



Erica Pan, MD, MPH
Interim County Health Officer
Alameda County Public Health Department
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
(510) 267-8000
www.acphd.org



Lisa B. Hernandez, MD, MPH
Health Officer
Health, Housing & Community Services Department
Public Health Division
(510) 981-5300
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/publichealth

JOINT HEALTH ADVISORY ALAMEDA COUNTY AND CITY OF BERKELEY

Discharge Guidelines for Patients Experiencing Homelessness January 31, 2019

Effective January 1, 2019, California Health & Safety Code Section 1262.5 requires general acute care hospitals, acute psychiatric hospitals and special hospitals to offer the following to patients experiencing homelessness prior to discharge:

- Screening or referrals “for infectious disease common to the region, as determined by the local health department”
- Immunizations appropriate to their “presenting medical condition”

This advisory provides joint guidance to hospitals within the local health jurisdictions of Alameda County and the City of Berkeley to comply with Section 1262.5. The guidance is based on local and state infectious disease epidemiology and national guidance on screening and immunizations for infectious diseases. Alameda County has a persistent HIV epidemic and rising rates of syphilis, including congenital syphilis. Bay Area counties have relatively high rates of syphilis in persons experiencing homelessness. Hepatitis C rates are likely elevated in persons experiencing homelessness in Alameda County, based on known risk factors. These infections can be diagnosed with blood tests and treated or cured.

In addition, Hepatitis A outbreaks have affected homeless populations in California and nationwide despite the availability of an effective vaccine, and outbreaks can spread rapidly within and beyond encampments and last months.

Prior to discharging a patient experiencing homelessness, hospitals are requested to:

1. Screen or make referrals for screening for the following infectious diseases:

- **HIV** at least one time for all persons not known to be living with HIV
- **Hepatitis C** at least one time for persons not known to be infected with Hepatitis C Virus
- **Syphilis** at least one time

Persons at increased risk for these infections should be re-screened at least annually.

2. Immunize patients according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines

- As of October 2018, **Hepatitis A immunization** is recommended for persons experiencing homelessness
- See ACIP Schedule for additional recommendations based on age and medical conditions

3. Immediately report suspected or confirmed acute Hepatitis A cases to local public health

- Call ACPHD at 510-267-3250, M-F 8:30a-5p, or after hours at Alameda County Dispatch, 925-422-7595. For **Berkeley residents only**, contact the Berkeley Communicable Disease program at 510-981-5292.

Resource Links:

[Complete adult immunization recommendations \(ACIP\)](#)

[Preventative care grade A and B screening recommendations \(USPSTF\)](#)

[Alameda County resources for patient referral](#)

[City of Berkeley resources for patient referral](#)

[California Health and Safety Code Section 1262.5](#)