

## Introduction

To minimize the spread of COVID-19, Healthy Davis Together (HDT), a joint initiative between the City of Davis, California and University of California, Davis recommends specific quarantine and isolation practices for infected individuals and their close contacts. While effective for preventing the spread of the virus, these guidelines can present barriers for individuals and families. Individuals living in close quarters are often unable to effectively quarantine or isolate themselves from other members of their household — risking virus transmission. Additionally, for those unable to work virtually, quarantine and isolation requirements often result in lost wages — putting further stress on families amidst a difficult economic climate. As a result, some are hesitant to adopt asymptomatic testing.

In order to address these barriers and facilitate wide-spread adoption of asymptomatic testing to minimize the spread of COVID-19, Healthy Davis Together extends quarantine and isolation (Q/I) support, including housing, food, and salary support, to all HDT-qualified infected individuals and close contacts. UC Davis offers parallel services (excluding income support) for students living on and off-campus — dedicating an on-campus dormitory for quarantine and isolation purposes.

HDT aims to combat the spread of COVID-19 in the Davis community through a host of epidemiological and health behavior change initiatives that include free asymptomatic testing for all Davis community members, environmental monitoring, business community relations, and quarantine and isolation support. **The purpose of this paper is to share HDT's approach to quarantine and isolation, as well as lessons learned that can be applied by others in the future.** The following outlines:

- HDT's **process** to connect individuals to support
- The role of **case management**
- HDT's approach to **quarantine and isolation housing**
- How HDT provided, and how the community responded to, **food and income support**

**Quarantine** separates clients who have come into contact with a known COVID-positive individual, but do not have a positive test result themselves

**Isolation** housing is for clients who have a tested positive for COVID-19





## The Process

HDT offers free saliva-based COVID-19 tests to anyone who lives or works in Davis and members of their household. When HDT identifies a positive test, HDT's contact tracing team reaches out to the client to identify close contacts and conduct a preliminary screening of the patient's needs to see if they meet program requirements. For those who indicate home isolation could be problematic, the contact tracer asks permission to pass on their contact information to the City's third-party case management team or provides the patient the case management "hotline" for additional screening. The third-party case management provider, CommuniCare Health Centers, which is highlighted in more detail below, contacts the client to conduct a thorough needs assessment. While CommuniCare is responsible for direct communication with clients, the City of Davis provides overall program management (e.g., securing the housing, acting as the fiscal manager for the program, and providing

post-occupancy turnover of the apartments). The City provides food support (in the form of gift cards) to CommuniCare and also handles all referrals to housing and hotels.

There are minimal criteria for receiving HDT quarantine and isolation support services; the client has to live or work in Davis and has to have either had a positive COVID test or have been exposed to a known COVID-positive individual in a way that could have resulted in virus transmission. Local hospitals, clinics, and the County Health Department were also informed of the criteria and process to access Q/I services, but throughout the lifetime of the program, the majority of referrals have come from the extensive testing being conducted as part of HDT.

## Case Management

Laws regarding access, maintenance, and release of health information affecting Q/I support are complicated and nuanced. HDT and the City therefore sought out additional resource support and knowledge to conduct ongoing case management for clients seeking Q/I assistance, partnering with non-profit provider CommuniCare Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

CommuniCare has a long and successful history within the Davis community. They have provided similar support and case management for other City/County health programs. They were a natural partner for the HDT Q/I program and serve as a subcontractor to the City. CommuniCare has provided a variety of services for the program, including preliminary screening of clients, ongoing case management, and, when necessary, wrap-around services to address physical or mental health needs not COVID-related.

The HDT testing clinical staff works directly with case managers, providing case managers with the contact information of the client. The case manager then reaches out to the client to screen for additional resource needs, such as the client's ability to isolate at home, their food support, income support, and if they have any other physical or mental health needs.

If the client has quarantine housing needs, the case manager places the client in one of two local hotels. If the client has isolation housing needs, the case manager places them in one of five local apartment units available for their isolation period. For both quarantine and isolation clients, case managers will also ensure they have access to food delivery (i.e. DoorDash or Grubhub) gift cards or local grocery gift cards.

Additionally, the case manager calls all quarantine and isolation clients daily to check on their well-being. If they have mental or physical health needs, CommuniCare is equipped to provide or connect clients to a wide array of medical services. For example, if a quarantined or isolated client has ongoing mental health or substance abuse support needs or does not have access to a primary care physician, the case manager is trained and positioned to provide direct support or access to those services.

