



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Date: April 2, 2020

As Local Health Authority for San Antonio & Bexar County, I authorize the Regional Medical Operations Center (RMOC) to develop an Interfacility Transfer Authorization Center (ITAC) for your facility. The ITAC will screen any requests for the transfer of patient from your facility to an acute care Hospital.

Such screening will identify needs for inpatient hospital care and assist with triage to an appropriate level of care, such as:

- Transfer to an Emergency Department
- Direct admit to inpatient bed facilitated by the RMOC
- Transfer to alternative care facility

The ITAC will offer advice and consultation services for the facility's Chief Nursing Officer and/or Medical Director to treat or evaluate in an effort avoid transfer. Options available may include:

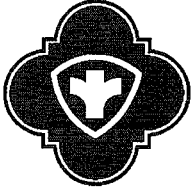
- Mobile X-ray/EKG
- Facilitate specimen collection and sending labwork to an external lab
- Facilitate treatment in place with IV fluids/antibiotics
- Facilitate PPE sourcing
- Facilitate hospice/palliative care resources.
- Coordinate Isolation with public health

You can access this service by calling **210-233-5815**.

Further, given the emergence of a nursing home with a cluster of COVID-19 cases in our community, I have authorized a team led by Dr. Ruth Berggren, Bexar County COVID-19 consultant and an infectious diseases specialist at UT Health, to randomly visit some facilities on behalf of Metro Health. This is a team of medical professionals who will offer free guidance on prevention practices.

Our strong recommendations, to prevent infections at your facility, include:

- Requiring all health care personnel to wear masks for patient care and to have temperature and symptom checks prior to each shift. If a worker has a temperature above 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit, then they are prohibited from going to work and must remain at their residence. Repeat temperature checks every 6-8 hours while at work.
- Requiring staff to stay home when even mildly ill. Rapid turnaround (2 days) COVID-19 testing is available to symptomatic healthcare workers in our community. Testing locations may change, so please contact me by cell (210-725-3100) or at junda.woo@sanantonio.gov to arrange.
- Stressing to staff the importance of minimizing their contacts in the general community, and good hygiene practices outside of work, to protect the residents at the nursing home.



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- Prohibiting visitors other than essential personnel, in accordance with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services policy issued March 13, 2020. Maintain a daily visitor log.
- Canceling all group activities, including congregate meals—serve residents individually in their rooms. Encourage residents to remain in their rooms. Residents who leave their rooms should be encouraged to wear a mask if one is available, maintain social distancing, limit their movements and perform hand hygiene.
- Cohorting residents with any respiratory illness with dedicated healthcare staff.
- Providing staff with refresher training on donning and doffing PPE. Here is a poster by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>
- Frequently cleaning high-touch surfaces, including doorknobs and railings. Maintain cleaning and disinfection processes according to CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Ensuring adequate supplies of PPE, hand sanitizer, soap and water for staff and residents. Assign someone to observe all staff—including CNAS, therapists and other ancillary staff—to ensure proper donning, doffing and hygiene practices. This includes washing hands for at least 20 seconds between every patient and handwashing after removing gloves.
- Increasing your HVAC air-exchange rate if possible, and ensuring that your ventilation system meets ANSI/ASHRAE/ASHE standards.
- Keeping a list of all staff and contractors who work at any other health care facilities, including the name and contact information for the administrator at the other facility. **Please submit your list to me at email address below, within 1 week of receipt of this letter.** Your preparedness plan for an outbreak at your facility could include a workflow in which staff live on-site for 4 consecutive days, and return to the community for 3 consecutive days. Your preparedness plan should also address staff absences due to illness or quarantine.

Thank you for your efforts to date in this challenging time. We are here to assist you, so please feel free to call or email with any concerns or questions.

Respectfully,

C. Junda Woo, MD, MPH
Medical Director and Local Health Authority
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