



July 31, 2020

Standardized Admission and Discharge Process Between the California Department of State Hospitals and the County Jails

Purpose

In response to the pandemic caused by coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and out of an abundance of caution, the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) and the county Sheriffs have been planning and developing the necessary precautions to reduce risk of exposure to both patients/inmates and staff, and to mitigate morbidity and mortality related to the disease.

The purpose of this memorandum is to standardize the discharge protocols between DSH and the county jails to ensure safe and efficient transfer of patients between these facilities.

The process for transportation has two components: screening and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing. For the patient to be clear for transport between a county jail and a state hospital, or vice versa, they must be COVID-19 symptom free (“No” response to Questions #1-4 on the DSH COVID-19 Admission and Discharge Screening Memos) and with no recent known exposure (recent housing, contacts, etc. – Question #7 on the DSH COVID-19 Admission and Discharge Screening Memos). If any of the questions (#1-4 or #7) from the screening memo are answered “Yes”, the patient is not cleared and shall not be transported/transferred. In addition to the screening, the patient must also have a negative COVID-19 PCR test. If the patient refuses to consent to the PCR test and is symptom/contact free (all “No” responses to Questions #1-4 and #7), they can still be cleared to transport, but must be transported separately from patients that have been tested.

DSH Discharges to Jails

1. Provided there is sufficient notice of a patient's upcoming discharge, Department of State Hospitals will test and perform COVID-19 screening prior to discharging and will provide the county jail with the patient's updated health information relative to COVID-19. The DSH COVID-19 Discharge Clearance Memo along with the COVID-19 test results documentation will be faxed to the jail. A copy of the DSH COVID-19 Discharge Clearance Memo and test results will also be provided to the transporting officer.

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2. Tests will be performed within a clinically appropriate timeframe prior to discharge, in alignment with public health guidelines.
3. Due to space limitations, there will be no pre-discharge quarantine/sequestration required.
4. For any patient testing positive for COVID-19 during the discharge process, discharge to the county jail will be delayed while the patient isolates at the DSH Hospital until cleared.
5. Any patient in isolation because they are a PUI shall not be transferred to the county jail until cleared.
6. A patient in a quarantined unit should not be transferred until the quarantine is lifted. Exceptions for quarantine patients may be considered when legally necessary, after discussion of the facility COVID-19 status between sending and receiving facilities and risks are considered.
7. If testing is refused, COVID-19 screening will be conducted by DSH and the patient will not be transported with patients who have tested negative.
8. Patients cleared for transfer will be categorized for transport in one of two cohorts: patients who have tested negative or patients who have refused testing but have otherwise passed the screening process. These two cohorts will remain separated during transfer and will not be transferred to the same county jail on the same day.
9. If DSH experiences an outbreak resulting in suspension of admissions and discharges, stakeholders will be notified.

Discharges from Jails to DSH

1. The county jails will test and perform COVID-19 screening prior to transferring inmates/patients to a DSH facility and will provide DSH with the inmate/patient's updated health information relative to COVID-19. The DSH COVID-19 Admission Clearance Memo along with the COVID-19 test results documentation will be faxed to the receiving DSH facility. A copy of the DSH COVID-19 Admission Clearance Memo and test results will also be included in the admission packet that is routinely provided to DSH by the transport officer.
2. Tests will be performed within a clinically appropriate timeframe (generally within 7 days) prior to discharge (generally within 7 days), in alignment with public health guidelines. Tests not performed within this timeframe may be considered based on clinical discussion and determination of risk.
3. Due to space limitations, there will be no pre-discharge quarantine/sequestration required.
4. For any inmate/patient testing positive for COVID-19 during the discharge process, transfer to the DSH facility will be delayed while the inmate/patient isolates at the county jail until cleared by both parties

- (cleared medically by the jail and cleared/accepted by DSH).
5. Any inmate/patient in isolation because they are a Person Under Investigation (PUI) shall not be transferred to a DSH facility until cleared by both parties (cleared medically by the jail, and cleared/accepted by DSH).
 6. A patient in a quarantined unit should not be transferred until the quarantine is lifted. If testing is refused, COVID-19 screening will be conducted by the county jail and the inmate/patient will not be transported with inmates/patients who have tested negative.
 7. Inmates/Patients cleared for transfer will be categorized for transport in one of two cohorts: inmates/patients who have tested negative or inmates/patients who have refused testing but have otherwise passed the screening process. These two cohorts will remain separated during transfer and will not be transferred to the same DSH facility on the same day.
 8. DSH's admission rates will be based on each facility's ability to screen, test, quarantine and observe cohorts of patients before they can be transferred to a treatment program. DSH's admissions will also be dependent upon continued availability of testing supplies and personal protective equipment. Additionally, any COVID-19 transmission within the facilities may impact the rate of admissions due to requirements to quarantine impacted units and the need to do contact tracing and further testing.

DSH Admissions

DSH facilities will be admitting patients in cohorts each week, the size of which will depend on the number of available beds in DSH's admissions observations units and the number of patients scheduled for admission.

1. Each cohort will be:
 - a. Screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before being placed on the Admission/Observation unit.
 - b. Tested for COVID-19 upon admission and at days 5-7 and 14 days after admission;
 - c. Patients who are asymptomatic at the time of admission will be placed on an admission/observation unit. The patients will be assigned to a single-patient dorm or a single-patient room for a period of at least 14 days for further COVID-19 monitoring and testing to ensure that no patient in the cohort develops COVID-19, unless extenuating circumstances temporarily causes a deviation to this practice.
2. If a patient subsequently develops symptoms, they will be moved to the isolation unit or room designated for persons under investigation. The patients remaining on the admissions/ observation unit will continue to be tested and observed until the end of their observation period.
3. If a patient subsequently tests positive, they will be moved to an isolation

- unit, and the patients remaining on the observation unit will restart their 14-day observation period and continue to be tested and observed.
4. Patients who are symptomatic at the time of admissions will be placed directly on the isolation unit or room designated for persons under investigation to be tested and observed.
 5. There are many forensic commitment patients awaiting admission to DSH. DSH will prioritize Offenders with Mental Health Disorder (OMD) patients, then patients revoked from outpatient status in its Conditional Release Program, and current DSH patients returning from court leave. In addition, DSH may prioritize a patient if a patient has been deemed psychiatrically acute by the Department's medical director or designee through the process in title 9 California Code of Regulations section 4717. Next, individuals referred as Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST), Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGI), and Sexually Violent Predators (SVPs) will be admitted based on commitment date order. LPS patients will be admitted as individual discharges occur at the hospitals.
 6. DSH's admission rates will be based on each facility's ability to screen, test, quarantine and observe cohorts of patients before they can be transferred to a treatment program.
 7. DSH's admissions will also be dependent upon continued adequate testing supplies and personal protective equipment.
 8. Additionally, any COVID-19 transmission within the facilities may impact the rate of patient admissions due to requirements to quarantine impacted units and the need to do contact tracing and further testing.
 9. DSH will continue to monitor guidance and evaluate its admissions processes and may modify its admissions process at any time to further improve safety for its patients and team members.