

HAIP CONNECTION

WINTER ISSUE

HAIP Program Overview

The purpose of the Healthcare-Associated Infections and Infection Prevention (HAIP) Program is to support skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities (LTCFs) during their response to outbreaks, and to build and maintain infection prevention programs to enhance resident, visitor, and healthcare personnel health and safety.

San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (SBCDPH) HAIP Program is NOT a regulatory agency. Our role is to provide recommendations, guidance, and support to enhance the infection prevention capacity of the facility.

Outbreak Investigation and Report

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires healthcare facilities to report outbreaks and unusual infectious diseases events to their local health department.

The All Facilities Letter ([AFL](#) 23-28) provides information on recommendations, definitions, and other resources. For more information on Outbreak Investigation and Response, visit the [CDPH HAI](#) page.



1 What is Healthcare Surge?

A healthcare surge often occurs when the County's healthcare delivery system has been significantly impacted, resulting in an excess demand for care and services in hospitals, LTCFs, community care clinics, the public health department, primary and secondary care provider offices, and the emergency medical services system.

A healthcare surge is a critical component of emergency preparedness for healthcare institutions, as it can occur at any time during a major health emergency affecting a county, region, state, or nation. This surge may be triggered by natural disasters, pandemics, wars, or mass casualty incidents, including chemical, radiologic, or biological attacks.

In San Bernardino County, a healthcare surge emergency is proclaimed by the County Health Officer or their designee.



Surge capacity refers to an institution's ability to swiftly transition from its expected service operation to a significantly increased capacity to accommodate a large influx of patients during an emergency. An effective surge capacity plan includes planning to allocate a maximum amount of internal and external resources to serve the growing number of patients.

Healthcare surges test the capabilities and capacities of healthcare institutions to remain resilient and operational after critical incidents. Therefore, healthcare institutions such as LTCFs and SNFs must develop their surge capacity plan and be able to respond to an increase in the number of patients they will serve during an incident that leads to a surge in the healthcare system.

Having a healthcare surge process in your facility's Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) is essential to preparing for this healthcare challenge. An EOP is an important planning document that designates who will do what, when, with what resources, and by what authority before, during, and immediately after an emergency.

Additionally, your EOP should address critical issues such as the evacuation and reception of patients during a surge incident.



What steps can LTCFs and SNFs take now to prepare for a healthcare surge?

LTCFs and SNFs must develop an EOP to prepare for a healthcare surge if one is not already in place. For institutions with existing EOPs, reviewing and ensuring these plans adequately address how the facility will continue to operate during a healthcare surge is crucial. If not, the plan should be revised to incorporate healthcare surge protocols.

As with any emergency planning and response, coordination and collaboration with local and regional medical and health partners is essential.

Therefore, LTCFs and SNFs should actively participate in meetings organized by community partners, including those hosted by the California Department of Social Services, CDPH, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (SBCDPH), and other local agencies. These meetings provide valuable opportunities for sharing best practices and fostering peer learning. Additionally, LTCFs and SNFs should cultivate strong relationships with nearby hospitals to establish a supportive network that can be essential during emergencies.



What are the roles of LTCFs and SNFs during a surge incident?

LTCFs and SNFs play essential roles during healthcare surges. They may serve as receiving institutions for patients with less acuity who are discharged from hospitals overwhelmed by patients of higher acuity. LTCFs and SNFs must position themselves to effectively accomplish this role by developing emergency plans that describe how they would integrate the new patients into their existing structure.

Depending on the incident that causes the surge, LTCFs and SNFs must also include cohorting strategies in their EOPs. Cohorting patients assures that residents with the same confirmed infections are housed together and minimizes the movement of providers and staff to prevent the spread of infectious diseases within the institution.

Healthcare Surge Resources

- CDPH: [Hospital Surge Monitoring Survey](#)
- Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response: [Medical Surge Capacity and Capabilities \(MSCC\) Handbook](#)
- California Hospital Association: [Hospital Disaster Preparedness](#)

2 Infection Prevention Resources



ENHANCED BARRIER PRECAUTIONS (EBP)

EBP is an infection control intervention designed to reduce the transmission of multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) in nursing homes. EBP involves gown and glove use during high-contact resident care activities for residents known to be colonized or infected with an MDRO and those at increased risk of MDRO acquisition. For more information, visit:

- [Implementation of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Additional Considerations for California SNFs](#)

HAIP, Preparedness and Response (PRP) Program, and Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency (ICEMA) work together to provide facilities for PPE at our HAIP Collaboration meetings.



VACCINATION

[Vaccines](#) are the most successful and cost-effective healthcare intervention, saving an estimated 4 million lives globally each year. The [CDC](#) recommends the following vaccines for older adults: [COVID-19](#), [influenza](#) (flu), [RSV](#), and [Pneumococcal](#).

- Visit the SBCDPH [website](#) to find mobile vaccination clinics offering COVID-19 and flu vaccines.
- Complete a [request form](#) or contact Nancy Garcia at nancy.garcia@dph.sbcounty.gov if you are interested in hosting a public mobile vaccination event.

Visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.myturn.ca.gov) to find RSV and pneumococcal vaccines.

3 SBC Department of Public Health Resources



PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAM (PRP)

Coordinates with emergency responders and partner agencies to meet the public health needs of residents in response to disasters.

PRP can assist the SNFs in the following ways:

- Reviewing the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Offering technical assistance to enhance and strengthen both the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and COOP
- Providing customizable COOP and EOP templates
- Assisting in the development of their COOP
- **Website:** [PRP](#), [Healthcare Surge](#)
- **Phone:** (909) 252-4406, TTY: (909) 387-6359
- **Email:** PRP@dph.sbcounty.gov
- **Contact:** David Yleah (909) 361-2722



SITE VISITS

The SBCDPH HAIP Program conducts onsite Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) assessments to help facilities prepare, prevent, and respond to outbreaks. These nurses carry out HAIP assessments, identifying gaps in IPC practices, potential outbreak causes, and systemic issues that require attention. The evaluation provides an opportunity to support the facility's Infection Control Program. At the end of the visit, the HAIP nurses share their findings and recommendations with the facility Infection Preventionist (IP) and leadership. Please note that site visits conducted by SBCDPH HAIPP are NOT regulatory.

To schedule a site visit please email HAIP@dph.sbcounty.gov



Environmental Services (EVS) Training opportunity coming soon!
More information with details and registration link will be sent via email.

