
Health Officer Recommendation

April 23, 2019

Dear Kern County Health Care Provider:

On September 30, 2018, the California State Legislature approved Senate Bill 1152. In accordance with Section 1262.5(o)(6), “The hospital shall document...the homeless patient has been offered or referred to screening for infectious disease common to the region, as determined by the local health department.” At this time, the Kern County Public Health Services Department (KCPHSD) recommends routine screening or referral for screening for the following infectious diseases:

- Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis C virus (HCV)
- Syphilis

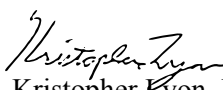
All three of these conditions may present with nondescript or no symptoms, can be treated and managed effectively after diagnosis, pose significant risk to the health of the individual patient, and continue to be a significant public health threat in Kern County. In accordance with Title 17, Section 2500, all patients diagnosed with HIV, HCV, and syphilis must be reported to KCPHSD. Information about reportable conditions can be found [online](#).

Facilities capable of performing laboratory testing are encouraged to test patients experiencing homelessness at least once annually and more often if indicated. Testing patients who are seen weekly or even daily is neither efficient nor indicated; facilities are encouraged to perform clinical screening at least monthly. If clinical screening identifies risk factors, symptoms, or other indicators for laboratory testing, laboratory testing should be performed accordingly. Facilities should test patients at the time of admittance or arrival to increase the probability of having test results before discharge. Facilities should also document contact phone numbers and locating information for the patient with as much detail as possible. If an exact address is not possible, neighborhoods, cross streets, or landmarks can help ensure adequate public health follow up.

Additionally, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends Hepatitis A vaccination for persons experiencing homelessness. Facilities with the capability to administer immunizations are encouraged to offer all recommended vaccinations. Facilities are encouraged to use the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) where they can both query patient immunization history and upload any new vaccinations administered. This will reduce unnecessary repeat vaccinations and can aid with appropriate spacing between doses.

If you have any questions or are interested in joining CAIR, please contact KCPHSD by phone at (661) 321-3000, via email at publichealth@kerncounty.com, or visit our [website](#).

Thank you,


Kristopher Eyon, MD
Interim Health Officer