



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 the Workforce Expansion Team

We apologize for the lateness of this issue but we appreciate all of the hard work everyone has been putting in especially with the changes going on, staff returning to their home teams, new members coming on, school starting, a new vaccine age group approved and another new variant hitting us. We will be back after the new year stronger than ever with new updates and information, for now we will leave you with some tips for protecting you and your families this winter.



Tips for Protecting Yourself and Others This Holiday Season

Get vaccinated

Get a booster shot

Stay home if you are sick

Get tested before family events or travel

Wear a mask

For more details and other great tips visit:

[Tips for Protecting Yourself and Others This Holiday Season \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov)



Happy Holidays from
California Connected and the
Workforce Expansion Team

Updates and Resources



ARE YOU TRANSITIONING BACK TO YOUR HOME DEPARTMENT?

Many of you may be returning to your home departments soon or have recently done so. It's a good idea to take some time to de-stress. Give your body time to rest and your mind time to process all that you've been doing these past months or year, for many of you. Make a game plan for regular self care. We have many resources to help with this, including CalHOPE.

<https://www.calhope.org/pages/gameplan.aspx>

We also have some excellent resources for you through this constantly updated link for Offboarding Staff.

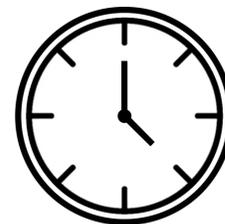
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1---Txx3bt309EyDHD13h4DA3eujT7QgfEtfHdqFynKc/edit>

CT/CI Program Timekeeping Portal

PLEASE make sure you fill out your timesheet by the end of each month or right before you leave the program!

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** only for the CT program and document any time off taken in the notes section.
- 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

Training Updates

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



CA Connected COVID-19 Case Investigation Communication Refresher Course.

Required for all State Staff, DIU Teams, and CI Schools Teams: 30 minute video

Available at: www.wearecaconnected.com

COVID-19 Response Resources

- Resources for You
 - Information Privacy & Security Training

There is a completion certificate also available on the website that you must download, digitally sign, and email to CTTrainingDev@cdph.ca.gov

Virtual Training Academy (VTA) Vaccine Communications for Case Investigators and Contact Tracers

Audience/Who Should Register: Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) and state employees who will be working in the area of COVID-19 vaccine outreach and communication.

Length of Course: 3 hours of online self-study and 4 hours (one half day) of live webinars and skill development activities. The online self-study must be completed before coming to the live training.

Learning Objectives:

- Provide accurate and non-judgmental answers to frequently asked questions about the safety, benefits, and availability of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Describe barriers to vaccination and facilitators of vaccination, especially among communities most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Apply principles of health coaching, motivational interviewing, and cultural humility to support people with their decision-making around if, when, and how to get vaccinated.

Language Offerings: The course is offered in both English and Spanish.

Records of Completion: Learners must complete and pass the knowledge assessment with a minimum score of 70% to receive a record of completion.

For more information or to register: <https://pandemic.ucsf.edu/vaccine-communications>

****LHJ and CT Sup Approval Required for Enrollment****

Program Staff Spotlights

This month we are spotlighting staff from the California Connected Contact Tracing Program and CT/CIs who are working with an Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) to learn a little more about them and what it's meant to be part of such an important effort.

Andrea Evering loves the people she works with.

I have always wanted to serve the public through the State. I started fifteen years ago working as an analyst in Disability with Social Security. The majority of my time has been in Life Safety Code & Health Care Facilities where we handle licensing and certification.



What have you enjoyed while working with the California Connected Contact Tracing Program?

The people, the people are amazing! I wish I could stay here forever. The kindness and patience, you wouldn't know we were in the middle of a pandemic. The willingness to help their fellow human beings it brings out the best in them, like Christmas all year long. It's a sad time but it's bringing out the best in America too. I'm going to bring back the calm and patience I learned while working with the California Connected Contact Tracing Program.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

Learning new things. Building the plane as we are trying to fly it. It was learn as you go and change in the middle or make adjustments.

What have your family and friends thought of your work with the Program?

Inspirational. My nephew was hesitant to get the vaccination and I think sharing my experiences contributed to his change of mind. It's been positive feedback from everyone.

