

# Sacramento Homelessness COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM

## Homelessness Isolation/Quarantine Program

Brought to you in partnership by Sacramento County, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Steps Forward and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

**May 27, 2020**

### ***Q. What are isolation/quarantine units?***

**A.** The COVID-19 Homelessness Response Plan is a joint effort by the County of Sacramento, City of Sacramento, Sacramento Steps Forward and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency. As part of the plan, the Homelessness Isolation/Quarantine Program is designed to ensure that there are safe places for persons experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic and to help slow the spread of the virus. Persons who tested positive or with tests pending, with symptoms, pre-existing health conditions or are over the age of 55 are prioritized for placement. Medically supported isolation care centers and preventative quarantine units are sited in existing motels throughout the community and State-donated trailers.

**Medically Supported Isolation Care Centers** are reserved for persons either confirmed positive or pending investigation who can self-care. Onsite medical staff will monitor health and assess whether a person needs a higher level of care.

**Preventative Quarantine Care Centers** are prioritized for persons who are highly vulnerable and symptomatic and may also be made available for other highly vulnerable populations. Telephonic medical care support will be provided.

Isolation/quarantine units in motels are overseen by the County Department of Human Assistance (DHA) and by the City of Sacramento for the trailers in partnership with a local contracted community partner. The Department of Health Services (DHS) coordinates medical services at both sites.

### ***Q. Why use motels for quarantine units, and how were motel sites selected?***

**A.** Motel rooms offer an immediate shelter solution that can be scaled to meet the needs of the community. These temporary shelter efforts protect high risk individuals and families, prevent the spread of the virus in our communities and minimize the virus' impacts to our hospitals and health care system. The selection of the motel sites have been based on a variety of factors, including motel willingness to enter into a 60- 90 day lease, number of units (100+ preferable), all rooms having exterior facing halls, and certain room amenities such as a microwave and refrigerator to support the guest's ability to shelter in place.

### ***Q. Besides medical care, what will be provided to clients residing in these isolation/quarantine units, and what will be expected of them while there?***

**A.** A medical team is located onsite at Medically Supported Isolation Care Center trailers and Preventative Quarantine Care Center motels. The medical team administers COVID-19 testing

upon enrollment and offers daily wellness check ins. Telehealth services to address behavioral health concerns are also available.

All locations have onsite provider staff, motel staff, and 24 hour security. A close working relationship with jurisdictional law enforcement has been established should issues arise. Goodwill Industries provides three meals a day, laundry services and daily hygiene and sanitation products. Onsite sheltering services also include access to a client liaison 24 hours a day and exit planning assistance.

All motel guests are required to abide by the policies and protocols implemented during their stay including following the Public Health order for sheltering in place. Participants may bring up to two pets (except at CalExpo trailers) and some personal items upon entrance. Visitors are not allowed onsite.

***Q. What measures are in place to support the communities surrounding the sites?***

**A.** When a COVID response motel is brought on, outreach efforts are made to connect with unsheltered persons in the near vicinity and assess them for program entry. Each site is outfitted with 24 hour security staff responsible for patrolling the grounds to ensure people remain in their rooms and to keep trespassers off of the property. A relationship with local law enforcement has been established to collaboratively address safety concerns.

***Q. How does a client get into a unit?***

**A.** Placement in the isolation/quarantine units are coordinated centrally through Sacramento Steps Forward with referrals made only through designated referral partners. These partners include hospitals, non-hospital medical partners, emergency shelters, designated outreach providers, homeless service providers, law enforcement, and correctional health. Referrals for Medically Supported Isolation Care units for prioritization populations 1 and 2 (see below) will be made through a medical or County Public Health referral.

Transportation will be arranged for persons coming from hospitals, emergency shelters and unsheltered locations.

***Q. Who is prioritized for isolation/quarantine?***

**A.** Under the Homelessness Response Plan, people will be assessed in accordance with prioritization developed by the Sacramento County DHS:

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Priority Group</b>
1	COVID-19 positive, any age
2	Under public health/medical investigation, pending test OR has recently been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person as confirmed by Public Health (regardless of age or symptoms)
3	55+ years and pre-existing health conditions with symptoms
4	55+ years with symptoms OR 54 years and under with pre-existing health conditions and symptoms
5	54 years and under with symptoms
6	55+ years old
7	54 years and under with pre-existing conditions, no symptoms

\* Currently Accepting Priority Groups: 1-7

***Q. Why are the units not open more broadly to anyone experiencing homelessness?***

**A.** The isolation and quarantine units are part of this specific health crisis response to COVID-19 with prioritization based on specific criteria developed by the Sacramento County DHS as indicated above. The availability of these rooms – with the required amount of medical and other supportive services – is limited. The prioritization policy provides an organized and coordinated system that will reach persons experiencing homelessness who are living in shelters, living unsheltered, being discharged from jail, or referred by a medical referral partner. Depending on the progression of the pandemic, additional referral partners may be added beyond those mentioned above.

Non-symptomatic vulnerable people with pre-existing conditions will be placed to the extent possible, prioritizing persons over age 55. Unsheltered people will be supported with necessary life-sustaining support such as food and water as well as sanitation and hygiene supplies. If someone becomes symptomatic, they should contact their healthcare provider. If you had no healthcare provider prior to this crisis, you should call 211 to be connected to healthcare.

***Q. Does the County have plans to purchase the motels?***

**A.** The County does not have immediate plans to purchase the motels utilized during the COVID-19 response effort. SHRA presented a re-housing plan to the City Council on May 5, 2020, which included the option of purchasing motels within the City of Sacramento for use as interim housing while funding is sought for rehabilitation into Permanent Supportive Housing. The report did not specify any locations or motel names, nor does it include a specific recommendation. The purchase would require the approval from the local jurisdiction.

***Q. Will housing be available for the persons in the motels?***

**A.** The COVID-19 Homelessness Response Team is currently working on a re-housing and exit strategy for the motel guests with the goal of pivoting the current funding or any additional funds received in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to providing the housing. Every effort will be made to connect clients with a sheltering option. Exits to unsheltered homelessness will be avoided to the extent possible. A Re-housing Strategy is anticipated to be brought before the City and County governing bodies in June.