COVID-19 Isolation & Quarantine for Providers: FAQ on how to keep your patients safe.

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This Tip Sheet was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) for local use. It will be posted at www.sfcdcp.org/i&qHCP.

Summary of Changes since the April 2021 Version

- Isolation and quarantine policies are no longer included in this document. These can be found on our new I&Q website at: https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp
- Available resources for people in isolation and quarantine have been updated based on current availability - including the addition of the COVID Resource Center at (628) 217-6101
- Eligibility criteria for the I&Q program have been updated

AUDIENCE: Healthcare providers, such as those providing healthcare services at outpatient offices, clinics, and hospitals who may evaluate and manage patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 who are required to isolate or quarantine.

PURPOSE: To guide clinicians providing resources for patients in isolation and quarantine.

General Questions

What are the Isolation and Quarantine (I&Q) Directives?

The Directives from the Health Officer at the San Francisco Department of Public Health describe the legal requirements of individuals exposed to or infected with COVID-19 to stay at home. See http://www.sfdph.org/directives for more information.

How are isolation and quarantine defined?

Isolation is used to separate people who tested positive for or have symptoms of COVID-19 from those who don’t. Quarantine is used to keep asymptomatic people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and may have been infected away from others while they may be infectious.

Does my patient need to isolate and quarantine?

As a rule, the following groups must isolate and quarantine:

- People diagnosed with COVID-19
- People with symptoms of COVID-19 who haven’t been tested or are waiting for their test result
- People who had close contact to someone with COVID-19 and aren't fully vaccinated for COVID-19
Requirements and duration can vary based on type of employment or living situation. For detailed information, see [https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp](https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp)

**Can my patient safely isolate or quarantine?**

**Your responsibilities as a provider with respect to I&Q are:**

- To recognize when a patient must follow Isolation or Quarantine directives
- To inform your patient of their responsibility to follow these directives
- To counsel your patient on how to safely isolate and quarantine, using the following questions to guide next steps

**Does your patient have a separate room and bathroom?**

To safely isolate or quarantine, the person must be able to stay in a separate room from others. They need a bathroom and kitchen that they can use without being around others. If they must share a bathroom or kitchen, they must be able to disinfect it after each time that they use it.

Persons staying at shelters usually cannot adequately self-isolate or self-quarantine. People living in other ‘congregate settings’ like SRO hotels, residential treatment programs, or unhoused individuals need careful evaluation for their ability to adequately isolate.

**Can your patient get to the place where they will isolate or quarantine without sharing a vehicle?**

Ask if the person can safely walk or travel in their own private vehicle to their place of isolation or quarantine. Make sure they are wearing a facemask or cloth face-covering. The person should not take public transit, taxi, or ridesharing to their place of isolation.

If the person cannot travel safely to their place of Isolation or Quarantine:

- Paratransit and ambulance are the safest options for transportation.
- Providers are requested to hold the patient at their facility, if possible, until appropriate isolation or quarantine housing can be arranged.

**Does your patient need help getting food, medicines, pet care, or cleaning supplies?**

- For food delivery, fill out a referral at [http://www.tfaforms.com/4857945](http://www.tfaforms.com/4857945). To follow up on an existing referral, please contact Meals on Wheels at (628) 652-6018 or IQFoodProgram@mowsf.org. You can also call the Covid Resource Center at (628) 217-6101.
- For medication delivery for older people or people with disabilities, consider using the following pharmacies: Walgreens, CVS, Kaiser or Alto ([https://alto.com](https://alto.com), 1-800-874-5881)
- For pet care, call (415) 554-9400 for Animal Care & Control, which can bring pets to animal shelter ONLY for hospitalized person.

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Updated 08/25/2021 [www.sfcdcp.org/i&qHCP](http://www.sfcdcp.org/i&qHCP)
• For cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment, mental health support, financial support, referral for wraparound services or any other questions or concerns, reach out to the COVID Resource Center at (628) 217-6101.

• For all other inquiries, call 311.

What if my patient cannot safely isolate or quarantine at their residence?

The Isolation and Quarantine (I&Q) Program has a limited number of hotel rooms available that provide a free location for San Francisco residents who qualify to complete their isolation or quarantine. Three meals a day are provided. Sites have varying levels of medical support. You can complete a web-based referral form for an I&Q site here: https://covid19isorequest.getcare.com/referral.

After filling out the referral your patient will automatically be screened for eligibility and processed by the referral coordinator. You do not need to call to follow up. During business hours, a referral RN will be in contact with you and/or the person you are referring within 2 hours at the most (usually you will get a response within 30 minutes). Bed availability depends on supply and the safety of the person referred to stay independently at the site. If you have any questions about eligibility or the referral process you can place a referral and also call the COVID-19 Containment Line at (628) 652-2820 (7am-8pm daily). After-hours, leave a message to receive a callback the next day.

Who is eligible for referral for city-provided Isolation and Quarantine Housing?

Remember that city-provided I&Q housing is a scarce community resource and should only be used for patients who truly require COVID-19 isolation or quarantine. Patients should not be referred if their only need is shelter. Families, including pediatric patients, are eligible, and ADA rooms are available.

Isolation and quarantine housing is provided to people who have one of the following eligibility criteria:

• COVID-19 positive: have laboratory confirmed COVID-19
• Person under investigation (PUI): have symptoms of COVID-19, no test or a pending test, and no history of COVID-19 in the past 45 days
• Close contact: are asymptomatic and unvaccinated and have known significant close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case

Housing is provided to the following groups in order of descending priority:

1. People who reside in a congregate setting (e.g., shelter, residential rehab) where onsite cohorting cannot safely be achieved and individuals cannot safely isolate away from others AND are either COVID-19 positive, a PUI, or a close contact
2. People who reside in a household with an unvaccinated individual(s) who is/are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate away from others (this includes vehicle and couch surfing), AND are either COVID-19 positive, a PUI, or a close contact

3. People who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness (e.g., street, encampment) who cannot safely isolate away from others AND are either COVID-19 positive, a PUI, or a close contact

4. People who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are awaiting test results (PUI) who reside in a household with unvaccinated individuals not at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and cannot safely isolate away from others (including vehicle and couch surfing)

5. Unvaccinated people with no history of COVID-19 in the past 90 days who are not symptomatic, do not have a close contact, and are awaiting test results for shelter or program entry requirements

Patients must be medically stable, able to manage their own medications and activities of daily living (ADLs), willing to come to an I&Q hotel room, and able to understand the need to stay inside the room. Patients must not be on a psychiatric hold or expressing active SI/HI and must be verbally redirectable.

What should your patient expect at an I&Q site?

I&Q sites are staffed with nurses, behavioral health clinicians, on call medical providers, site support staff, security, and meals. For patients who use drugs and alcohol, Addiction Medicine consultation and access to harm reduction services and supplies are available. Staff will take care of the medical needs for admitted patients, including daily symptom monitoring, testing and disclosure of test results. Your patient will be required to stay at the I&Q site for the duration of their isolation or quarantine. Patients have access to phones and television and can receive outside deliveries while staying there. Telephone translation services are used if language-concordant staff are not available.

Resources:

San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

- Isolation and Quarantine: https://www.sfdph.org/dph/COVID-19/Isolation-and-Quarantine.asp