



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

HEALTH ALERT

Date: May 7, 2020

To: Healthcare Providers

From: David Ghilarducci, MD, FACEP, Interim Health Officer

Subject: CDC Updated COVID-19 Isolation Discontinuance Criteria

The purpose of this alert is to provide the medical and health care community with updated and unified COVID-19 isolation discontinuance (clearance) criteria. San Benito County Public Health Services is the local health jurisdiction authority and lead health care agency responsible for containment, mitigation, isolation and quarantine of the COVID-19 disease outbreak.

Public Health staff investigates and monitor all reported laboratory confirmed positive COVID-19 cases. Specially trained staff conduct associated patient assessments, contact tracing, initiate isolation of persons that test positive, quarantine their contacts, and determine when to discontinue isolation and quarantine for each reported case based on CDC evidence-based criteria. Public Health staff also provides patients with work clearance documentation if required by their employers.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recently updated criteria for discontinuance of isolation for persons with COVID-19. Evidence-based data now indicate that shedding of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in upper respiratory specimens declines after onset of symptoms. *Replication-competent virus has not been successfully cultured more than 9 days after onset of illness.* Given this information, the CDC provides guidance for use of symptom-based, time-based and test-based isolation discontinuance criteria for persons with COVID-19.

The updated CDC criteria that San Benito County Public Health Services follows to clear COVID-19 patients from isolation is as follows:

Symptom-based strategy

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were isolated at home will be discontinued from isolation when:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

Time-based strategy

Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who were ASYMPTOMATIC and isolated at home will be discontinued from isolation when:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. *If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based or test-based strategy should be used.* Note, because symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness, it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.

Test-based strategy

- *Note: San Benito County Public Health does not require the test-based strategy nor does it recommend it for in-home-isolated-patients.*
- Negative results (of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA) from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).
- Prolonged viral shedding has been demonstrated without direct correlation with replication competent virus. False positive test results may occur, causing patients to potentially have unnecessarily prolonged isolation periods which can impact socio-economic and psychosocial conditions.

For additional information please see links below for CDC published guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html>

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