

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Non-Residential Substance Use Settings

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is asking for your assistance to slow the spread of the novel (new) coronavirus in Los Angeles County. Globally, there continues to be a growing number of people infected with this virus which causes “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated COVID-19). According to the World Health Organization, the worldwide spread of COVID-19 now qualifies as a pandemic. We need to work together to slow the spread of this infection locally.

We strongly recommend that all non-residential substance use settings (outpatient, intensive outpatient, syringe exchange programs, etc.) review and update their emergency plans and consider ways to continue essential services if on-site operations must be reduced temporarily.

This guidance summarizes our current recommendations to help prevent the spread of novel coronavirus. In addition, we encourage you to visit the DPH Novel Coronavirus webpage for resources including Guidance for Business and Employers, Frequently Asked Questions and infographics:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>.

General Information

What preventive measures should be taken at an organizational level to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses, like the virus that causes COVID-19?

- Educate and emphasize the importance of everyday personal prevention actions (see below).
- Encourage and support staff and volunteers to stay home when they are sick. Remind them to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever for at least 72 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including easy access to clean and functional handwashing stations, soap, paper towels, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Encourage regular hand washing including before meals, after using the restroom and after coughing and sneezing.
- Minimize, where possible, close contact (defined as within 6 feet for greater than 10 minutes for non-healthcare workers, or greater than 2 minutes if providing direct clinical care) and the sharing of objects such as cups, food, and drink.
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, faucet handles, and phones. Use the usual cleaning agents and follow the label directions.
- Provide clients and staff with accurate information about COVID-19 and steps they can take to protect themselves and their families.
- Post information in common areas that serve as reminders of the need for all clients, staff, and volunteers to engage in personal protective actions (materials for downloading are available at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>).

Everyday personal prevention actions include:



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- Stay home when you are sick. Stay home for at least 72 hours after you no longer have a fever or symptoms of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and then dispose of the tissue and clean your hands immediately. If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Limit close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipes.

What should our agency be prepared to do if there is increased community transmission of COVID-19?

Increased community transmission of COVID-19 would indicate growing risk to the general public and that additional precautions may need to be taken to contain any local community transmission.

Organizations should have a plan and be prepared to take these additional actions, as recommended by Public Health:

- Have a plan to communicate with your staff, and volunteers. Visit our website, <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>, for accurate and updated information that can be used for your communications.
- Allow staff to stay home if someone in their house is sick or school closures have occurred.
- Plan for worker absences. Do not require a healthcare provider's note for staff or volunteers who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work. Healthcare provider offices and medical facilities will be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Consider how to protect staff who are at higher risk for adverse health complications. This may include strategies such as telecommuting and staggered shifts to increase the physical distance among staff, cross-training staff, and canceling non-essential business travel and large face-to-face meetings and events.
- Post signs at facility entrance instructing visitors and clients to alert staff if they have fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Modify, postpone, or cancel large conferences or events or group activities.
 - Events where people are in close contact with others for an extended period may need to be canceled or modified.
 - All events with more than 50 participants should be postponed or canceled. Group activities with fewer than 50 participants involving either staff or clients should maintain appropriate social distancing and preventive measures to minimize close contact and transmission risk. Participants should be seated or positioned at least 6 feet apart from one another, and efforts should be made to avoid direct face-to-face positioning of chairs.



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- If a client who participates regularly in groups reports a fever or acute respiratory symptoms (new cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, etc in the last 14 days), encourage the client to seek medical attention and share [home isolation instructions](#). Consider making accommodations by providing telehealth counseling for these individuals when possible.
- Implement ways to ensure continuity of services if on-site operations are reduced temporarily such as through teleworking when clinically appropriate, and flexible schedules with cross-training of staff.
- Implement ways to ensure clients who are on home isolation or otherwise unable to come in person for individual or group sessions can continue to access treatment or other services if clinically appropriate and when possible.

Know where to get reliable information

Beware of scams, false news and hoaxes surrounding novel coronavirus. Accurate information, including announcements of new cases in LA County, will always be distributed by Public Health through press releases, social media, and our website. The website has more information on COVID-19 including FAQs, infographics and a guide to coping with stress, as well as tips on handwashing

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH, County)
 - <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/>
 - Social media: @lapublichealth
- The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline (800) 854- 7771.

Other reliable sources of information about novel coronavirus are:

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH, State)
 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, National)
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO, International)
 - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

If you have questions and would like to speak to someone call the Los Angeles County Information line 2-1-1 which is available 24 hours a day.

