

## Testing Strategies in Congregate Settings

Testing of asymptomatic persons in a congregate setting with known COVID-19 positive residents should be conducted in consultation with the PDPH and OHS. This consultation and collaboration will include a specific action plan for isolation for the facility. For congregate setting outbreak response, testing strategies should be used in conjunction with other COVID-19 control measures. This includes:

- Reducing the density of residents.
- Relocating persons at high-risk for severe disease off-site or to separate areas of the facility.
- Promoting social distancing and use of face covers/masks by residents and staff.
- Providing enough hand washing supplies and/or hand sanitizer for residents and staff.
- Routinely cleaning high contact surfaces.

Not all sites may be recommended to test facility-wide. Given Isolation and Quarantine (I & Q) housing and specimen collection resources are not unlimited, use of a widespread testing approach will be prioritized by PDPH based on COVID-19 transmission and exposures within the shelter and facility characteristics (see below). If facility-wide testing is not indicated or feasible due to resource limitations alternative approaches will be pursued and recommended, including testing of: symptomatic residents and staff, those at highest risk of severe disease, and/or asymptomatic persons in closest contact with the case (e.g., roommates, persons sleeping in close proximity to a case, etc.).

### COVID-19 transmission and exposure characteristics

- Number of COVID-19 positive residents
  - Location of cases (e.g., facility-wide)
- Number of persons having close contact with positive residents(s)

### Facility characteristics

- One large room vs. individual rooms, ability to maintain space between beds, etc.
  - Size of resident population, are they sheltering-in place, etc.
- Proportion of people at higher risk for severe disease (e.g., ≥65 years of age and older, people with underlying conditions particularly if not well controlled)

## **Communications and Planning for Site-Wide Testing**

Prior to implementing testing at a congregate setting, a planning meeting should be convened with the site, PDPH (Outbreak Response and Housing teams), OHS, and supporting agency representatives involved in the response, to determine the testing strategy and outline an action plan for once testing results are received.

During the meeting, COVID-19 positive residents and information on exposed contacts will be reviewed along with facility characteristics (see above) to guide the testing strategy and resulting action plan. The resulting action plan should outline and communicate steps to isolate persons who are waiting for test results and for those who test positive, and to quarantine and monitor residents and staff who test negative.

Congregate settings will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) based on the isolation plan developed. The location for isolation will vary depending on resources available at the time of testing (e.g., rooms open at the City's I&Q site, ability to isolate onsite) and outcome of testing (e.g., percentage of residents testing positive). While tests are pending, facilities should be prepared to isolate persons onsite under the guidance and support of PDPH and OHS, since testing turnaround may be 24 hours or longer.

After results are received and if placement of residents at the City I&Q site is recommended, the plan will outline the intake process for the City's I & Q site noting that placement may take several hours (and depend on the number of referrals), transport to the I & Q from the referring shelter will only occur during daytime hours Monday- Saturday, and detailed information about each resident referred to the I & Q site will be required from the facility. In addition, the City's I & Q site is not a medical facility, so all residents being referred for housing will undergo a medical and behavioral health review prior to acceptance for intake. The facility will agree that individuals who are not medically stable enough to remain in a room on their own or cannot independently perform Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) will need to be isolated onsite at the congregate setting or at an alternative location that can be arranged through OHS. Shelters will be asked to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) based on the isolation plan developed.

Infection Prevention Experts from PDPH can provide shelters with guidance on their approach to isolating residents onsite. PDPH can also provide shelters with personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene supplies and social distancing recommendations to support COVID-19 outbreak response and prevention efforts.