This guidance is provided by the Santa Barbara Public Health Department in order to maintain standards for coordinated discharge of COVID-19 positive and non-COVID patients from hospitals and emergency departments to skilled nursing, congregate care settings, and homes. This guidance will change according to current guidance from CDPH and the CDC.

Facilities may choose to implement policies that provide stricter guidelines for standard, contact, or droplet precautions and isolation periods. The Public Health Department is available for consultation regarding each facility’s individual situation and residents.

The following discharge guidance is covered in this document:

- **Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to SNF/LTC and Congregate Living**
- **Patients without COVID-19 Discharged to SNF/LTC and Congregate Living**
- **Patients Transferred from SNF/LTC to another SNF/LTC**
- **Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to Non-Congregate Isolation Settings**
- **Patients Awaiting Laboratory Results Discharged to PHD Non-Congregate Isolation Settings**
- **Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to Home Settings**
Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to SNF/LTC\(^3\) and Congregate Living

If patient is being RETURNED to the SNF/LTC of origin:
- Patient may be transferred when clinically indicated
- Continue standard, contact, and droplet transmission-based precautions at the receiving facility.\(^1\)

If patient is a new admission to the receiving SNF/LTC:
- Patients with confirmed COVID-19 may be transferred if they meet one of the 3 discharge criteria below.

If patient is being transferred to congregate living (non-medical setting- e.g. Assisted Living, Adult Residential Facility, or unlicensed congregate living):
- Patients with confirmed COVID-19 may only be transferred when criteria 2 or 3 are met (criteria 1 acceptable if facility capable of transmission precautions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discharge Criteria</th>
<th>Precautions Needed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 10 days have passed since symptom onset (\text{AND}) no fever x 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.</td>
<td>Continue standard, contact, and droplet transmission-based precautions at the receiving facility for 14 days after symptom onset.(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 14 days have passed since symptom onset (\text{AND}) no fever x 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.</td>
<td>No transmission-based precautions required at the receiving location.(^2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications x 72 hours (\text{AND}) improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), (\text{AND}) two serial negative PCR tests for SARS-CoV-2, at least 24 hours apart.</td>
<td>No transmission-based precautions required at the receiving location.</td>
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</table>

Facilities should be prepared to accept confirmed COVID-19 patients when the transfer requirements are met.

\(^1\) Patient should be preferably placed in a location designated to care for COVID-19 patients. The patient may be placed in a shared room with other confirmed COVID patients. Patients should not be transferred if the receiving facility cannot maintain transmission-based precautions.

\(^2\) If patient has persistent symptoms from COVID-19 (e.g., persistent cough), they should be placed in a single room, be restricted to their room, and wear a facemask during care activities until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.

\(^3\) Applies to the following facility types- skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, adult residential facilities, hospice facilities, intermediate care facilities, mental health rehabilitation centers and special treatment facilities.

Discharge criteria can be changed by Santa Barbara County Public Health Department at any time.
### Patients without COVID-19 Discharged to SNF/LTC³ and Congregate Living Settings

All hospitalized patients will be tested for COVID-19 prior to admission or readmission to a skilled nursing facility, long term care facility or non-medical congregate living setting.

| Patient is negative continue with discharge | • No current requirement to initiate transmission-based precautions for COVID-19 after hospital discharge  
• Receiving facility, at their discretion, may implement transmission-based precautions.  
• Receiving facility should not ask the sending facility for additional COVID-19 testing.  
• These patients should NOT be placed in a location designed for COVID-19 patients and may NOT be placed in a shared room with other COVID-19 patients. |
| Patient is positive | • Refer to: [Discharge Criteria for Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 going to SNF/LTC and Congregate Living Setting](#) |

