



Keeping Our Families and Communities Healthy

The newsletter for Redirected State Staff working for the California Connected COVID-19 Contact Tracing Program

A Message from Holly Howard

The weather is warming up and with that comes Spring Fever and everyone wanting to get outside and enjoy themselves. We have to keep in mind that this time last year saw a surge in cases. Holidays, graduations and barbeques are great reasons to get outside and get together but now more than ever, we want to be good ambassadors encouraging caution among family and friends to safe distance, wear masks and wash our hands regularly.



We need to give our state time to disseminate vaccinations more broadly and keep those numbers on a downward trend, especially now that kids are headed back to school part and full time. They are excited to be in class and see friends again so we need to remind them of the importance of following Covid-19 precautions while we work to get a vaccine approved for children under 16.

People still have many questions about Covid-19 and being vaccinated and we have many resources for them. Be sure to point them towards our informative websites featured monthly on our Technology Updates page. **Vaccinate ALL 58 - Let's Get to Immunity** is featured this month, be sure to check it out as well as the others provided for all residents to use. They can find information, sign up for a vaccination and even be notified electronically if they've been exposed.



Let's keep working together, encouraging those around us to follow precautions and get vaccinated so we can all return to doing those things we love, with those we love.

-Holly Howard

Contact Tracing Program Director

Training Updates

****All Trainings and Mentorship Summits Must Be Approved By Your CT Supervisor Prior To Registering/Attendance****



April 26-28 (9-1pm) and in Spanish 28-30 (9-1pm) :
VTA: Cultural Humility for Case Investigation and Contact Tracing. A 12-hour course (9am-1pm), for staff that have already completed CT or CI VTA. Learn the tenets of cultural humility and how to apply them towards respectful and effective engagement of COVID-19 cases and contacts during investigation and tracing interviews. After your CT Supervisor approves your training attendance, register here: <https://pandemic.ucsf.edu/cultural-humility>

****New!** Is Your LHJ Using Staff for Vaccine Coordination?**

If so, please check with your CT Supervisor about attending this important training! **VTA Vaccine Communications** for Case Investigators and Contact Tracers state-redireted sessions to be held **April 16 and 21 from 9:00am to 1:00pm**, with mandatory 1.5 hours of pre-course self-study. Case Investigators and Contact Tracers will learn to effectively communicate information about COVID-19 vaccines with members of the public. Priority given to those performing vaccine coordination activities due to limited course capacity. Additional courses to be offered in May and June. If you are in a priority group for the April courses, you will receive a registration link via your CT Supervisor. Please note - the April courses will be offered via Google Classroom which may be blocked by State computers. Thank you in advance for using a personal computer (if necessary).

April 20 & 27: Mentorship Summits for Recently Deployed CIs/CTs. Get guidance and support while learning interviewing tips and tricks. For registration information, please contact - CIMentoring@cdph.ca.gov

Mentorship Summits for Recently Deployed CIs/CTs.

Each Tuesday from 2:30pm-4:00pm, the CI/CT Mentorship Team will host a summit to provide guidance and support to CIs/CTs who have recently been deployed to assist with the State's COVID-19 efforts.

The format is a facilitated, free-flowing, unscripted conversation between staff and our team of experienced disease investigators on the tips, tricks, and challenges of conducting Case Investigation and Contact Tracing activities. Summits focus entirely on disease investigation/conducting the interview and will NOT provide guidance on CalCONNECT/data systems, HR, or deployment concerns.

We strive to provide a safe space where staff feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings and anxieties without fear of ridicule or repercussion. Therefore, we kindly ask that managers/supervisors/team leads NOT attend this session.

These summits are **limited to staff deployed within the last 30 days**. Additional mentorship opportunities are available for individual teams and more experienced staff.

- Please note that these sessions are optional
- **CT Supervisor approval is required prior to registration.**
- Registration is required.
- Space is limited. Please *only* register if you plan to attend, and cancel if your plans change.

For more information, please contact CIMentoring@cdph.ca.gov.

Technology Updates



Vaccinate ALL 58- Let's Get to Immunity

The Covid -19 vaccines are safe, effective and 100% free for all residents of California's 58 counties. Vaccinate to stop the spread to your friends, your family, your elders, and the people who work hard to keep our communities safe and open. Vaccination helps us get to community-wide protection (sometimes called herd immunity) much more quickly, saving millions of lives. When enough individuals become vaccinated, it adds up to protection for everyone. Learn more here- <https://www.vaccinateall58.com>

Are You Using 'My Turn' to Get Your Vaccination Notification?

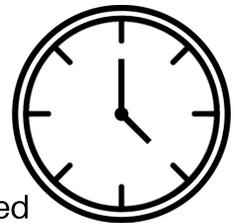
Use this easy website to find out if you are eligible to receive the vaccination or be notified of when it's your turn. This site isn't just for Contact Tracers, this is for all Californians so please share the link with family, friends and neighbors. <https://myturn.ca.gov/>

CT/CI Program Timekeeping Portal

Now you can enter timesheets electronically!

