



INFORMATION NOTICE 20-04 (REVISED)

Date August 11, 2021 

To Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Workforce (i.e., regular, part-time, contracted and temporary employees, interns, volunteers and public service employees; contract agencies, and fee-for-service providers).

From Veronica Kelley, DSW, LCSW, Director

Subject Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for DBH Workforce

Purpose To provide information regarding COVID-19 and the following related areas:

- Background on outbreak and emergency declarations;
- Actions DBH HR, Executive Management and Office of Disaster & Safety have taken and planned strategies;
- Practices to limit the risk of workplace exposure;
- Requirements for responding to suspected or confirmed cases of infection; and
- Considerations of potential impact to services and/or administrative operations.

Background The United States (U.S.) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has continued to respond to the respiratory disease outbreak caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19)

On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a State of Emergency to propel resource availability and initiate formalization of emergency actions within California. The declaration was supported with available funding dedicated to addressing COVID-19 in California and implementing prevention efforts across agencies.

On March 10, 2020, the San Bernardino County Public Health Officer and Board of Supervisors declared a local health emergency in an effort to initiate preparations for COVID-19.

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Background, continued

California implemented the Blueprint for a Safer Economy on August 30, 2020, to reduce COVID-19 in the state with criteria for loosening or tightening restrictions on activities.

Effective June 15, 2021, the Governor terminated the executive orders that put into place the Stay Home Order and the Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The vast majority of executive actions put in place since March 2020 as part of the pandemic response were also phased out, leaving a subset of provisions that facilitate ongoing recovery. The *State of Emergency*, currently remains in effect.

Resources:

- The CDC maintains a *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) webpage* (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>) with credible National information regarding history of the virus, symptoms, individual, community and healthcare professional guidance.
- The California Department of Public Health (CA DPH) *webpage* (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCoV2019.aspx>) is issuing regular updates, preventative measures, vaccine data, high-risk populations and statistics on transmission and reported cases in California.
- The County Department of Public Health (DPH) maintains a Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) *webpage* (<https://sbcovid19.com/>) with new releases, and guidance available for cities, vaccine availability, healthcare providers, first responders and law enforcement, etc.
- The County Department of Human Resources (HR) maintains a Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) *webpage* (<https://hr.sbcounty.gov/employee-benefits/coronavirus-resources/>) with numerous resources for workforce members and the latest news.

DBH Actions and Expectations

DBH Human Resources (HR), Executive Management and the Office of Disaster & Safety (Disaster & Safety) have been diligently working to ensure a safe working environment. The Department has taken the following proactive measures to minimize the risk of illness in the workplace:

- Distribution/availability of hand sanitizer at DBH locations and continued coordination/planning continued distribution of safety products;
- Meetings with County Human Resources and local unions;
- Disaster & Safety engagement with County disaster preparedness representatives and leaders;
- Planning for impacts to the community and/or workforce; and
- Development of service measures to reduce exposure in DBH clinics.

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DBH Actions and Expectations, continued

During the state of emergency, it is critical for DBH facilities, including contracted providers, to continue to provide care for all clients while remaining proactive and cognizant of appropriate adjustments based on need (e.g., home-based care, outpatient, urgent care, telephonic consultation, telehealth, etc.). Alternative methods of treatment (other than face-to-face outpatient) in the event a client has symptoms associated with COVID-19, shall be coordinated with the Clinic Supervisor, Clinic Nurse Supervisor, Program Manager and Clinic Medical Director, upon approval/guidance by the appropriate Deputy Director.

Symptoms of COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, but some people can become severely ill.

According to the CDC, reported coronavirus illnesses have included mild to severe cases of the below-listed symptoms, 2-14 days after exposure.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Note: Symptoms associated with coronavirus are subject to change as more information becomes available.

General Workplace Safety Precautions

The following are preventative measures to maintain health and limit the spread of diseases in the workplace:

- Educate employees on topics such as staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene;
 - Educate clients as appropriate (prior to scheduled visits and ensure clinic postings) (CDC – Stop the Spread of Germs – [English](#) and [Spanish](#));
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
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General Workplace Safety Precautions, continued

- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty;
- When soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash immediately;
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth;
 - Clean and disinfect frequently-touched objects and surfaces using cleaning agents created to disinfect these surfaces and follow labeled directions (also see [CDC Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines](#));
- Clean workstations and eating storage areas;
Avoid close contact with sick individuals;
- Stay home when you are sick or have symptoms.

