

# Utilizing Nontraditional Healthcare Delivery Practices: Alternative Care Sites During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Issue** A prime concern that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic is that hospitals and healthcare facilities may not have sufficient capacity to provide care during case surges. Alternate care sites (ACS) are nontraditional sites that are temporarily repurposed for providing healthcare services during public health emergencies, such as stadiums, hotels, and dormitories. During the pandemic, ACS have been utilized during the pandemic to relieve overcrowding.

**Methods:** Researchers at UCSF conducted semi-structured interviews with three personnel who respectively worked at three different ACS across the country, including nursing and administrative staff. The researchers reviewed resources that the interviewees shared, such as administrative handbooks, admissions policies, and training materials.

**Findings:** The ACS where our interviewees worked provided care to vulnerable and underserved populations; specifically, COVID-19 patients who are experiencing homelessness or indigenous. Facilities included a convention center, hotels, and temporary tent housing. The three sites varied with respect to patient admissions processes, patient discharge processes, staffing policies, and support services offered to patients. Nontraditional care approaches were used, such as disaster medicine and telehealth.

**Discussion:** ACS can supplement care gaps during public health emergencies by relieving capacity constraints on hospital and healthcare facilities, delivering care to vulnerable and underserved populations, and utilizing nontraditional care approaches.

**Key Words:** Alternative care sites; pandemic response; emergency medical response; alternative care models

**HWRC Website Link:**

<https://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/publication/utilizing-nontraditional-healthcare-delivery-practices-alternative-care-sites-during>