

Benefits, Risks and Consideration for Clinicians and Students Responding to COVID-19

The county is experiencing a pandemic that has created a disaster situation across the United States, and Governor Newsom proclaimed California to be in a state of emergency. The community values the expertise and capability of health care professionals and appreciates your willingness to help in this time of great need. To prepare you for what may lie ahead, it is important to consider the benefits, risks, burdens, and alternatives of responding to this call for aid. Please review the information below. If you understand and agree to respond, your help is truly welcomed. If responding is not for you or it is not the right time, it is completely understandable. Thank you for considering this request for aid. Whether you decide to respond or not, we wish you good health and ask that you monitor your health and well-being, and that of your colleagues for signs of stress and burnout.

Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in an unprecedented health/emergency crisis where volunteering supports the community’s immediate and emergent needs • Personal fulfillment in knowing that you are contributing to a higher professional good • Applying the knowledge and competency skills that you have learned in real-life situations • Acquiring new knowledge and skills in the profession of nursing and disaster management • Know you are working with experts in the field of nursing and disaster management • Developing a camaraderie with others responding to the disaster • Providing service to a community of underserved or vulnerable populations that need assistance
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to contract COVID-19 that may result in mild to severe illness, including possible, but unlikely, death • Psycho-emotional and morally challenging situations in which care decisions are difficult, this experience will change you • Long hours can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion • Situational awareness, you may be asked to do something beyond your knowledge, skill, and competence • There may not be enough personal protective equipment to reduce the chance of contracting COVID-19 or another disease significantly • You will be faced with hard decisions at the fundamental basis of care from the usual focus on an individual’s needs to a focus on the needs of a population
Burdens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May affect the physical, psychological, emotional, social, and existential health of you and your family • The needs of society will be greater than what you can provide yourself
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can choose not to participate; there is no judgment • You can stop volunteering at any time • You can offer to help in other ways that do not put you in the frontline risk factors as they emerge