Note: All employees must notify their supervisors if they will not be reporting for work due to illness or COVID-19 symptoms according to applicable County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) guidelines. **It is mandatory that employees not report for work if COVID-19 symptoms are present.**

Health Care Worker Protections in High-Risk Settings

- July 26, 2021 to September 30, 2021 CDPH Mandates
Health care facilities identified in [State Public Health Officer Order of July 26, 2021](#) must verify vaccine status of all workers in accordance with [CDPH Guidance for Vaccine Records Guidelines & Standards](#).
- Facilities must have a plan in place for tracking verified worker vaccination status. Records of vaccination verification must be made available, upon request, to the local health jurisdiction for purposes of case investigation;
 - Workers who are not fully vaccinated, or for whom vaccine status is unknown or documentation is not provided, must be considered unvaccinated;
 - Facilities must strictly adhere to current [CDPH Masking Guidance](#);
 - Asymptomatic unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated workers are required to undergo diagnostic screening testing at least once a week, and
 - Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated workers are not exempted from testing requirements even if a worker has a medical exemption to the vaccine.

Note: The Order is effective **August 9, 2021**, and all impacted California employer facilities must be in full compliance by **August 23, 2021** until requirements mandated in [State Public Health Officer Order of August 5, 2021](#) go into effect on **September 30, 2021**.

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Health Care Worker Protections in High-Risk Settings, continued

September 30, 2021 to indefinite CDPH Mandates

Per the [California Department of Public Health Order issued on August 5, 2021](#), workers who provide services in or have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and other healthcare facilities will now be required to have their first dose of a one-dose vaccine (such as Johnson & Johnson) or their second dose of a two-dose vaccine (such as Pfizer or Moderna) no later than September 30, 2021.

- Workers may seek an exemption from this requirement by providing a declination form signed by the worker stating that they either 1) decline the vaccination based on religious beliefs; or 2) are excused from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine due to “Qualifying Medical Reasons,” and
- Workers who are granted an exemption must be 1) tested weekly for COVID-19; and 2) wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator such as an N95 at all times while in the facility.

Note: the August 5, 2021 order does not replace or supersede the July 26, 2021 order issued by the CDPH. The new order specifically states the July 26 order continues to apply. Facilities should continue with plans to remain in compliance. However, after September 30, 2021 testing as an alternative to vaccination is no longer an option for Healthcare Facilities under the new order.

AB 685 and COVID-19 Workplace Exposure

Effective January 1, 2021, AB 685 requires employers to notify employees about possible or known exposure to COVID-19 at the workplace. The law requires actual notification to employees within one day.

An employee or subcontractor who meets one of the conditions listed below is considered a “qualifying individual” and initiates the notification process outlined in AB 685:

- Has a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19;
- Was given a positive COVID-19 diagnosis by a licensed healthcare provider;
- Received a COVID-19-related order from a public health official to isolate; or
- Died due to COVID-19 as determined by a county public health department or as included in a county’s COVID-19 statistics.

The California Department of Public Health determines the number of cases that meets the definition of “outbreak.” At this time an outbreak at a non-health facility occurs when there are at least three (3) probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases within a fourteen-day period among employees or subcontractors at a worksite that are from different households and are not close contacts. (See more on “outbreaks” on p.8.)

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Guidance for Potential or Actual Employee COVID-19

In accordance with the County Health Order dated June 15, 2021, prior to arriving at a worksite, County employees are required to self-evaluate for COVID-19 symptoms, and stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness. Temperature screenings are not currently required when entering County facilities.

The following guidelines are provided to assist supervisors regarding employees with COVID-19 symptoms or actual diagnosis:

Note: The information herein may be updated as needed.

If ...	Then ...
<p>If an employee presents with COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough and/or shortness of breath <u>before arriving to work</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY HOME • Notify supervisor as soon as possible regarding inability to come in. (Employees are expected to follow the same policies/ procedures when not reporting for work due to any illnesses or injuries) • Contact your medical provider using one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blue Cross Teladoc/ Kaiser Video Appointments • Consider requesting approval for an appropriate leave of absence per the MOU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leave Request for Extended Sick and Special Leave (instructions) ○ Leave Request for Extended Sick and Special Leave (form) • Check the County HR webpage: Precautions to Stay Healthy on updated information

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Guidance for Potential or Actual Employee COVID-19,
continued

If ...	Then ...
<p>An employee develops symptoms during the work day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee must be immediately separated from other employees <i>and</i> must be instructed to go home immediately and contact their medical provider. (See above instructions). • If employee presents that they are physically unable to leave the facility due to illness or injury, medical personnel (911) should be called. Employees are not provide transportation. • The Investigations of Workplace or the Occupational Injury or Illness Reporting Procedure (SFT7020) must be followed and supervisor is to complete and submit the Bloodborne Pathogen/TB Exposure Report according to Report Instructions. • The Clinic Supervisor must report both suspected and confirmed notated communicable disease as described under Reporting Medical Conditions and Communicable Diseases IIN 16-002. See Health Officer Order – Addition of COVID-19 to the Reportable Diseases and Conditions List.

