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Riverside County  
**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Teams deploy to support licensed care facilities**

Specialized teams designed to educate and equip employees at licensed care facilities throughout Riverside County will start visiting the locations today.

The four SOS (Skilled Nursing Facilities Outreach Support) teams consist of workers from American Medical Response and other healthcare partners who could be involved in patient care, said Kim Saruwatari, director of Public Health. The teams will target specific regions – Northwest, Southwest, Central and Eastern – in the county and work with staff members at each facility to demonstrate proper safety techniques, provide proper safety gear and educate them about COVID-19 to dispel rumors and correct erroneous information.

“There has been so much incorrect information that has spread that many employees in these facilities are scared to show up for work,” said Saruwatari. “Information is power, and by providing these employees with accurate information about how COVID-19 is and is not spread, they will be confident when they report to work.”

Saruwatari said the teams will also provide facilities with the proper personal protection equipment.

The target team concept is aimed at preventing a situation that occurred earlier this month at a Riverside rehabilitation facility.

“These teams are vital to address the pressing needs at group healthcare sites. The health and safety of the employees and residents at these facilities are critical,” said Chair V. Manuel Perez, Fourth District Supervisor.

More than 80 patients, including 34 who had earlier tested positive for COVID-19, were evacuated from the Magnolia Rehabilitation and Nursing Center and transferred to different locations throughout the county. The previous day, operators of the facility informed the county that most of the regular staff did not show up for their scheduled day shift, prompting health officials to quickly find nurses and others to fill in.

When workers failed to show up for the night shift, Dr. Cameron Kaiser, the county's public health officer, ordered the facility evacuated.

Saruwatari said the four teams will also work with the various facilities to determine if they could be at risk for operational impacts.

Rehabilitation facilities and nursing homes present a challenge for health officials due to the age and health conditions of the residents, as well as their close proximity to each other. The county prioritizes investigations in these facilities due to the high risk of serious illness that outbreaks pose.

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