



SARA BOSSE  
Public Health Director

SIMON PAUL, M.D.  
Health Officer

## Health Alert

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CONTACT: [publichealth@maderacounty.com](mailto:publichealth@maderacounty.com)

Phone: (559) 675-7893

### **Patients Treated at Fresno and Madera County Hospitals – Repatriation for Transferred Patients and Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Placements**

With the closing of Madera Community Hospital and the overload on Fresno Hospitals, many Madera SNF residents may be returning from Fresno County. The purpose of this health alert is to share critical reminders about patient flow between hospitals and SNFs.

1. During this time of extremely limited capacity, patients continue to be transferred to a higher level of care when their needs cannot be met at their current inpatient, residential, or SNF.

**2. While transfer to another medical center can be necessary for the proper treatment and recovery of the patient, it is important to remember that after the care has been rendered, these patients must be repatriated back to the sending facility.**

3. Please see AFL 22-33 for more information: Guidance for Response to Surge in Respiratory Viruses Among Adult Patients: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-22-33.aspx>

4. This is not only a matter of proper patient care, but it is also a matter of ethical responsibility. When patients are transferred to another facility, they are often away from the support of their loved ones and familiar surroundings. It is therefore important to ensure that transferred patients are returned to their original location as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

5. In order to ensure that hospitals are able to provide care for the most critically ill patients, it is also imperative that **SNFs must accept patients who have been assigned to their facility in a timely manner**. Delays in accepting these patients can have serious consequences, as it can prevent hospitals from being able to provide the necessary higher level of care for other patients.

6. Please see AFL 22-31 for more information: Movement of Patients/Residents in the Healthcare Continuum During Seasonal Surges and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-22-31.aspx>

7. As stipulated by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), infectious isolation or rule-out status is NOT a valid reason to delay or block transfer to a SNF, and it is expected that infection control protocols are followed to keep staff and other patients safe. By working together, we can ensure that every patient receives the care they need.

8. Additional information to help SNFs establish and/or maintain infection prevention practices for patients who may be returned to their facility with either COVID-19 or with a multi-drug

resistant organism can be found in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and CDPH documents: • [CDC - Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)  
• [CDPH - Enhanced Standard Precautions for SNFs, 2022](#)

9. It is understandable that SNFs may also be experiencing an increase in demand for care due to the ongoing surge in respiratory illnesses. The Fresno and Madera County Departments of Public Health are working together with the CDPH Licensing and Certification Division and other State partners to address needs as they arise, our team is available to answer questions and provide support to SNFs to help meet these obligations.

10. Any Madera facility or organization with resource requests can relay their needs to the Madera County Medical Health Operational Area Coordinator (MHOAC). Email [MHOAC@maderacounty.com](mailto:MHOAC@maderacounty.com) to connect with the designated MHOAC on duty.

All members of the medical community, especially acute care, SNFs, and other residential care facilities are urged to prioritize the placement of patients back to their original facility after the necessary care has been provided. Thank you for your dedication to clinical care of all patients during this challenging time. During this period of severe surge, it is more important than ever that we work together to provide the best possible care for all our patients.

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Categories of Health Alert Messages:

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

**Health Information:** Provides general health information which is not considered to be of emergent nature

