

## 8 residents, 3 workers at Upland nursing facility contract coronavirus



The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health reported there were eight cases of COVID-19 among patients and three from the staff at the Villa Mesa Care Center/San Antonio Post Acute skilled nursing facility, located at 867 E 11th St., Upland. (Via Google maps)

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Eight patients and three staff members at a skilled nursing facility in Upland have contracted novel **coronavirus**, the San Bernardino County public health department reported on Monday, April 20.

The outbreak occurred at the Villa Mesa Care Center/San Antonio Post Acute facility located adjacent to San Antonio Regional Hospital at 867 E. 11th St., confirmed Lana Culp, public health spokesperson.

All cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, must be reported to both the county and the state, Culp said. She said the county, which has established a **task force to address the spike in COVID-19 cases** in nursing facilities, is working with Villa Mesa to prevent the spread of the virus.

“They should have a protocol in place,” she added. “All health workers should at minimum be wearing a face mask and have gloves and aprons.”

Supervisor Curt Hagman said Monday he saw a social media post over the weekend from a person identifying as “one of the nurses” at the center who said workers did not have enough protective equipment. He worked with the county health department as well as the Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) serving Inyo, Mono and San Bernardino counties to deliver protective gear to the Upland facility Sunday night.

“The request (for equipment) was larger than I thought,” he said.

The facility received N95 masks, gowns and COVID-19 testing kits, Hagman added. He could not recall the number of masks and kits delivered but said the tri-county agency was able to deliver 75 gowns.

Jessica V., a licensed vocational nurse at the facility, said she has tested positive for COVID-19 and is at home recuperating. She only gave her first name and last initial because she was concerned about reprisals for speaking out.

“They were not providing them (masks) to us. I don’t know what they were doing,” she said during a phone interview on Monday.

Daniel Kramer, a spokesman for Villa Mesa, said in an email Monday that workers and ownership are taking all reasonable measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus at the facility.

“Facility management and ownership continue to ensure that the San Antonio facility is equipped with Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) that will aid in the protection of all the residents and staff,” Kramer wrote.

Sarah D., who works at the facility and also asked that only her first name and last initial be used, said she took a leave of absence on April 10. She was concerned about bringing home the virus to her husband.

“They provided masks but only those cheap nylon ones and they didn’t fit the majority of the staff properly,” she said on Monday.

Cynthia Carrillo, 57, said her brother, David Carrillo, 65, was taken from the facility in respiratory distress by ambulance on April 9. The next day, she got a call from a physician attending to her brother who said he tested positive for COVID-19. He died a week later, she said.

“I saw my brother on March 30 through the window at Villa Mesa because there was no visiting,” she said. “The ones around him were not wearing masks.”

When she complained by phone, she was told that masks were not essential at that time.

“He should have been protected,” she said.

His death has not been recorded by the county as COVID-19-related, according to Carrillo. She said she's still working on paperwork with the mortuary and his test results and death may not have reached the health department yet.

Culp confirmed no COVID-19 deaths had been reported at Villa Mesa as of Monday.

Kramer wrote that Villa Mesa's owner, Crystal Solorzano, is lobbying President Trump to require the production of more protective gear for medical workers. In his email, Kramer quoted Solorzano as saying: "Reliable international supplies of PPEs have almost ceased to exist, domestic stockpiles are dwindling. We must do something now."