## Housing

To ensure COVID-exposed and COVID-positive individuals can remove themselves from their family and friends during the quarantine or isolation period, HDT secured housing in the form of apartments and hotel rooms.



### Quarantine Housing

Quarantine has been used to separate clients who have come into contact with a known COVID-positive individual, but do not have a positive test result themselves. HDT provides quarantine housing for the entire CDC recommended period. If the client receives a positive test during the quarantine period, they become an isolation client.

At the outset of the Q/I program, the demand for this service was unknown – it was the first time it was being offered to Davis community members who might need it. Initially, the plan was to rent local apartments to provide Q/I, however, renting market rate apartments was complicated and potentially costly. To simplify the process, the program attempted to secure local hotel rooms for both quarantine and isolation patients. While hotels were reluctant to take known COVID-positive patients for isolation, they were willing to provide housing for contacts needing quarantine services. HDT negotiated below market rates with two local hotels, which allowed for direct booking and direct payment for the rooms. Direct booking allows for quick reservations and a level of privacy for the client.

One issue that arose during the process of booking hotels was a credit card hold for incidentals. Typically, the hotel will place a \$50/day hold on a credit card as security and to cover incidentals. This was problematic because a 14-day stay meant upwards of a \$700 hold on their credit card. While the fee was not actually charged to the card, unless used to make purchases, it meant the client would not have access to those funds for other needs. For some clients, this was too large of a barrier. After discussion, the hotels agreed to a much smaller credit card hold – the equivalent of a typical one-day hold (\$50). This gave the hotel a level of security against damage and ensured the client would have use of their credit card for other reasons.

Given the low occupancy rate at the local hotels, the hotel rooms provided for quarantine were able to be placed away from other hotel guests; situated in a corner of the building with several vacant rooms in between or located on their own floor. Hotel cleaning staff provided all cleaning services after the client vacated the hotel room.

### Isolation Housing

Isolation housing is used for clients who have a tested positive for COVID-19. HDT also provides isolation housing for entire CDC recommended period. HDT provides isolation housing that is sufficiently comfortable and properly equipped so the clients are able to stay inside the apartment for the recommended time.

As hotels were lodging clients in quarantine, alternate lodging was needed for isolation. The challenges with isolation housing included finding apartment management companies willing to house known COVID-positive clients, determining the volume of units, and equipping the apartments with all necessary amenities (i.e.,



furnishings, kitchen supplies, linens and bedding, internet, cable, and basic food needs). The lease on the apartment as well as the amenities had the potential to be very costly in Davis, which historically has very low availability for rentals.

After reaching out to the local community, a local property management company stepped forward to assist. Initially, two apartments were provided. The property management company furnished the apartments, which were normally leased unfurnished. Additionally, all basic kitchen supplies were provided, and utilities, internet services, and cable TV were provided for less than 25% of the typical cost, making this partnership very beneficial to the HDT program.

About two weeks after the Q/I program started, HDT filled both apartments. To ensure HDT would be ready to meet upcoming Q/I needs, more apartments were requested. The property management company agreed to increase its commitment to five total apartments under the same conditions.

After each client vacated the apartment, the unit was professionally cleaned to CDC standards. This cleaning service is approximately \$1,000/unit for each cleaning. An interesting problem that has persisted during the entire program is laundry services. Commercial cleaning companies, local drop off/pick up laundry services, and larger industrial laundry services were not able or willing to take the linens due to the hesitation of handling COVID-positive linens or the ad-hoc nature of the services required. To meet the need, the City volunteered, and staff laundered the linens for the apartments.

To provide security for the City and the property management company, clients housed in the apartments were required to sign a sublease. The City signed as the primary lessor, but the client had to sign as a sublessor. The sublease bound the client to certain rules (e.g., no pets) and outlined the agreed upon tenancy, generally 10 days. The sublease provided the City leverage if the isolated client did not leave as scheduled.

## Food Support

Food support has been a part of both HDT quarantine and isolation services, as well as a stand-alone service — if a person can quarantine/isolate at home but is unable to shop, case managers can provide either food delivery gift cards or grocery gift cards. This has been the most frequently requested service under the Q/I program.

