



CDSS

COVID-19 Action Report

California Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing Division

Overview

The COVID-19 virus has changed daily life for everyone, and it has created especially difficult challenges for many of the 67,000 state-licensed facilities that care for seniors, vulnerable adults, and children. In keeping with our mission to promote the health, safety, and quality of life for persons served by these facilities, the Department of Social Services has taken extraordinary steps to help care providers adapt to the uncharted territory of COVID-19.

In response to the pandemic, Governor Gavin Newsom urged all Californians to do their part to “meet the moment.” This Action Report highlights the ways in which the Department has answered the call by helping vital community institutions and the public navigate this public health crisis.

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Senior and Adult Care

We now know that residential homes serving seniors and adults with chronic illness are ground zero for the virus, as this population is at the highest risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The Department has made it a priority to serve as a resource to facility operators, staff, residents, and their families, offering guidance and technical assistance on how to operate safely during the pandemic.

Informing, Educating, and Communicating

In times of uncertainty, we believe information, education, and communication are imperative. The Department used multiple strategies to connect with residential homes and offer timely information and resources to help them adapt to the new normal of COVID-19.

- **More than 13,000 visits to adult and senior care facilities** – Since the crisis began, the Department has conducted thousands of in-person and virtual visits to care homes and adult day centers. We provide guidance,



education, and technical assistance to ensure that facility staff has a proper understanding of things such as infection prevention protocols and case reporting requirements. We completed trainings for six regional offices to prepare for the Community Care Licensing Division’s Rapid Assistance Support Team visits, which included nurses from Public Health, to all adult and senior care facilities.

- **Daily contact with COVID-positive sites** – Every facility with a COVID-positive case receives a daily contact from the Department, either as a tele-visit or by phone, in which we provide technical assistance, evaluate personal protective equipment needs, and assist with other immediate requests. **We check in with nearly 1,000 COVID-positive facilities per day.**

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- ▶ • **Teleconferences and webinars** – Since the onset of the pandemic, the Department conducted a series of teleconferences and webinars with adult residential facility providers that drew participation by more than 2,000 stakeholders. We provided guidance on best practices for issues including infection control and prevention, social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting protocols, mental health impacts of isolation, and general information about the virus.
- **Online resources for providers and the public** – We created a robust online resources platform for adult and senior care facilities in which we offered guidance on a host of topics, including entry procedures, staff training and policies, resident counseling, containment strategies, environmental preparation and cleaning, social distancing, isolation, disinfecting, best practices for quarantine and isolation of residents, assessment of residents’ emotional health, engagement activities, and maintaining self-care of employees. <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/community-care-licensing>



Supporting Essential Workers

One of the department’s top priorities is to ensure personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves and hand sanitizer, is available for employees, and when needed, residents of residential facilities. The Department worked closely with the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Services to distribute masks to adult and senior care facilities at three sites and provided guidance to facilities and the public on how to correctly wear PPE. **Statewide, the Department has been instrumental in the delivery of 496,000 masks to care facilities.**

The Department established a Caregiver Stipend Program in which essential caregivers serving will receive a \$500 stipend as an incentive to keep them on the job during these trying circumstances. We expect to issue up to 40,000 cash cards worth an estimated \$21 million.

Securing Surge Capacity

One of our most important responsibilities is ensuring there is adequate “surge capacity” to handle an increase in virus activity when and where it happens. For senior and adult care, this means having enough available beds in care homes and personal protective equipment when and where they are needed. The Department has been assessing the capacity of our licensees throughout the state to meet demands and to identify resources to support facilities should additional surge capacity be needed.

Keeping Families Informed

The Department strives to ensure proactive communication between licensees, persons in care, their families, and facility staff. Toward this end, the Department issued guidance to facilities on how and when to inform residents’ families when there is a COVID-positive person at the home. And, the Department dedicated a toll-free hotline – **1-844-Let-usNO** – to respond to and track COVID-19 inquiries and complaints.

Providing Flexibility

In his March 4, 2020 Executive Order, Governor Gavin Newsom recognized that it may not be possible for care facilities to comply with all regulations during the pandemic and authorized the Department to alter or waive requirements. Accordingly, the Department made it easier for clients to be admitted to care homes and replaced in-person inspections with video-conferenced inspections. Working with the state Department of Justice, we expedited background checks for new residential home employees who were needed to backfill when existing facility staff contracted the virus. This was especially crucial as the regular in-person background check offices were closed due to COVID-19.

Supporting Home Health Care Organizations

Recognizing the important role Home Care Organizations (HCOs) play in caring for seniors and adults in their own homes, the Department devoted additional resources to support these entities during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department held a webinar attended by 700 HCOs to provide guidance and resources on best practices relating to the virus and made this information available online as well. We also surveyed these organizations to ascertain those with the capacity and desire to work with COVID-positive persons through which we initially identified 169 HCOs in 39 counties that would do so.