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

I am not looking forward to leaving all the great people I work with but I do miss my home department co-workers. I would like to be able to go to lunch with them again.

Program Staff Spotlights

Caralee Mann uses her skills to provide relief to those in need.

Since 2008, I have worked for the State of California at California Public Employee Retirement System (CalPERS). I have held several roles there including PSR Training coordinator, Project manager, and Oversight Analyst in our Information Technology (IT) Branch during my 12+ years. I volunteered to be redirected to “pay it forward” for the kindness and support I received from people, I did not even know, when my oldest son was injured in a car accident March 2015. I remember how scary it was to not know what to do next or not have the information I needed to make choices for him. I figured since before my State service; I had Case management experience in Welfare and Social services (Sutter, CA and Maricopa, AZ) I could dust off those skills and help here. I have been deployed since August 10, 2020 as a Contact Tracer (CT) and Contact Investigator (CI).



What have you enjoyed during your experience as a CI/CT?

The pandemic has shifted what going to work looks like, as it did for most employees. I have enjoyed reducing my 90-minute daily commute to the walk down the hall to my office. It has allowed me to allocate that time to my children. As far as, what have I enjoyed in the roll of a CT/CI; I have found great pride in the relief I have heard in the voices of mothers and fathers when their questions are answered and some of the unknown was removed from a situation they had very little control over. I have also enjoyed having the opportunity to work with and build friendships with county and state staff that I would not have otherwise had the opportunity for.

What has been your biggest challenge as a CI/CT?

As a person who went to school for (BS-IT, MBA) and has worked in IT for over a decade; I found that my biggest challenge with the CT/CI role has been to ignore the urge to analyze, document, and submit bug fixes and enhancements to the CalCONNECT system. As well as, remembering how to re-ground and do some self-care after very hard and emotional calls with families who are in crisis.

What have your friends and family thought about your important work during this time?

Mostly, family and friends did not even know my role changed. I do my best to put work down at the end of my day. However, when the situation would arise that someone would know what I am doing now, I became the person to call. Questions pertaining to: Quarantine/Isolation instructions, vaccine information, timeline, symptoms, reliable resources. Well you get the picture. I would suspect this occurrence was similar for all of us who have participated in the CT/CI program. We became trusted subject matter experts.

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

Truthfully, I am not sure there will be a “back to normal”, maybe a new normal. COVID-19 and its effects will be with us for the foreseeable future. Now, my hope is we can get to a point in the new normal where the fear, misinformation, and the loss of lives have become a distant memory. At that point, my desire will be to see effort being put into “what did we learn” from what we all went through as a state and what opportunities “to do it better” exist. In project management, Lessons Learned are a valuable piece of closing and I hope to see them in the CT/CI program as it transitions from a State Pandemic response effort to an evolving Health education/maintenance program.

Staff Spotlights

Evan Stagg scrambled to help the Program succeed.

I started my career after college working at San Quentin during the 2008-2009 recession. From there I worked at CalVet then the Board of Equalization and more currently with Office of Tax Appeals where they nominated me to become a Contact Tracer for Riverside County January 2021. In June I took over a new team in Riverside and will soon be taking one over for Humboldt County.



What have you enjoyed during your experience working as a CI/CT?

I've enjoyed the challenge of supervising a fully remote workforce while also meeting the needs of the County leadership and CDPH. My role has been the go between for information from the teams to the program leadership and back down to the teams.

What has been your biggest challenge so far?

It has been emotionally challenging to see so many employees exhibiting burnout symptoms yet still trying to push on day after day taking cases. Trying to coach employees out of a burnout situation is very difficult and not all situations could be turned around.

What have your friends and family thought about your important work during this time?

My friends and family are generally critical of the program but then again I come from a family that is mostly anti-government. I perform my role as part of a health corps so that is how I see it at least. The Riverside program had a rocky start in early January that had me scrambling around the clock for three weeks to get workers trained assigned and working, so that probably shaped their opinion in a negative way since I was being overworked due to program mistakes outside of my control.

What are you looking forward to when you return to your home department?