### Patients Transferred from one SNF/LTC³ to another SNF/LTC³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SNF/LTCs experiencing confirmed or suspect outbreaks of COVID-19</th>
<th><strong>Do not transfer</strong> asymptomatic residents into or out of SNF/LTC facility unless first cleared by Santa Barbara County Public Health Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Resident from facility with outbreak is cleared for transfer to another facility by SB PHD | • Receiving facility should be notified prior to transfer that the patient is potentially COVID-19 exposed **AND**  
• Upon arrival at the receiving facility, the resident should be maintained in quarantine for 14 days after date of last exposure. |
| SNF/LTC facility not experiencing confirmed or suspect outbreaks of COVID-19 | • **May transfer** asymptomatic residents without prior approval of Santa Barbara County Public Health as long as the resident has not had fever or respiratory symptoms for at least 3 days prior to transfer **OR** resident has a negative COVID-19 PCR test result within 4 days prior to transfer.  
• Receiving facilities may elect to place transferred patient into quarantine for 14 days at their discretion. |

³ Applies to the following facility types: skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, adult residential facilities, hospice facilities, intermediate care facilities, mental health rehabilitation centers and special treatment facilities.
Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to PHD Non-Congregate Isolation Setting

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department will accept patients for PHD COVID-19 Non-Congregate Setting that meet the following criteria:
- Cannot go home due to the fact that they live in a congregate living setting (non-medical), current living situation doesn’t allow them to isolate, or are without a home.
- Does not require assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL), or has a caregiver/home health agency arranged to provide assistance.
  - If the patient requires Home Health, Hospice or private care, the hospital will notify the designed Home Health, Hospice Agency, or private caregiver prior to discharge home.
- If patient needs additional medical equipment (e.g. oxygen, nebulizer etc.) hospital must arrange provision of equipment.

PHD COVID-19 Non-Congregate Setting is NOT able to provide the following services:
- Substance detoxification services
- Mental health services or management of disruptive behavior
- Maintenance of persons who cannot comply with health officer isolation orders

Process to discharge to PHD COVID-19 Non-Congregate setting:
- In-patients: 8 am - 5 pm Monday – Friday. PHD will not accept weekend discharges of confirmed COVID-19 inpatients.
- ED patients: Requires discharge planning with PHD. All discharges of confirmed positive ED patients must be coordinated through the PHD Operations Section. Do not call transportation unit directly.
- Contact PHD Operations Section: 805-696-1106 (8 am – 5 pm)

Patients Awaiting Laboratory Results Discharged to PHD Non-Congregate Isolation Setting

The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department will accept ED patients who need to be isolated awaiting test results into the PHD Non-Congregate Setting that meet the following criteria:
- Live in a congregate living setting (non-medical), current living situation doesn’t allow them to isolate, or are without a home.
- Do not require assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL), or they have a caregiver/home health agency arranged to provide assistance.
  - If the patient requires Home Health, Hospice or private care, the hospital will notify the designed Home Health, Hospice Agency, or private caregiver prior to discharge home.
- If patient needs additional medical equipment (e.g. oxygen, nebulizer etc.) hospital must arrange provision of equipment.

Process to discharge ED patients awaiting test results to PHD COVID-19 Non-Congregate setting:
- **Do NOT call this number for inpatient discharges**
- Contact PHD Isolation & Quarantine Transportation Unit: 805-681-5165
**Patients with Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Discharged to Home**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>10 days since symptom onset AND no fever x 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, and improvement of symptoms.</th>
<th><strong>No restrictions.</strong> Patient is considered non-infectious for the purpose of discharge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Less than 10 days since symptom onset or febrile | • If the patient requires Home Health, Hospice or private care, the hospital will notify the designed Home Health, Hospice Agency, or private caregiver prior to discharge home.  
• Transport home by private conveyance or medical transport (No public transportation, no rideshare/taxi)  
• Provide guidance on self-isolation until end of infectious period.  
• Advise any household members that they will need to self-quarantine for at least 14 days after last contact with this patient. Provide home quarantine instructions.  
• If the patient lives with others and is not able to adequately self-isolate advise that:  
• The self-quarantine period of all household members will be extended to 14 days after the end of the patient’s isolation period  
  o The Public Health Department can provide isolation housing for persons who are unable to isolate at home due to lack of a private room or exposure of vulnerable members of the household  
  o Every effort should be made to relocate household members at risk for experiencing severe illness if infected (e.g., age>65 years, pregnant, and/or medical co-morbidities) |