Portal link: <https://cdphcontacttracers.powerappsportals.us/>

- Register for the portal using the registration link in your invite email
- Navigate to the Survey tab and complete all of the information requested
- Select current month and enter actual time worked for the CT program and document any time off taken
- Submit the completed CT timesheet on the last day of the pay period
- Your CT Supervisor will review and approve your time entries
- Remember to also submit a timesheet to your HD Supervisor, according to your HD procedures
- A copy of your approved CT timesheet will be sent to your HD Supervisor as a reference for approving your HD timesheet.



Portal support can be reached at the [Help and Support Page](#) or ContactTracingPortalSupport@cdph.ca.gov

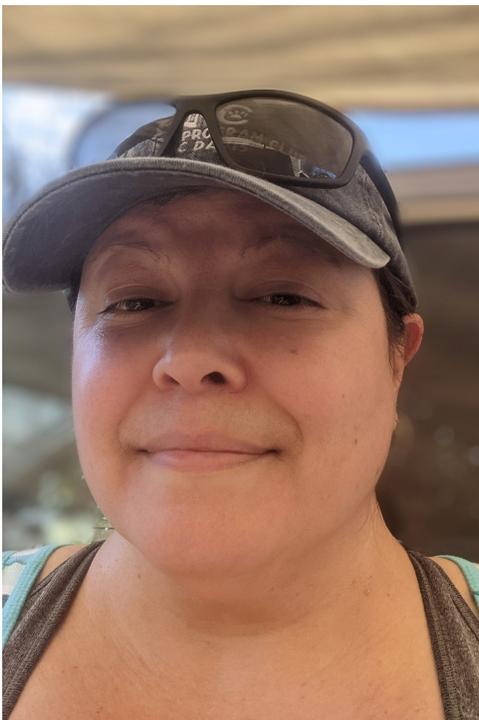


Staff Spotlights

We reached out to redirected staff to get a better idea about their experiences working with the California Connected Contact Tracing Program. Each month we'd like to highlight their responses, and share with you what it means to be part of such an important effort.

Monica Aleman celebrates two decades of helping Californians.

I have been working as both a CI and a CT for Los Angeles County DPH, from the start (July 2020). I am an Environmental Coordinator for the California Department of Parks and Recreation, at the Northern Service Center, and I just reached my 20 year mark (all with Parks and Recreation)



What have you enjoyed during your experience as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

I have enjoyed being able to get information to folks who otherwise might not have been able to get this information. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to be part of, and get to know, a whole new group of people.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

The biggest challenge for me was getting comfortable calling people I don't personally know and who do not know me. I am very much an introvert and this was difficult for me. Second to that, it was being able to keep up with all of the changes made to both the script and CRM as the virus spread in LA County.

What have your friends and family thought about your work as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

Initially they were a bit confused as to how I was going to be able to help folks in LA County, being as I am in Sacramento County. In the end, they think it's pretty neat that I have had a role in helping people get through this. They do ask questions and I do have a family member who was exposed, twice, but thankfully no one in my family has come down with COVID.

What are you looking forward to when things get back to normal?

It will be nice to be able to attend family functions and celebrate special occasions, without wondering if COVID has somehow snuck into our little family circle.

Staff Spotlights

Patricia Moyer enjoys the environment she helps protect.

I've worked for the State of California as a Biologist, then as a Supervisor and Office Chief of Environmental helping protect California's Natural Resources for the past 22 years. My most recent, pre-reassignment position was as a Supervisor of Scientist in the Bishop field office of CDFW working on permitting projects affecting special status plants and animals, waterbodies, as well as dealing with large water rights and FERC projects in the Eastern Sierra. I have been assigned to



San Bernardino County as a CTS since August 2020, supervise 20 staff members and have had the great fortune to work with amazing supervisors, CDPH support staff & mentors and county staff.

What have you enjoyed during your experience as a Contact Tracing Supervisor?

I volunteered for this assignment as it is important to me to give back to our communities and our state and to feel like my daily work is making a small positive impact in our world. I have enjoyed finding solutions to the challenges of this reassignment, forging new

relationships, finding allies and supporters, and forging a new path forward for myself, and my team. I have found this reassignment to be a tremendous opportunity for self-reflection and growth, both professional and personal. I have really enjoyed meeting all the amazing people I would never have met, including VTA instructors, CDPH leadership, my own team members and the other state redirect supervisors.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Contact Tracing Supervisor?