The City purchased both types of gift cards and provided them to the case managers to issue. However, the grocery gift cards were more challenging to use, as the user must present the gift card to the store at the time of purchase — the cards could not be used to make purchases over the phone or online. To resolve this, the program established a relationship with the two primary grocery outlets in the City. An arrangement was

established for the case manager to provide the card number to the grocery manager for the order to be filled, allowing the case manager, friend, or family member to pick up and deliver the groceries to the client.



## Income Support

Some community members may be reluctant to quarantine or isolate due to the potential of lost income. An individual may not have access to sick leave or vacation, making it especially challenging to take the recommended time to quarantine or isolate. To address this barrier, the program added income support.

As part of the screening process conducted by case managers, inquiries are made regarding the client's financial stability. To be eligible for income support, clients need to meet five requirements:

1. Individual is employed in or lives within the city limits of Davis.
2. Individual has exhausted paid leave options (i.e. employer paid sick leave, employer paid vacation, or federal COVID-19 benefit for paid leave, etc.)
3. Individual is in quarantine due to known exposure to a person with a positive COVID-19 test or an individual is in isolation due to a confirmed positive COVID-19 test.
4. Individual is able to provide adequate documentation that demonstrates loss of income due to COVID-19.
5. Individual's household income does not exceed 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI).



A case manager may request a pay stub or other proof of income from the client's employer that shows income level and available paid time off. Approved individuals could receive financial support up to \$1,120. Individuals who were reluctant to fill out federal W-9 forms could only receive amounts up to \$600, which do not require W-9 reporting.

Outside of the specific Q/I program, HDT funding was also used to provide financial assistance to 31 households in Davis identified as in immediate risk due to a gap of time during which Federal assistance had expired but State assistance would not be in place for one month. ApoYolo is a local non-profit organization supporting low-income households of non-native English speakers and requested and received a grant of \$11,500, which they administered directly to landlords in amounts ranging from \$68 to \$1,000 to offset or pay for portions of utilities and rent bills.

### Q/I Kits

A quarantine and isolation kit has been offered to all HDT Q/I clients. The kit contains a few items to ease the transition to quarantine or isolation, including an informational letter from the Mayor of Davis and the UC Davis Chancellor that details Q/I self-care as well as pulse oximeters and thermometers to assist in self-monitoring.

### Results

HDT's Q/I program began providing services in December 2020. During the life of the program, Q/I services has involved:

- 35 community members contacted and screened
- 32 community members received services
- 29 households served
- 76 total nights of isolation
- 42 hotel nights provided
- Approximately \$3,500 in food services provided
- 2 households received income support, totaling \$2,240

UC Davis's parallel Q/I program for students has received much higher volume, with 456 students (including 234 living off-campus) utilizing campus Q/I housing.

## Key Takeaways

- **Food service has been the most frequently requested support.** Relatively few clients have been interested in utilizing the full benefits of the program, specifically lodging. With most clients choosing to stay at home during their quarantine/isolation period, food service has been the most frequently requested support. Food service is therefore the most cost-efficient way to provide at least the most basic support – it requires no housing or travel demand, and delivery can be done over the phone and/or online.
- **Have a sublease in place for isolation clients.** For isolation housing in apartments, communities need to ensure there is a sublease in place with the isolation client. In California, laws can make it difficult to evict a tenant. A sublease with the client can help provide clear expectations for occupancy and for vacating the unit.
- **Income support is important, but challenging.** Clients most in need of income support have often been reluctant to apply. Communities interested in providing this service need to get legal advice first to determine income tax reporting requirements (i.e., W-9 requirements).
- **Cleaning isolation locations post-occupancy can be challenging and expensive.** The CDC recommendation for cleaning units is not routine; it requires specialized training, equipment, and chemicals. Additionally, the management of laundry services should be researched. Local, small-scale laundry services did not want COVID-positive laundry and large commercial laundry services wanted predictable and regular demand before agreeing to provide services. Advance planning to address these potential challenges is critical before providing isolation housing.
- **Grocery gift cards are most useful if they can be used both online and in person.** To facilitate the use of grocery gift cards, communities need to work with grocery outlets in advance to confirm if cards can be used online rather than in person.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HDT would like to acknowledge Mike Webb, Diane Parro, Steven Pierce, Kelly Stachowicz as well as other City of Davis and UC Davis representatives for their outstanding contributions to HDT's Quarantine and Isolation Program and input on this document.