Child Care and Children's Residential

The Community Care Licensing Division seeks to ensure the health and safety of the nearly one million children in child care centers, family child care homes, and licensed children's residential facilities in California. We are providing COVID-19 information, education, and technical assistance as needed for these facilities. We also are taking innovative steps to ensure that childcare is available to parents and guardians working in essential occupations, and are assisting the public in finding child care resources.

The Department has conducted nearly 8,000 tele-visits to Childcare Centers and congregate children's residential facilities to provide guidance, education, and technical assistance to ensure that every facility's staff has a proper understanding of things such as infection prevention protocols and case reporting requirements. More than 24,000 tele-visits are planned for family child care homes throughout the state.

Child Care "Pop-ups"

As the COVID-19 virus caused the mass closure of schools and child care centers, there was a sudden and urgent need to create child care locations for the families of essential workers in health care and other vital occupations. The Department of Social Services quickly initiated child care "pop-ups" to fill this void. A pop-up site is an informal setting, such as a conference room, that can be used to provide child care without going through the standard, often lengthy approval process. In just three weeks after Governor Newsom declared the COVID-19 state of emergency, the Department had arranged for more than 50 child care pop-ups to support essential workers. As of July 13, this number increased to 641 sites throughout the state.



Mychildcare.ca.gov

The department launched a statewide child care locator online tool – <https://mychildcare.ca.gov> – to give families a way to easily and quickly access information about child care availability in their area. The department was the lead in creating the child care portal, partnering with Open Lattice, the California Department of Education, and the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network. The portal will continue to be updated as additional child care programs reopen and new programs become licensed. **More than 65,000 families have used this website.**

Assessing Needs

The Department is working along side local and state partners to continuously monitor the child care needs and available resources within communities. Early in the pandemic, the Department created a survey to assist interested organizations in assessing the need for child care in their community or staff needs within their own workplace. We also created a pipeline through which workers from closed child care facilities could provide vital staffing capacity at pop-ups serving essential workers. The Department is committed to continue to identify strategies to support communities in meeting the needs of families.

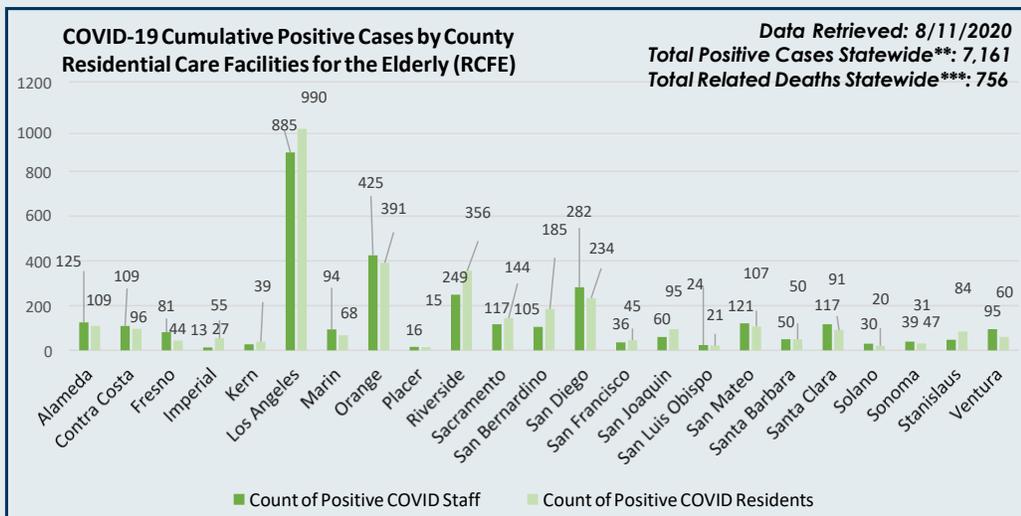
Staying Connected with Child Care and Children's Residential Providers

The department held informational calls with child care stakeholders in English and Spanish covering topics such as social and physical distancing and healthy practices for facilities. **One call had participation by more than 7,000 child care providers.** We prepared Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for child care and children's residential licensees, streamlined licensing requirements, and provided information on prevention, containment and mitigation measures.



Data-Driven Decisions

The Department continuously tracks and monitors all cases of COVID-19 in licensed facilities and uses this data to inform decision-making. Our data tracking team collects and utilizes data to identify existing cases and predict future virus trends. Using this information, we stay ahead of the curve in determining where additional resources may be needed and anticipate subsequent strain on resources such as personal protective equipment or surge capacity. Our real-time data tracking enables us to allocate resources efficiently and quickly at the local level.



Resources

Websites

- Child Care Locator: <https://mychildcare.ca.gov>
- Community Care Licensing Division Online Provider Information Notices and FAQs: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/community-care-licensing>
- State of California COVID-19 Resources: www.covid19.ca.gov

Toll-free numbers

Inquiries and Complaints: **1-844-Let-usNO**

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