

The County of Riverside - Homelessness Solutions GUIDANCE ON THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FOR HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS



Purpose: This guide is for outreach workers, case managers, housing navigators, and other homeless service staff who play a critical role in reducing transmission risk, minimizing COVID-19 impact, reducing fear and stigma, and ensuring that communities proactively consider and address the needs of people experiencing homelessness in a positive manner.

Best Practices

1. Ask the Wellness Screening Questions **before** proceeding with delivery of services. When possible, conduct the screening in the fresh air. See “Wellness Steps” section on next page for questions and more information.
2. Staff should maintain **six feet** distance during all interactions and use hand sanitizer (60% or higher alcohol content) before and after visits. Remember to clean areas after each encounter. This includes wiping down surfaces with disinfectant in both meeting rooms and vehicles.
3. With every contact, educate people on infection control measures and rationale for not engaging in close contact such as shaking hands and maintaining 6 feet distance from people even if they are not exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, as suggested by the County of Riverside, Riverside University Health Systems Public Health Department. *Example: COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets, so you need to keep your distance from people. The virus can also remain active on hard surfaces, so if you can, frequently disinfect surfaces. Otherwise take care to frequently wash hands thoroughly with soap for 20 seconds.*
4. When possible, call people in advance before making a home visit. If individuals or members of their household report symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection (i.e. cough, fever, or shortness of breath), try to use virtual methods to conduct the visit.
5. Clients should be encouraged to contact their Primary Care Provider for questions related to health. Clients may also give verbal consent to their case manager to make the call. The Riverside University Health System (RUHS) – Community Health Centers provide outpatient primary care services to all – regardless of one’s ability to pay. Clients, or their providers, with consent, can reach out to 1 (800) 720-9553 or visit RUhealth.org/CHC to schedule appointments or to obtain more information.
6. When individuals cannot be contacted and staff have concerns for their safety, then local standard operating procedures should be completed, which may include a welfare check.

THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE - HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS GUIDANCE ON THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

FOR HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Wellness Screening Questions

1. Ask the *Wellness Screening Questions* below **before** proceeding with your regular scheduled appointment:

Script: *It's great to see/talk to you today. As part of our process for helping people stay healthy related to the flu and other viruses, we are going to ask you a few questions.*

Please know that these questions are for informational purposes only. They will not affect your access to a safe space to stay or your path to permanent housing. Rather, they just allow us to provide you with the best care possible. Please be open and honest.

- **Question 1:** Do you have a fever, or have you had a fever in the last 2 days?
 - **Question 2:** Are you experiencing any symptoms that are similar to the cold or a flu (cough or difficulty breathing)?
 - **Question 3:** Do you know if you have been in close contact with anyone who was diagnosed with Coronavirus COVID-19 (examples: healthcare workers, friends, family, peers, etc.)?
 - **Question 4:** Have you or someone close to you been in an area with widespread or sustained community transmission of Coronavirus Disease 2019 within 14 days of symptoms occurring (travel outside U.S., travel inside U.S. in states or communities that have been identified as widespread transmission, etc.)?
2. *If on the phone or in person, were there any auditory or visible signs that did not appear to align with a response? Runny nose, coughing, etc.?*
 3. *If “no”, continue with your scheduled interaction and delivery of services plan. Remember to maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet away throughout entire interaction. Consider providing general education around respiratory hygiene and social distancing. **If “yes” to question 1 and/or 2 and also “yes” to question 3 or 4, please continue following the steps below.***
 4. If illness is mild, consider rescheduling your appointment and provide recommendations on how to take care of yourself. This includes cleaning hands well and often, treatment includes taking fluids, rest and medications to help you feel better, **limiting all interactions with others** until 24 hours after your fever is gone, and being a good neighbor by warning others you are sick. For persons who are enrolled in your program (i.e. emergency shelter, transitional housing, or SafeHaven), provide the person with a space that is secluded from other clients or staff.

[continued]

THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE - HOMELESSNESS SOLUTIONS GUIDANCE ON THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

FOR HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS

5. If illness is more severe or client is having difficulty breathing, provide a surgical mask to ill-person (when possible) and follow the steps below:
 - a. Call the RUHS – Community Health Clinic’s number at 1 (800) 720-9553 and advise that you have a client with signs and symptoms you need to bring into the clinic. Follow the directions provided.
 - b. If severe respiratory distress, call 911, advise the call center of client’s signs and symptoms.
 - c. If you need to transport client to health care facility, roll down windows during transport. Consider covering area where client will be sitting with waterproof barrier on seats/floor.
 - d. Upon arrival at clinic, have client wait in the car unless otherwise advised and check-in at clinic for further instructions.
 - e. Remember to clean areas after each encounter. This includes wiping down surfaces in both meeting rooms and vehicles with disinfectant.
 - f. When individuals have been directed to self-quarantine or self-isolate, talk to your Supervisor and medical provider to ensure proper supports are in-place. Discussions with these individuals should address issues related to housing, food security and other subsistence issues. For general information and guidance, which includes identifying space that might be available to isolate persons please contact RUHS – Public Health at 2-1-1.
 - g. Check the County of Riverside RUHS-Public Health website frequently for the latest information about COVID-19 , located here: <https://rivcoph.org/coronavirus>.
Additional resources and COVID-19 information can be found at:
 - California Department of Public Health (CDPH),
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC),
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
 - State of California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency,
<https://www.bcsb.ca.gov/hcfc/>

Even if client does not show or report symptoms, exercise caution and remember to:

- **Maintain appropriate distance**
- **Sanitize your hands and surfaces (e. g., phone, clipboard) before and after visit**