My biggest challenge has been to assemble, get to know, understand, lead and motivate a very large, diverse team virtually. Constant, rapid change and resultant high stress levels in my team have created unique challenges, mixed with the general challenges of living, working and supervising in a COVID world where my teams patience and capacities have at times been severely taxed. Leading a large team virtually through change, during a pandemic says it in a nutshell.

What have your friends and family thought about your work as a Contact Tracing Supervisor?

Very few have asked me about my work. My husband thinks I'm too busy.

What are you looking forward to when things get back to normal?

I live and work in the Eastern Sierra of California. I love spending time with my husband on outdoor adventures such as backpacking, ski touring, bike touring, trail running and mountain lake SUPing. And we used to love traveling. Also really enjoy and miss our extended family-five kids and seven grandkids. Love to bake, garden and knit, but spending time outdoors usually trumps that. But I'm looking most forward to traveling to Europe to see my mom. Having family reunions. Visiting Norway, as we had planned in 2020. Seeing peoples smiles. Riding in big group rides. Going out to eat. Hosting get-togethers, BBQ's and dinner parties. In person races.

Staff Spotlights

Kerrilee Blunt has firsthand experience behind her position.

At the end of June 2020, I was assigned to Imperial County as a Contact Tracer, then assigned to Butte County in September as a Case Investigator. In my pre-covid life, I worked as a staff services analyst with the Facilities Development Division of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development - OSHPD is a big name for the 'building department for hospital construction in California' and several other programs. I've been there 15 years. Unfortunately, I knew two people



who succumbed to the virus early on and so I did not hesitate to answer the call to assist in the CA Covid response effort. I had no idea what I was getting into, I just wanted to help in any small way... Now I find myself doing work I could not imagine yet it still aligns with my experience. So for now, I accept I'm where I'm meant to be.

What have you enjoyed during your experience as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

There are several things I've found to be very satisfying in this work. I've had the privilege to work with a great team of dedicated, professional public servants. We've learned so much together and come a long, long way in building our skills and knowledge. I've also enjoyed and am so grateful to have received quality ongoing education, training and support from some exceptional and well-respected public health experts. The knowledge gained has helped me personally cope with the pandemic, as well as, helped me to be more effective in my work with the public. I really enjoy connecting with cases that welcome me into their situation, who ask questions I can answer with confidence and who appreciate the information I share. Those moments help blunt the sting of some of the more difficult calls. I'm very encouraged and hopeful when people actively seek information to protect their loved ones and help stem the spread of the virus.

What has been your biggest challenge as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

I have to say that week leading up to my first call was a huge challenge...and then that first call went to voicemail! LOL I put a lot of unnecessary pressure on myself. In the beginning, navigating the platform, conducting interviews with a translator, dealing with the occasional dropped call and dealing with difficult attitudes was a big challenge and frustration. Time and experience have allowed me to build my skills and those other things while annoying, are no longer big obstacles.

What have your friends and family thought about your work as a Contact Tracer/Case Investigator?

Friends and family have expressed gratitude for my work. They are supportive, concerned for the toll it could take and they allow me to vent when I need it. Sometimes they have questions and I'm glad I can provide them with reliable information and resources.

What are you looking forward to when things get back to normal?

I don't know if we'll ever completely return to "normal". For me, the new normal I look forward to will mean safe travel and the usual gatherings. My family is spread across the United States, so I see some road trips in my future.

We Heard It Through The Grapevine.....

Enjoy Some Great CI/CT Stories Shared From the Field



The Right Place At The Right Time

Tonight, I was in the supermarket buying milk. I overheard an animated conversation at the pharmacy counter regarding COVID vaccines. I passed by thinking I should stay out of it. But when I came back on the way out, the conversation was ongoing and the pharmacist was clearly not having a happy time. I stopped and asked if I could help. The elderly gentleman said he was frustrated as he could not find anyone who could give him a COVID vaccine. He had been calling his insurer and they say they have no supply. I asked if he knew about the SCC No Wrong Door policy and then went on to explain it. I used my own phone to bring up the website and took him through the questions and showed him all the appointments available at Levi Stadium. He was thrilled. I wrote everything down on a piece of paper from the pharmacist and gave it to his companion and they left, happy, going to make the appointment now on their phone. The pharmacist then stopped me and asked me to write the sccfreevax.org details down for her so she could tell others. When I left, the gentleman and his companion saw me in the parking lot and thanked me profusely. I was actually surprised at the impact this had on me (enough that I had to share this story). -CICT Team Member

We ARE California Connected (WACC) Update

What's going on at WACC?

- **Webinars:** Our live webinars have officially wrapped up, but in their place we've set up a digital library on our website so that you can relive your favorite moments from the sessions or catch up on what you missed in every series.
- **Right Now Resources:** We also added a new section to the site, titled, "Right Now Resources." This space houses educational videos and downloadables, created in response to your current wellbeing needs.
- **CliftonStrengths Assessment:** We've also noticed an increased interest in the CliftonStrengths assessment lately! Whether or not you've taken the test already, the "CliftonStrengths 101" section on our website will help you understand the benefits of strengths development and how to make the most out of your results.
- **Coaching:** Our expert coaches are at the ready to assist your professional and personal development. Coaching sessions are completely confidential, come at no cost to you, and are conducted over the phone.

