



AARON PESKIN

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 8, 2020

TO: Dr. Grant Colfax, Department of Public Health, Director
Mary Ellen Carroll, Department of Emergency Management, Director
Sean Elsbernd, Mayor's Office, Chief of Staff

FROM: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

CC: Sunny Angulo, Supervisor Peskin, Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Department of Public Health Protocols for SRO residents

Please consider the following recommendations culled from weeks of work with the Department of Public Health both in and out of the Emergency Operations Center:

- **Establish and publish clear protocols for triaging PUI/COVID+ for SRO residents that is understood across all DPH teams including:**
 1. DPH to instruct the health care provider to hold the person for transportation to a hotel unit and under no circumstances shall the person be released to self-isolate in their SRO. (Note: Although the Department of Building Inspection (DBI) has a master list of registered SRO buildings, if a PUI/COVID+ confirms they rely on a bathroom shared by other members of the public that are not their roommates or family, they shall be presumed to need an isolation room and the City policy shall apply.)
 2. DPH Isolation & Quarantine team shall immediately begin assigning resident patients (including exposed family unable to self-isolate) to isolation hotel units and arrange for transportation.
 3. As soon as possible and not less than 4 hours, the DPH Contact Notification team shall contact the owner and manager of the SRO building that a resident has tested positive for COVID-19.
 4. If the owner or manager of the building cannot be reached within 4 hours then the DPH Contact Notification team shall contact a person or persons designated by a City-contracted SRO collaborative with the building address for help reaching the

- owner or operator to ensure that proper sanitization instructions are given to the owner and an offer of resources and City support for disinfecting communal areas, if the owner/operator cannot provide them on their own.
5. DPH shall inform the District Supervisor and the Department of Building Inspections of the building address and confirmation of the status of the tenants' quarantine within 24 hours.
 6. Establish a DPH hotline for SRO residents that would respond to questions about accessing COVID-19 health screenings and testing, including for those without access to a healthcare provider, and concerns regarding unsanitary conditions for DPH/DBI inspection follow-up. The person who calls the SRO hotline can be screened for symptoms and ideally referred to a neighborhood-based and culturally competent medical provider for testing. It should be clear to SRO residents that being exposed to a COVID+ individual automatically makes them PUI, and they should have access to a quarantine unit and a test. Currently there are emails for questions related to all Affordable Housing in the City, but the reality is that SRO residents by and large do not have consistent access to email.
 7. Establish clear DPH Contact Tracing protocols to swiftly identify and transport to an isolation unit all persons with prolonged contact with the infected person, including any co-habitant, or family member residing in the same building and arrange for testing.
 8. To the full extent possible under the law, provide specific information to the owner and operators of the SRO building regarding the residence of the infected person recognizing that failure to provide specific information may put third persons including service providers, custodial and in-home healthcare staff operating in the building at risk of infection and further community transmission.
 9. Create a centralized database that is shared across all DPH teams, the SRO Working Group and DBI of SRO addresses and action items without including patient names. It should include both COVID+ cases and PUI cases, whether the resident has been quarantined, whether the owner/operator has been notified of the PUI/COVID+ and whether a DPH environmental inspector has inspected to ensure that the proper sanitization of all communal areas has been done and that the appropriate notification has been posted for residents of the building. The City teams should have access to the same information and know the status of the building in question. (DBI has requested that *all* housing with confirmed COVID+ cases be shared with them, as Housing Inspectors are going into all housing typologies right now without knowing if there are cases on site.)
 10. The DPH Dashboard should include raw numbers about how many COVID+ cases are SRO residents, shelter residents or street homeless, which I understand that Sophia Kittler has elevated to you.
 11. Issue a public/written directive to all testing sites, hospitals and health clinics as to appropriate interview questions for patients being tested which specifically include questions about whether the individual lives in an SRO hotel/congregate site with shared bathrooms, kitchens or other facilities. Testing sites should make it clear that it is the City's policy that **anyone who is PUI or COVID+ and who has no other option to shelter in place outside of their SRO or at-risk congregate living site has priority placement in a quarantine unit** managed by HSA and coordinated by DPH. Testing sites shall immediately notify DPH of a PUI/COVID+ patient who confirms they live in an SRO or at-risk congregate site.

Background: Over the course of the last several weeks my office and I have been “elevating” to the Department of Public Health (DPH), through both the Population Health Team and the Emergency Operations Center, the necessity for COVID-19 protocols for Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) residents and those living in other transmissible congregate housing settings as well as transparency for SRO service providers and hotel operators.

Although some progress has been made, things are not moving fast enough and by DPH staff’s own account, the siloization of roles and lack of communication and information sharing across DPH teams is leading to delays and lack of follow-up on cases in these highly transmissible environments. I echo concerns from SRO stakeholders that some of these delays may have already resulted in increased risk of preventable exposure to contaminated conditions to third persons.

Via the Emergency Operation Center’s (EOC) SRO Working Group, it has become clear that at least three hotels with confirmed COVID-19 cases have not been notified about those cases, which prevents them from taking the actions necessary to decontaminate their buildings and ensure that the virus does not spread. It is also appears that in some instances the tenants in those buildings have not been properly quarantined nor had their contacts properly traced. DPH has consistently refused or otherwise been unable to verify the status of cases for me or my office, or present clear protocols on whatever process DPH has been devising.

Short of legislating requirements, these recommendations are my best attempt at solving for these gaps in communication and implementation.

Thanks for your consideration,