

Quality and Productivity Commission
34th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Leading with Excellence"

2021 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: HEALTH FACILITIES INSPECTION - COVID RESPONSE TEAM

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: FEBRUARY 1, 2020

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY. (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 The Department of Public Health's Health Facilities Inspection Division (HFID)
 2 established the COVID Response Team in March 2020 to assist skilled nursing facilities
 3 (SNFs) with infection prevention and control and to provide among the most assertive
 4 efforts among the nation's local health jurisdictions to limit COVID-19 transmission and
 5 premature deaths in SNFs. Early in the pandemic, HFID's COVID Response Team
 6 worked with DPH's Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) program to
 7 implement infection control interventions and provide updated guidance, often ahead of
 8 similar guidance from State authorities. These interventions included facility inspections,
 9 including targeted infection control surveys, Infection Control Assessment & Response
 10 (ICAR) Surveys, Mitigation Plan Surveys, and onsite investigation of new COVID-19
 11 outbreaks. HFID also monitored facilities daily to ensure they had adequate personnel
 12 and personal protective equipment (PPE). The statistics show that these interventions
 13 had a profoundly positive effect in preventing COVID transmission and deaths at the
 14 SNFs. The COVID Response Team has continued to actively limit the number of cases
 15 and deaths at the SNFs throughout the pandemic.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS
Public Health, 313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles

TELEPHONE NUMBER
562-345-6884

PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME
SUZETTE LEVERETT-CLARK

TELEPHONE NUMBER
562-345-6852

EMAIL: SUZETTE.LEVERETT-CLARK@CDPH.CA.GOV

PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)
Catherine Mak, MBA 

DATE
6/25/21

TELEPHONE NUMBER
626-299-4133

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE
Dr. Barbara Ferrer, MPH, Med, PhD 

DATE
06/25/21

TELEPHONE NUMBER
213-288-8117

****ELECTRONIC, WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE****

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and **specify assessment time frame.** Use Arial 12 point font.

Beginning in February 2020, DPH and its HFID began immediate preparations for the threat posed by COVID-19 to Los Angeles County SNF residents and staff. DPH's ACDC Health Facility Outreach unit leveraged HFID's existing relationships with SNFs and began cultivating relationships with SNF infection control directors and management. Together, ACDC and HFID began to provide both infection control guidance and implementation oversight to SNFs. DPH's COVID-19 guidance for SNFs was issued prior to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) or CDC releasing similar guidance. On March 12, HFID and ACDC began to jointly conduct onsite Preparedness Assessments. By the end of March, they completed assessments of 383 SNFs, 139 congregate living health facilities, and 258 intermediate care facilities throughout the County. Additionally, on March 23, HFID surveyors completed targeted infection control surveys using the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) QS0-20-20 survey tool. To ensure ongoing implementation of the guidance in SNFs, HFID surveyors began conducting daily check-in calls with all SNFs in the County to monitor the status of any outbreaks, assess exposure risks and provide recommendations, and obtain reports of positive cases or deaths that were related to COVID-19. This effort was also made in coordination with the Long Beach and Pasadena Public Health Departments.

In April 2020, HFID surveyors conducted Infection Control Assessment & Response (ICAR) Surveys in the 210 SNFs with an active COVID-19 case. Concurrently, DPH instructed its HFID surveyors to begin collecting daily capacity data from all long-term care facilities, including SNFs, within the County to provide daily reports to multiple entities, including DPH's ACDC, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and the County's Department of Health Services (DHS). This new active monitoring allowed decision-makers to have a better real-time picture of the COVID-19-related impacts on both individual SNFs and the entire long-term health care system.

These daily SNF monitoring surveys had the secondary effect of serving as an ongoing source of communication between HFID and the SNFs. This allowed HFID to rapidly respond to urgent SNF requests for additional staffing and PPE resources. It is important to remember that early in the pandemic, many SNFs experienced severe staffing shortages and shortages of PPE supplies. If needed, HFID would schedule an onsite visit to assess these situations and aid in the procurement of additional resources. Importantly, HFID has continued these daily SNF-focused infection control surveys and provided technical assistance throughout the pandemic.

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On May 11, 2020, CDPH established a requirement for all SNFs to develop and implement a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan to expand existing infection control policies. Providers then had 21 days to submit plans to HFID for review and approval; HFID then reviewed the plans to ensure they included all required elements. Subsequently, HFID conducted its first round of 304 Mitigation Plan Surveys in July to ensure compliance with the approved mitigation plans. Surveys were then required to recur every 6-8 weeks, and HFID surveyors continued to conduct these surveys with this periodicity through March 2021.