You can check out all of these resources on our website: www.weareconnected.com

A BIG THANK YOU FROM CALHOPE



California
HOPE

HOPE LIVES HERE

CalHOPE joined with the CA Surgeon General to make this wonderful "Thank You" for our Contact Tracers

WATCH HERE:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/thankyoucontacttracers>

CalHOPE is a great place for resources, support and information.

www.calhope.org

Warm hand off to
treatment services

CalHOPE Support:

Crisis counseling via chat,
phone, virtual, and in-person
Focused on highest-risk communities

CalHOPE Peer Warm Line

CalHOPE Web:

Links to resources, including apps

CalHOPE Media:

Broad and targeted messaging

CalHOPE Layers of Intervention and Support

CalHOPE addresses the stress and anxiety that people may feel due to isolation, health challenges, economic uncertainty, food insecurity and other negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.



California
HOPE

In Case You Missed It

Bilingual & Out of Class Pay

BY THE NUMBERS AS OF 4/12/2021

Stats & Figures About
the Contact Tracing Program

2286

REDIRECTED STAFF

1969

DEPLOYED STAFF TO
AN LHJ

38

COUNTIES WITH
DEPLOYED STAFF

COUNTY WITH THE
MOST DEPLOYED
STAFF:

Los Angeles (872)

COUNTY WITH THE
LEAST DEPLOYED
STAFF:

Del Norte (5)



Keeping Our Families and Communities Healthy

Tools & Resources

California Connected is dedicated to outfitting redirected staff with the tools they need and the training to use those tools effectively. Some examples include:

[Release Update](#) – Review this video to learn about the latest updates to the CalCONNECT platform, including feature enhancements, new entry fields, and permissions updates

[SPOT for Outbreak Investigators](#) – Learn about key functionality available to Outbreak Investigators when working with the School/Shared Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT).

Find more great information and tutorials on the [CDPH CalCONNECT Learning YouTube playlist here](#).

Do you regularly use bilingual skills while completing your role in the Contact Tracing Program? Are you working in a classification lower than the Staff Services Analyst (SSA) level? Then you may be eligible for an Bilingual and/or Out of Class pay differential. The recently approved SEIU side letter, and several other union side letters, include provisions that discuss either Out of Class, Bilingual Pay, or both. Both pay differentials are retroactive, effective from the beginning of your contact tracing assignment, or July 1, 2020, if your assignment began before July 1, 2020. All employees that meet the provision criteria in the side letters are eligible to submit a request for the pay differential(s). If requesting bilingual pay, the following criteria must be met*: The local health jurisdiction (LHJ) the employee is assigned to identifies a need for bilingual skills. The employee self-certifies that they are conversationally proficient in the needed language. Some examples of classifications that are eligible for Out of Class pay*:

- Office Technician
- Office Assistant
- Seasonal Clerk
- Personnel Specialist

If you have questions or would like to submit a Bilingual or Out of Class pay request, please connect with your Contact Tracing Supervisor (CTS). For more information, including specific provision language, please refer to the CalHR

Bargaining/Contract site at [Bargaining / Contracts - CalHR](#).

*The lists above are not exhaustive of the respective provisions, please refer to the CalHR Bargaining/Contract site for more information.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The State of California adheres to confidentiality regulations as part of the contact tracing program. All case reports and any information collected or maintained in contact tracing and case investigation activities that may directly or indirectly identify an individual are considered personally identifiable information and must be handled with the utmost confidentiality. This includes all personally identifiable information stored in the CalCONNECT and CalREDIE systems. Privacy in contact tracing is primarily governed by Article 1, Section 1 of the California Constitution; the Information Practices Act (IPA) California Civil Code section 1798, et seq.; State policy including the State Administrative Manual section 5300; and for some local health departments the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). As the assurance of confidentiality is a key component of protecting individuals' information and ensuring confidence in the contact tracing process, any actual or potential improper disclosure of confidential information must be immediately reported. In the event of any suspected disclosure, a case investigator or contact tracer must immediately notify their CT Supervisor and/or our HR Policy Team at CTSupervisors@ca.gov. We will then work in conjunction with the local health department and the local health officer to promptly investigate the suspected breach.

ANY Questions or concerns? Our HR Policy Team is here to support you-- do not hesitate to contact CTSupervisors@cdph.ca.gov for any questions or concerns about your work as a contact tracer/case investigator working at a local health department. We are here to support you!

*How are we doing? Let us know how we can improve this newsletter by completing our survey [here](#).
Thank you!*