COVID-19 Isolation & Quarantine for Providers: FAQ on how to keep your patients safe.
Updated May 3, 2022

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

Summary of Changes since the August 2021 Version

- Isolation and quarantine policies are no longer included in this document. These can be found on our 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 eligibility and availability.

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?
To find the most up-to-date rules on who must isolation or quarantine see our Isolation and Quarantine webpage: 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 https://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) 652-2700.
- For medication delivery for older people or people with disabilities, consider using the following pharmacies: Walgreens, CVS, Kaiser, or Alto (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.
- For cleaning supplies, questions on COVID-19 therapeutics, referral for wraparound services or any other questions or concerns, reach out to the COVID Resource Center at (628) 652-2700.
- For financial support, please contact Office of Economic and Workforce Development at (415) 701-4817.
- 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. 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 or call the COVID Resource Center at (628) 652-2700. After-hours, leave a message to receive a callback the next day.

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.

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 require COVID-19 isolation. Patients should not be referred if their only need is shelter. Families, including pediatric patients, are eligible, and ADA rooms are available. If you have questions about your patient’s eligibility, please call the COVID Resource Center at (628) 652-2700.

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

- 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 COVID-19 positive.
- 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 COVID-19 positive.
- People who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness (e.g., street, encampment) who cannot safely isolate away from others AND are COVID-19 positive.

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. Not all sites provide nursing staff 24 hours a day. The onsite staff may need assistance coordinating medication access or non-covid related nursing care (i.e., regular wound care).
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)**
- Health Directives: [http://www.sfdph.org/directives](http://www.sfdph.org/directives)