the nasopharynx. Gently rub and roll the swab. Leave swab in place for several seconds to absorb secretions. Slowly remove swab while rotating it.

Storage

Store specimens at 2-8°C for up to 72 hours after collection. If a delay in testing or shipping is expected, store specimens at -70°C or below.

References

California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.) §2540. Title17.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)