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Guidance for Potential or Actual Employee COVID-19,
continued

If ...	Then ...
<p>An employee claims that that they were exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Investigations of Workplace or the Occupational Injury or Illness Reporting Procedure (SFT7020) must be followed and supervisor is to complete and submit the Bloodborne Pathogen/TB Exposure Report according to Report Instructions. • The Clinic Supervisor must report both suspected and confirmed notated communicable disease as described under Reporting Medical Conditions and Communicable Diseases IIN 16-002. See Health Officer Order – Addition of COVID-19 to the Reportable Diseases and Conditions List.
<p>An employee is out for a consecutive period of time due to a potential or actual case of COVID-19 diagnosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact MetLife for Short Term disability information (if applicable) • A healthcare provider's note (doctor's note) for the employee will not be required at the time of initially reporting the absence. • A healthcare provider's note <u>will be required</u> upon ability to return to work.
<p>An employee is out to care for a family member with COVID-19</p>	<p>COVID-19 may qualify as a "serious health condition" under FMLA/CFRA, allowing an employee to take FMLA/CFRA leave if either the employee or an immediate family member contracts the disease.</p> <p>See SB County Benefits Website for Leave Information: http://cms.sbcounty.gov/hr/Benefits/ProtectedLeavesDisability.aspx and contact MetLife for Short Term disability information.</p>

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Guidance for Potential or Actual Employee COVID-19,
continued

If ...	Then ...
An employee is ready to return to work after a COVID-19 <u>confirmed</u> case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employee will be contacted by DBH Payroll to complete <i>return to work</i> documentation as instructed. • An appointment with the County Center for Employee Health (CEHW) and Wellness will be scheduled. The employee may be released to return to work if the CEHW confirms employee's symptoms are fully resolved.

Supervisors/managers are prohibited from the following actions:

- Asking if an employee has a compromised immune system or a chronic health condition that the CDC advises may make him/her/them more susceptible to complications from a communicable disease;
- Compelling an employee to take an influenza vaccine, or mRNA vaccine;
- Discriminating against an employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, citizen status, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, AIDS/HIV, medical condition, political activities or affiliations, military or veteran status, and status as a victim of domestic violence, assault or stalking.

Outbreaks:

DBH and contract providers are required to notify all employees of:

- Potential exposures workers could encounter;
- COVID-19 related benefits;
- Precautions being made for COVID-19 (disinfections and safety measures);
- All COVID-19 cases at the same worksite within 24 hours;

DBH and contract providers must notify the Health Department of any work place outbreaks. An outbreak is three or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases in two weeks.

See [CDPH AB 685 COVID-19 Workplace Outbreak Reporting Requirements](#).

Note: Resources that *can* be provided to staff, as needed include:

- Information regarding [Mental Health Benefits](#) for counselling services to deal with any stress or grief-related concerns.
- The County's benefit webpage for information on [Protected Leaves and Disabilities](#).

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Preventative Client - Interactions

The following preventative measures are required during the current state of emergency to minimize risk in DBH service locations. Guidance shall be coordinated through the appropriate Program Manager, Clinic Supervisor, Clinic Nurse Supervisor and Clinic Medical Director:

- Programs are to call clients in advance to verify appointment attendance and screen for symptomology (see script [IN-20-04 COVID-19](#));
- If a client reports any symptoms as described herein, reschedule and recommend client contacts their primary care provider, urgent care center, or local emergency department, depending on severity;
- Provide alternate methods to face-to-face consultation, as coordinated with leadership (as described herein) including telephonic consultation, telehealth, etc.; and
- Consider the need to conduct in-home visits for high-acuity clients that may be ill, such as Clozaril recipients, when appropriate contact and droplet precautions can be taken.

Guidance for Actual or Potential Client COVID-19 Case

In the event that a DBH clinic or program becomes aware of a client that is suspected to have, or is confirmed to have, COVID-19 symptoms, the following actions must be completed:

Note: The information herein may be updated as needed.

