

# *Getting Your Outpatient Practice Functioning: Risks, Tips and Insights*

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# Stay Current

- Daily review current status of legislation
  - ✓ New York State Department of Health
  - ✓ New York City COVID-19 Citywide Information Portal https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/index.page
  - ✓ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
  - ✓ Whitehouse.gov: Guidelines Opening Up America Again https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#criteria
  - ✓ Council of State Governments https://web.csg.org/covid19/executive-orders/
  - ✓ Federation of State Medical Boards: COVID-19 Resources https://www.fsmb.org/advocacy/covid-19/ *
  - ✓ Medical Society of State of New York
  - ✓ Other Federal, state, local authorities, department of health
  - ✓ Professional specialty organizations
  - ✓ National Association of County Health Officials: Directory of Local Health Departments:

Breach of standard is part of the liability equation

# Environment of Care

- Follow Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions for all healthcare staff interacting with patients/patient care areas (CDC)
- Post signs to instruct patients and staff to follow infection control protocol.
- Follow CDC hand-washing protocol for healthcare providers
- Have staff maintain social distancing during work and breaks/lunch, limit staff number as needed
- Create a standardized cleaning checklist for during the day clinic cleaning as needed, in clinic restrooms, etc.

CDC: Standard Precautions for All Patient Care

CDC Posters: List of COVID-19 Print Resources

World Health Organization (WHO): Educational resources for the public, including posters for use in the medical office

CDC: Standard Precautions for All Patient Care
CDC: Transmission-Based Precautions

*All posters downloadable from CDC website*




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# Messaging and Readiness

## Modify messaging across platforms

- Voicemail, Telephone, Website, Social Media, Marketing
  - Statement of reassurance on steps taken to protect their safety
  - Post signage for potential or positive COVID-19
  - Post signage for prevention steps – masks, distance, sanitizer, etc.
  - Develop and communicate pre-visit instructions
  - Provide COVID-19 educational resources to patients
- Maintain clinic readiness for equipment and supplies
  - Clinical supplies on hand – confirmed vendor sources
  - Equipment for patient use in working order
  - Medication expiration dates

CDC has multiple signage for office for employee and patients and YouTube videos for training staff

# Employee Focus

- Screen employees daily – Follow CDC Guidelines
  - Maintain logs of screening
  - Testing employees?
  - Sick staff members should stay home and follow return to work guidelines for suspected or positive cases
  - Assess/monitor unprotected exposure by staff
  - Coordinate with local public health department on reporting, contact tracing, coronavirus testing protocols, locations, and testing kits
- Staff emotional support
- IT security & Cybersecurity
  - Return devices with PHI
  - Wipe clean personal devices with PHI
  - Keep up with HIPAA guidelines
  - Remain vigilant for COVID related scams

Document all employee screening in administrative logs

# Team Communications



- Conduct daily staff huddles and end-of-day debriefs.
  - Staff opportunity to discuss anticipated issues, identify concerns
  - Share COVID-19 updates
  - Recruit/assign staff as infection resource
  - Review, modify and improve processes, keep consistent
  - Identify retraining needs
  - Reinforce emotional support
  - Acknowledge good work, share what went well
  - Document daily huddles and debriefs occurred

# Train Staff and Document

- Patient Screening and Triage
  - Evaluate patients prior to appointment and upon arrival for S&S of COVID-19
  - Isolate symptomatic patients immediately in private room

CDC Screening and Triage_at_Intake

- Patient Communication
  - Explain screening process, cleaning process, scheduling process
  - Open and transparent

- Infection Control
  - Prepare the office environment
  - Emphasis hand hygiene, social distancing, patient masks

CDC
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html

- Use of Professional Protective Equipment (PPE)

OSHA
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/personalprotectiveequipment/

# Waiting Area

## Prepare and Monitor Waiting Area (if you have one?)

- Space chairs at least six feet apart
- Provide respiratory hygiene supplies at all entrances
  - Surgical masks, gloves, alcohol-based hand rub, tissues
  - Touch free trash cans
- Remove magazines, pamphlets, toys, and other potential vectors for infection
- Minimize patient/patient contact - ensure physical distance

OSHA: Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

CDC: Get Your Clinic Ready for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

# Patient Registration/Checkout

- How will patients flow? Consider one patient path, separate entrance and exit
- Install barrier between patient and staff
- Thoroughly wipe anything handed to a patient after single use. Allow disinfectant to fully dry to be effective
- Wipe down telephone, chair arms, desktops, door handles keyboards regularly
- Staff use of hand sanitizer before using a frequently used shared device
- Consider keyboard covers

# Treatment and Exam Rooms

## Develop a detailed checklist and schedule for:

- Cleaning treatment rooms between patients
- Terminal cleaning of treatment rooms end of day
- Consider use of air purifiers, UV light disinfection for areas in contact with patient and staff
- Keep the cleaning logs in administrative files

FDA March 2020: Enforcement Policy for Sterilizers, Disinfectant Devices, and Air Purifiers During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

# Patient Management Preparation Before Clinic Presentation

- Reconcile overdue appointments since office closure
  - Consider a soft opening
- Prioritize in-person visits according to medical priority/necessity and route to telemedicine is possible
- Use CDC guidelines for COVID-19 screenings when scheduling and when providing appointment reminder
- Conduct outreach to high-risk patients sheltering in place
  - Review plan of care
  - Medication supply
  - Indications when to seek care for respiratory illness
  - If positive COVID-19, educate on prevention of spread, and disease management, medical disposition

CDC: Evaluating and Testing Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

# Prioritize Follow-up Care

- Reconcile outstanding lab and diagnostic tests
  - Ordered prior to COVID-19 but not yet completed or result received
- Reconcile outstanding specialty consultations
  - If priority, consider telehealth with consultant
- Reconcile received but not yet reviewed with patient results  for follow-up
- Prioritize medical and cardiac clearance for anticipated surgery volume increase
- Prioritize prescription refills accordingly

# In-person clinic visits

- CDC guidelines for patient screening at scheduling and day of visit and to manage suspected positive patients
- Process flow
  - Pre-appointment paperwork on-line or in waiting room if needed or brought to car 15 minutes before visit
  - Patient calls or texts when appt. arrival, return communication when to enter office
  - Monitor and limit waiting room volume
  - Limit in-office visit to patient only, if essential, one family member
  - Advise patients to don mask, cover cough, use tissues and dispose of appropriately, follow distancing, separate entrance/exits

CDC: Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

CDC: Priorities for Testing Patients with Suspected COVID-19 Infection

AAP: For children under the age of 2, the American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend the use of masks.

# High Level: What do I need to do?

Prepare before opening

Conduct a daily huddle at the start of the day with your team.

Review changes and needed improvements from day prior



1. Assess Current Practice Workflow
2. Compare to new COVID-19 Requirements
3. Determine Required Changes and Note Why Changes are Being Made
4. Outline Changes and Why to Staff
5. Train, Review, Allow for Questions
6. Document
7. Communicate to patients

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