



DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELESSNESS AND
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS STATEMENT *****

SAN FRANCISCO SHELTER GUEST TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

The Department of Public Health initiates protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at congregate shelter.

San Francisco, CA – On Wednesday, April 1, 2020, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing learned from the Department of Public Health that a guest at the Division Circle Navigation Center tested positive for COVID-19. The person is not currently at the Navigation Center, is in good condition, and is currently recovering in an isolation hotel.

It is unclear at this point where the virus was contracted but the Department of Public Health (DPH), in partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) and St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco, will work together to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in this congregate shelter environment.

Immediately upon learning of the diagnosis, the shelter site was supplied with additional masks for all shelter guests and staff to wear at all times. DPH also initiated the contact tracing process to identify who the patient came into contact with both at the shelter and in the community.

In response to this positive test, DPH has deployed a physician and health workers to the shelter site to conduct symptoms and temperature screenings for all guests and staff. Any guest demonstrating symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be tested for COVID-19 and relocated to a staffed quarantine hotel room immediately. Other guests may be moved to hotels based on their risk of exposure and risk of disease. Staff at the shelter will also be provided medical support and space to self-isolate or quarantine if needed.

Additionally, the City is deploying a professional cleaning crew on-site to thoroughly disinfect the shelter. DPH staff will be on-site to answer staff and guest questions. The site management will continue to guide social distancing protocols and implement shelter health screening protocols.

Expansion of congregate settings and hotel rooms are a key part of the City's strategy for reducing the spread of COVID-19 among high-risk populations. The new shelter at Moscone West will add approximately 390 new beds to the congregate shelter system allowing greater social distancing at all shelters. One of the top priorities for the use of hotel rooms is to provide both quarantine and isolation rooms for COVID positive people living in congregate settings as well as high-risk shelter guests.



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As part of the City's commitment to prioritize vulnerable populations in the COVID-19 response, on March 5, 2020, Mayor Breed and Supervisor Peskin announced a \$5 million investment to protect vulnerable populations, including people living in congregate settings. This initiative included expanded cleaning in shelters, increased meal offerings at shelters, increased access to hygiene supplies, and expanded hours for the few shelters that were not already 24/7 to encourage homeless individuals to remain indoors.

"We have been preparing for this situation for weeks, and HSH and DPH are wrapping around the patient with health care and support. The wellbeing of our homeless neighbors is our top priority, and we will continue to work in partnership with our nonprofit service providers, DPH, and the entire City to aggressively contain the virus and protect our community," said Abigail Stewart-Kahn, Interim Director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. "To the Division Circle Navigation Center community, I am here for you, HSH and DPH are here for you as is the entire City."

Over the past several weeks, the City has been preparing for this eventuality and aggressively responding to localized outbreaks in other congregate residential communities. The City has learned from these experiences and will bring those insights to bear in its effort to contain the virus and protect the health of shelter guests, staff, and the San Francisco community.