I mostly miss my home department team because I had the experience to hire, train, and work with them for a couple years but now I've been away so long and will be another 9 months it looks like.

We Heard It Through The Grapevine.....

Enjoy Some Great CI/CT Stories Shared From the Field



Encouraging Research is a Good Thing-Shared by a CI/CT

A CI/CT gave a call to a young female as part of the closed record COVID-19 vaccination scheduling project. The young woman instantly said she was not interested. The CI/CT kindly asked her why, and she explained it was because the vaccinations are so new and were created quickly with little scientific research. The CI/CT responded that she understood her concerns, and that although the COVID-19 vaccine is new, the study of the mRNA vaccines has been done for many years and scientists know a great deal about vaccines, having many others used for decades, and these COVID-19 vaccines were studied in clinical trials to make sure they are effective and safe. The CI/CT also shared that some people do have side effects after vaccination, but overall people have reported positive experiences and they are grateful to now be protected.

After taking time to explain and take more time with the young woman, the CI/CT noticed she started to seem more interested, but still a bit reluctant. She said she would still want to do more research. The CI/CT affirmed that it is important to do research and highly recommend she does more research. "How about I schedule you an appointment and you can do research prior to your vaccination appointment?" The young woman agreed to let the CICT schedule an appointment!

CDPH COVID-19 Webpage

Here's everything you'd ever want to know about
COVID-19 in California:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CovidDataAndTools.aspx>

In Case You Missed It

BY THE NUMBERS AS OF 12/15/2021

Stats & Figures About
the Contact Tracing Program

274 REDIRECTED STAFF

261 DEPLOYED STAFF
TO AN LHJ

24 COUNTIES WITH
DEPLOYED STAFF

COUNTY WITH THE
MOST DEPLOYED
STAFF:

Los Angeles (115)

COUNTY WITH THE
LEAST DEPLOYED
STAFF:

Plumas (2)



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

BEWARE OF PORCH PIRATES!!

Picture it. It's a winter wonderland on the street where you live, Thanksgivings Day has passed, the smell of turkey is out of your nose, the weather is nice and calm during the day and crisp at night, the streets outside of your neighborhood are bustling with cars and foot traffic, friends and family members stop by your home to wish you a peaceful holiday and the atmosphere is almost perfect. That morning you woke up early and started the day with vigor. Went for a coffee run, ran some errands, and made a few last-minute online purchases. While working a few days later at the office, in the middle of your meeting where you are to present to the executive staff on your assignments, you start receiving notifications that packages have arrived or are on the way. At the end of the workday, after forty minutes in traffic you finally arrive home to find none of your packages are where the delivery driver left them. Then, the idea of someone taking something of yours and you say, I've been robbed by those darn "Porch Pirates."

December 1st was National Package Protection Day! In the wake of Black Friday and Cyber Monday online shopping, reports are coming in of so-called "porch pirates," thieves who are targeting packages delivered to your front doorstep. According to a recent report by market research firm C + R Research, 43% of the people it surveyed had a package stolen in 2020. With this year's supply chain issues, delivery timeframes can be varied and inconsistent, so it is important to continuously track your packages in transit whenever possible. The risk this year is compounded by ongoing supply chain issues and delays. Many people started their online shopping early, and if they're not getting their packages within the expected timeframe, they might simply chalk it up to supply chain delays. That gives porch pirates a little more time before victims even notice that their stuff is gone. Every package left outside a door is a target, but there are things you can do to make sure your deliveries do not disappear.

Things You Can Do To Thwart Porch Pirates:

- Use an Amazon locker at a local store
- Point a security camera at your front door
- Get your package delivered to work or to a neighbor's house
- Require a signature on your delivery.

Many people think security cameras or doorbells cams are a deterrent for thieves. While they do record evidence of a theft, they do not really do anything to prevent it. The video is great to have, though, because it can help police ID the thief. Give it to investigators when you report the theft, something you should always do. File a police report first, then put in a missing package claim with the shipper. You have zero chance of recovering your money if you do not report the theft.

*Have a question or concern about your
contact tracing/case investigation work?
Do not hesitate to reach out to
CTSupervisors@cdph.ca.gov for
confidential concerns*