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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES**



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June 17, 2021

Honorable Donna Stashyn  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Solano Superior Court  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield CA 94533

**Regarding: County Responses to FY2020-2021 Grand Jury Report Entitled:  
COVID-19 Resident Safety in Nursing Homes**

Dear Judge Stashyn:

This letter is in response to the report of the Civil Grand Jury 2020-2021 "COVID-19 Resident Safety in Nursing Homes" submitted to me on May 28, 2021. The Department of Health & Social Services appreciates the opportunity to respond to your findings and recommendations.

Below you will find Health & Social Services' responses to both the findings and recommendations from your report:

**First Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 1** – Isolation brought about by COVID-19 lockdowns caused unexpected mental and physical health issues.

**Recommendation 1** – In full compliance with CDC protocols, Solano County Division of Public Health be available to assist facilities in putting stringent screening protocols in place to protect residents once visitors are allowed to enter the facilities.

**Response to First Finding** – The Department of Health and Social Services agrees with this finding

**Response to Recommendation 1** – The Department agrees with this recommendation. We have developed and provided to facilities protocols and procedures for screening of staff, residents, and visitors. These guidelines conform to the California Department of Public Health and California Department of Social Services screening guidelines for their respective licensed facilities. These screening guidelines are modified as CDC and State guidelines are modified and most recently, they have been modified to address vaccination of residents and visitors.

## **Second Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 2** – Registered Nurses, Licensed Vocational Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, and other healthcare employees need more training in infection control techniques including personal protection equipment use.

**Recommendation 2a** – If requested by the facilities, Solano County Division of Public Health provide support for improved staff training as well as on-going mentoring.

**Recommendation 2b** – If authorized by the State, Solano County Division of Public Health support the state's efforts to establish a system for monitoring the implementation of California State Assembly Bill 2644.

**Response to Second Finding** – The Department of Health and Social Services agrees with this finding

**Response to Recommendation 2a** – The recommendation has been implemented. Early in the pandemic, we established an Infection Prevention and Control Team, which has been regularly contacting facilities to provide training to staffs and has also made itself available to facilities to assist with on-going mentoring. In addition, training assistance has been available from the healthcare program of the California Department of Public Health.

**Response to Recommendation 2b** – The recommendation has not yet been implemented. The Department of Health and Social Services is awaiting authorization by the State.

## **Third Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 3** – Staff members have not been properly trained in implementing proper infectious disease protocols.

**Recommendation 3** – Upon request, Health and Social Services work with skilled nursing facilities to ensure that new and existing staff undergo continual training in federal and state prescribed infectious disease safety protocols.

**Response to Third Finding** – The Department of Health and Social Services agrees with this finding.

**Response to Recommendation 3** – The recommendation has been implemented. Early in the pandemic, we established an Infection Prevention and Control Team, which has been regularly contacting facilities to provide training to staffs and has also made itself available to facilities to assist with on-going mentoring. In addition, training assistance has been available from the healthcare program of the California Department of Public Health.

## **Fourth Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 4** – Evidence provided by health professionals indicates staff brought COVID-19 into facilities.

**Recommendation 4** – When requested by the facility, Solano County Division of Public Health establish and continue to provide more stringent screening protocols of all staff.

**Response to Fourth Finding** - The Department of Health and Social Services agrees with this finding.

**Response to Recommendation 4** – This recommendation has been implemented. The Department of Health and Social Services has developed and provided to facilities protocols and procedures for screening of staffs, residents and visitors. These guidelines conform to the California Department of Public Health and California Department of Social Services screening guidelines for their respective licensed facilities. These screening guidelines are modified as CDC and State guidelines are modified.

**Fifth Finding and Recommendations**

**Finding 5** – Ombudsman staff did not visit the Skilled Nursing Facilities in Solano County from March 16, 2020 through August 31, 2020.

**Recommendation 5** – The Administration of the Division of Public Health has indicated that the Ombudsman staff can request and receive a waiver during lockdowns to safely enter SNFs. In light of this, Ombudsman staff request a waiver and continue to visit Skilled Nursing Facilities.

**Response to Fifth Finding** - The Department of Health and Social Services agrees with this finding.

**Response to Recommendation 5** - This recommendation has been implemented. Current visitation guidance by the California Department of Public Health and California Department of Social Services permits unrestricted visitation by Ombudsman personnel. In addition, Ombudsman staffs have been eligible for COVID-19 vaccination since early 2021.

**Closing:** The Department of Health and Social Services thanks the Solano County Civil Grand Jury for the opportunity to respond to the report COVID-10 Resident Safety in Nursing Homes.

Respectfully,



Gerald R. Huber  
Director, Health & Social Services

cc: Bela Matyas, Deputy Director, Public Health  
Birgitta Corsello, County Administrative Officer  
Solano County Board of Supervisors  
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