If ...	Then ...
<p>A client is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and a non-licensed/registered professional is first made aware of this</p>	<p>Client must be asked to reschedule clinic appointment and contact their primary or other healthcare provider. The Clinic Supervisor must then follow the Special Incident Reporting Procedure – Client Related and report to the Program Manager, Deputy Director, Medical Director Assistant Director, Director, HR, Compliance and Disaster & Safety.</p> <p>The Clinic Supervisor must report both suspected and confirmed notated communicable disease as described under Reporting Medical Conditions and Communicable Diseases IIN 16-002. See Health Officer Order – Addition of COVID-19 to the Reportable Diseases and Conditions List.</p>

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**Guidance for
Actual or
Potential Client
COVID-19
Case, continued**

If ...	Then ...
<p>A client is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, and a licensed/registered professional is made aware of this</p>	<p>Client must be asked to reschedule clinic appointment and contact their primary or other healthcare provider. The Clinic Supervisor must then follow the Special Incident Reporting Procedure – Client Related and report to the Program Manager, Deputy Director, Assistant Director, Director, HR, Compliance and Disaster & Safety</p> <p>The licensed professional and/or registrant must report the notated communicable disease as described under Reporting Medical Conditions and Communicable Diseases IIN 16-002. See Health Officer Order – Addition of COVID-19 to the Reportable Diseases and Conditions List.</p>

Note: Following the reporting of an actual or potential client case, the Office of Disaster & Safety will coordinate cleaning and sanitization of the clinic, building or floor, in collaboration with Facilities and Project Management. In addition, please see the [CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility - Everyday and When Someone is Sick Guidance](#).

**Impact to
Programs and
Services**

In an effort to remain proactive and prepare for potential impacts to primary behavioral health care operations, DBH leadership – including supervisory, management and executive management staff, continue to evaluate the operational impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Primary service and administrative operations and critical staff are required to carry out regular operations. In the event future health orders or changes significantly compromising DBH's ability to meet the safety and well-being needs of clients and workforce members, DBH may approve telecommuting and alternative work schedules, as appropriate. Said alternate operations and approvals will be planned and communicated separate from this notice.

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Reference

- California Department of Public Health (CDPH): [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) - Centers for Disease Control (CDC):
 - [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [Coughing and Sneezing](#)
 - [Clean Hands Save Lives](#)
 - [Prevention and Treatment](#)
 - [Protecting yourself and others from Respiratory Illness – Non-pharmaceutical Intervention \(NPI's\)](#)
 - [Symptoms](#)
 - San Bernardino County Department of Public Health: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - San Bernardino County Human Resources: [Precautions to Stay Healthy](#)
 - San Bernardino County Human Resources: [Coronavirus Resources](#)
 - World Health Organization: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)
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Questions

Please contact the appropriate office/division based on type of inquiry, as listed below:

- Personnel-related inquiries and/or workforce operations – DBH HR at 909-388-0890
 - Incident reports and/or safety concerns – Office of Disaster & Safety at 909-388-0885 or safety@dbh.sbcounty.gov
 - Clinic operations and/or client-related reporting – Direct Supervisor, Program Manager or Deputy Director (based on availability)
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Client Illness Preventative Script

Script Information

In accordance with guidance in the DBH Information Notice (IN) 20-04 – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information for DBH Workforce, please use the following script to facilitate appointment reminder:

Standard Dialogue

DBH Staff: *“Hello, this is [DBH Staff Name] calling to confirm an appointment with [Provider Name] on [Appointment Date and Time] at [Clinic Location]. Will you be able to attend?”*

Patient: “Yes”

DBH Staff: *“In an effort to reduce illness at our locations, we are asking if any of our clients are experiencing a combination of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Are you currently experiencing any of these symptoms?”*

Patient: “Yes”

DBH Staff: *“As you know, flu and coronavirus are currently health concerns; therefore, we would like to offer alternatives to your face-to-face appointment. Is it okay for us to contact you in the near future to arrange an alternative to your face-to-face appointment?”*

Note: Upon client agreement, coordinate alternative methods to treatment as instructed in IN 20-04. Clients should be reminded to refrain from coming in to future face-to-face appointments if they exhibit any of the COVID-19 or flu symptoms.

Standard Message for Answering Machine/Voice mail

DBH Staff: *“Hello, this is [Staff Name] calling to confirm an appointment with [Provider Name] on [Appointment Date and Time]. If you are currently experiencing fever, cough, and shortness of breath symptoms please let us know so that we may offer you alternatives to a face-to-face appointment. If you have an urgent mental health need or an emergency please call our clinic, the access unit, community crisis response team or 911. Thank you.”*

Note: If the client does not answer the phone, follow confidential protocol and do not reveal client is a recipient of behavioural health services. Attempt to call client a second time prior to appointment to ensure pre-appointment screening.
