

February 18, 2020

Via Email

Rosanna Mendez
Executive Director
SEIU Local 121RN
1040 Lincoln Avenue, First Floor
Pasadena, CA 91103

Re: Response to SEIU Local 121RN's Request re 2019-nCoV Preparedness

Dear Ms. Mendez,

Below are the responses of West Hills Hospital & Medical Center (the "Hospital") to the Union's request for information regarding CoronaVirus preparedness. For ease of reference, I have quoted below each of the requests made by the Union.

1) What steps are being taken to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV?

Response: The Hospital has posted the attached recommended signage from the Los Angeles Public Health Department ("LAPHD") in all waiting areas and entry points into the Hospital alerting patients/visitors that they must notify a staff member immediately if they are exhibiting signs and symptoms of coronavirus. In addition, the Hospital has respiratory stations with masks and alcohol gel available to all patients and visitors. The Hospital has provided the attached information regarding 2019-nCoV to all of its healthcare workers via the weekly newsletter as well as via handed educational materials on what to do with a suspect case, engineering controls, and PPE.

2) What steps are being taken to identify and isolate patients with 2019-nCoV and inform key facility staff and public health authorities?

Response: The Hospital has notified EMT services and ED staff to screen all patients according to updated LAPHD recommendations. The staff is using the guided handout provided by LAPHD, which was provided in response to Request No. 1, to screen suspected cases of 2019-nCoV.

3) What steps are being taken to care for a limited number of patients with known or suspected 2019-nCoV as part of routine operations?

Response: Hospital executives are engaging in ongoing Coronavirus preparedness meetings. If there are a limited number of patients with known or suspected 2019-nCoV, those patients will be treated in the Hospital's negative pressure rooms. An inventory of all negative pressure rooms has taken place in addition to the verification of the efficacy of these patient rooms.

4) What steps are being taken to potentially care for a larger number of patients in the context of escalating transmission?

Response: Hospital executives are engaging in ongoing Coronavirus preparedness meetings in which they are continuing to review the Hospital's attached influenza pandemic and influx of patients policies and procedures to guide them in preparation for a potential increased volume of patients.

5) What steps are being taken to outline plans for internal and external communication?

Response: The Hospital is working closely with its internal Marketing and Communications departments to keep staff informed on any new developments, such as through weekly newsletters, which was provided in response to Request No. 1. The Hospital will continue to provide communications to internal and external parties as the needs arise.

6) What steps are being taken to monitor and manage healthcare personnel with potential for exposure to 2019-nCoV?

Response: To facilitate exposure evaluation and follow-up, upon receiving a patient that is suspected to have coronavirus, the Hospital will keep a running list of healthcare personnel ("HCP") that have been in contact with the suspect patient. At a minimum, the Hospital will adhere to recommendations made in the Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by the CDC, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>. The Hospital will collaborate with LAPHD in identifying the risk category that the healthcare workers fall into and implement work restrictions as per the guided table in the guideline. If HCP begin to exhibit symptoms of 2019-nCoV, they will be treated the same as a patient exhibiting symptoms.

7) What steps are being taken to manage the impact on patients, the facility, and healthcare personnel?

Response: The Union's Request No. 7 is overly broad, vague, and ambiguous. Subject to the foregoing, the Hospital refers the Union to its responses and documents produced in response to Requests No. 1-6.

8) Ensure facility infection prevention and control policies are consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2019-nCoV guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>).

Response: The Hospital asserts that it is not clear whether a response to Request No. 8 is necessary, as it does not contain a question. Subject to the foregoing, the Hospital responds that it is closely monitoring the CDC's coronavirus guidance and is continuing to ensure that its policies are consistent with such guidance.

9) What procedures have been developed for rapidly identifying and isolating suspected 2019-nCoV patients?

Response: All Hospital staff has been educated on the screening form provided by the LAPHD, which has been provided in response to Request No 1. Further responding, the Hospital is complying with the following CDC guidelines:

1. CDC 2019 Novel CoronaVirus (2019-nCoV) Hospital Preparedness Checklist, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/hospital-preparedness-checklist.pdf>
2. CDC Frontline Healthcare Personnel Preparedness Checklist, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/infection-control.html>
3. CDC Situation Summary, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
4. CDC Interim Guidelines for Clinical Specimens, available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidelines-clinical-specimens.html
5. CDC Interim Guidelines for Infection Control, available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Finfection-control.html
6. Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to patients with 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

10) What is the ability to implement triage activities based on public health guidance including at the facility and using remote (i.e., phone, internet-based) methods where appropriate to minimize demand on the health care system?

Response: The Hospital is currently working on a phone/online message system to notify patients of the most recent coronavirus developments. This system is being implemented, in part, to minimize the demand on HCP to convey such information.