In June, HFID staff began conducting immediate onsite investigations of new COVID-19 outbreaks in health facilities and performed 84 site visits during the month. SNFs received outbreak interventions and technical assistance from HFID, ACDC, and DPH's Outbreak Management Branch, which is staffed with physicians, public health nurses, and investigators. After identification of each SNF outbreak, HFID responded with an onsite investigation within 24 hours, daily facility monitoring and support by phone, and a follow-up visit within 3-5 days to provide additional technical assistance and ensure that facilities implemented interventions with fidelity. This outbreak management activity is ongoing, and HFID has followed this rapid response protocol for each of the County's 865 SNF outbreaks, peaking at 50 per week during the early 2020 COVID outbreak and 46 per week during the winter surge.

Los Angeles County's data and experience suggest that DPH and HFID's infection prevention interventions had a substantial, positive impact by limiting the number of cases and deaths in SNFs. SNF resident cases peaked in April 2020, at the time of issuance of the SNF Health Officer Order, while case and death rates dropped throughout May and the following months. Importantly, the decreases in SNF cases largely remained steady and did not rise during the July 2020 surge in cases that Los Angeles County experienced. While the County experienced 20,243 total cases during the week of July 12, SNF cases did not exceed 412 during the month of July.

A review of the trends in SNF COVID-19 deaths relative to deaths for the entire County offers further evidence of the impact of DPH's support and proactive interventions within SNFs. Weekly deaths in SNFs and in the County simultaneously peaked in May 2020. While the County's overall number of deaths rose and peaked again in July 2020, weekly SNF deaths mainly declined throughout this summer surge. After June 1, 2020, SNF-associated deaths steadily declined both in number and as a percentage of total COVID-19 deaths in the County. More recently, the late 2020 surge in cases resulted in hundreds of deaths across the County, while deaths at SNFs have remained a very low percentage of total deaths throughout this unprecedented surge. According to federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid data from the winter surge, Los Angeles County experienced lower COVID case and death rates compared to large states of similar population size (OH and PA). DPH's and HFID's SNF COVID response effort has resulted in fewer and less frequent outbreaks, outbreaks with fewer cases, and lower death rates.

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State	SNF COVID-19 death rate per 1K residents	Rank
Indiana	172.39	1
New Jersey	172.27	2
Rhode Island	164.85	3
New Mexico	164.58	4
Pennsylvania	164.24	5
Oklahoma	163.50	6
South Dakota	160.40	7
Connecticut	157.61	8
Arkansas	156.41	9
Massachusetts	150.97	10
Kansas	149.42	11
North Dakota	148.32	12
Illinois	139.37	13
Maryland	136.45	14
Mississippi	135.57	15
Colorado	131.80	16
Ohio	129.50	17
Iowa	127.25	18
Michigan	123.54	19
Kentucky	121.78	20
Louisiana	120.07	21
Tennessee	119.28	22
North Carolina	119.07	23
Texas	118.48	24
South Carolina	118.09	25
Arizona	116.81	26
Georgia	116.11	27
Missouri	113.57	28
Alabama	112.97	29
New York	111.95	30
Minnesota	111.03	31
Delaware	107.77	32
California	101.15	33

Source: <https://data.cms.gov/Special-Programs-Initiatives-COVID-19-Nursing-Home/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Dataset/s2uc-8wxp/data>

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12-point font.

The HFID COVID Response team has been supporting Strategy 1.2 of the County's Strategic Plan, Enhance our Delivery of Comprehensive Interventions.

The HFID COVID Response team has been conducting State and federally mandated inspection of long-term health care facilities in Los Angeles County under a contract with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the vulnerable residents in these facilities.

The HFID COVID Response team also has been supporting Strategy 3.8, Develop an Early Warning Tool.

The COVID Response Team's interventions started during March 2020, when HFID and ACDC began to jointly conduct onsite Preparedness Assessments. By the end of March, the team completed assessments of SNFs, congregate living health facilities, and intermediate care facilities throughout the County. To ensure ongoing SNF implementation of the guidance, HFID surveyors began conducting daily check-in calls with all SNFs in the County to monitor the status of any outbreaks, assess exposure risks and provide recommendations, and obtain reports of positive cases or deaths that were related to COVID-19.

Concurrently, DPH instructed its HFID surveyors to begin to collect daily capacity data from all long-term care facilities, including SNFs, within the County to provide daily reports to multiple entities, including DPH's ACDC, the CDPH, and the County's Department of Health Services (DHS). This new active monitoring allowed decision-makers to have a better real-time picture of the COVID-19-related impacts on both individual SNFs and the entire long-term health care system.

These daily SNF monitoring surveys had the secondary effect of serving as an ongoing source of communication between HFID and the SNFs. This allowed HFID to rapidly respond to urgent SNF requests for additional staffing and PPE resources.

After identification of each SNF outbreak, HFID immediately responded with an onsite investigation within 24 hours. As a result, these efforts minimized COVID death in LA County, comparing with other States

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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