11) How many negative pressure rooms are available and what steps have been taken to ensure that negative-pressure airborne infection isolation rooms are available and functioning correctly and are appropriately monitored for airflow and exhaust handling?

Response: The Hospital has 11 negative pressure rooms available and they have all been appropriately tested for functionality.

12) What assessments have been done on availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other infection prevention and control supplies (e.g., hand hygiene supplies) that would be used for both healthcare personnel (HCP) protection and source control for infected patients (e.g., facemask on the patient)?

Response: The Hospital is continuing to work with its internal supply chain team to inventory the number of supplies available. If necessary, the Hospital has backup supplies at the county level through EMS and also at the corporate level.

13) What is the facility's contingency plans if the demand for PPE or other supplies exceeds supply? What is the current supply level?

Response: The Union's request for "current supply level" is overbroad, vague, and ambiguous. Subject to the foregoing, the Hospital is currently not experiencing any shortages and have full supply in every unit of N-95, gowns, gloves, masks. Further responding, the Hospital refers the Union to its Response to Request No. 12.

14) Please attach any plans for implementation of surge capacity procedures and crisis standards of care. Is there a contingency plan to staff up RNs if needed?

Response: The Hospital refers the Union to its response and documents produced in response to Request No. 4.

15) Please provide policies & procedures for laboratory submission of specimens for 2019-nCoV testing.

Response: The Hospital's laboratory is following the CDC's guidelines for collecting, handling, and testing clinical specimens from persons under investigation for coronavirus, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>. The Hospital will also follow any additional recommendation set forth by the LAPHD.

16) Has there been an assessment on the effectiveness of environmental cleaning procedures (<https://www.cdc.gov/HAI/toolkits/Evaluating-Environmental-Cleaning.html>); What education/refresher training has been provided for environmental services personnel and other HCPs?

Response: The Hospital is currently providing refresher courses for all EVS personnel on cleaning and disinfecting guidelines, which are consistent with CDC guidance.

17) Please attach any policies and procedures for monitoring and managing HCP with potential for exposure to 2019-nCoV, including ensuring that HCP have ready access, including via telephone, to medical consultation.

Response: The Hospital refers the Union to its response to Request No. 6.

18) Have all staff and appropriate HCPs been medically cleared, fit-tested, and trained for respirator use and/or PAPR?

Response: Yes – staff and appropriate HCP are medically cleared, fit tested, and trained for respirator use and/ or PPR at New Employee Orientation and annually thereafter.

19) Please provide the education and refresher training to HCP regarding 2019-nCoV diagnosis, how to obtain specimen testing, appropriate PPE use, triage procedures including patient placement, HCP sick leave policies, and how and to whom 2019-nCoV cases should be reported, procedures to take following unprotected exposures (i.e., not wearing recommended PPE) to suspected 2019-nCoV patients at the facility.

Response: The Hospital asserts that it is not clear whether a response to Request No. 19 is necessary, as it does not seem to contain a question, but rather directs the Hospital to provide certain training to its HCP. Subject to the foregoing, the Hospital refers the Union to its responses and documents produced in response to Requests No. 1-18.

20) What are plans for visitor access and movement within the facility?

Response: The Union's request for plans regarding "movement within the facility" is vague and ambiguous. Subject to the foregoing, the Hospital has posted the recommended signage from the LAPHD (provided in response to Request No. 1) in all waiting areas and entry points into the Hospital alerting patients and visitors that they must notify a staff member immediately if they are exhibiting signs and symptoms of coronavirus. Further, the Hospital will follow CDC recommendations on screening for signs and symptoms before entering the facility, apply restrictions if necessary, and instruct on hand hygiene and PPE usage. Further, no visitors will be permitted into an airborne isolation room of a person under investigation or confirmed with coronavirus until directed by proper health authorities.

21) Which specific persons have been designated within the facility who are responsible for communication with public health officials and dissemination of information to other HCP at the facility and SEIU121RN?

Response: The Hospital's Infection Prevention department, including the Director of Infection Prevention, is currently responsible for communication with public health officials, such as the LAPHD. The Hospital's Infection Prevention, Marketing, and Communication departments are responsible for dissemination of information to HCP and staff. The Hospital's Labor and Employee Relations department is responsible for communications with SEIU121RN.

22) Who is the local or state health department contact for reporting 2019-nCoV cases and confirm reporting requirements? Please provide their name, title, phone and email address and agency they work for.

Response: The Hospital refers the union to LAPHD Acute Communicable Disease Control's telephone number, 213-240-7941 and 213-974-1234 after hours.

Sincerely,



Adam Gardner
Director, Labor & Employee Relations