

# BEST PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES

Best Practices, Guidelines and Recommendations for the  
Healthcare Industry (focus on non-Health System practices)

*A post COVID-19 Resource*

*As of June 3, 2020*



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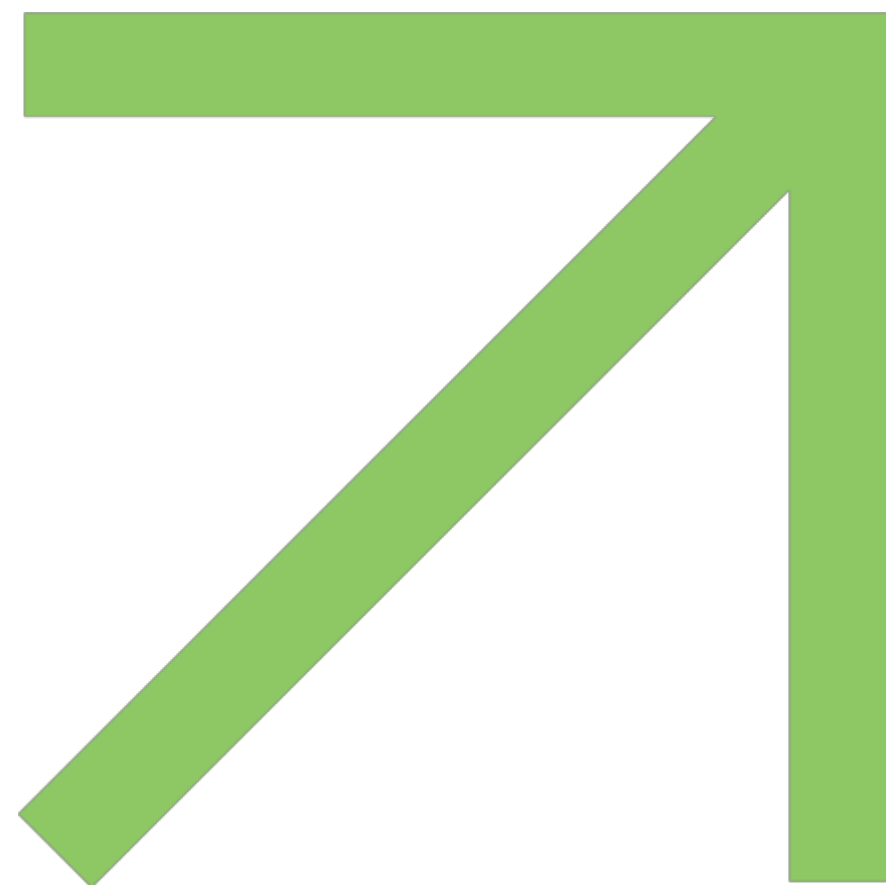
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# HEALTHCARE

For healthcare providers, delivering services while adhering to infection controls is not a new practice. However, COVID-19 as a pandemic, requires heightened vigilance for the safety of patients and staff.

Included are some guidelines specific to small healthcare practices, recognizing that every industry is responsible for adhering to guidance from the CDC, OSHA, and licensing bodies.



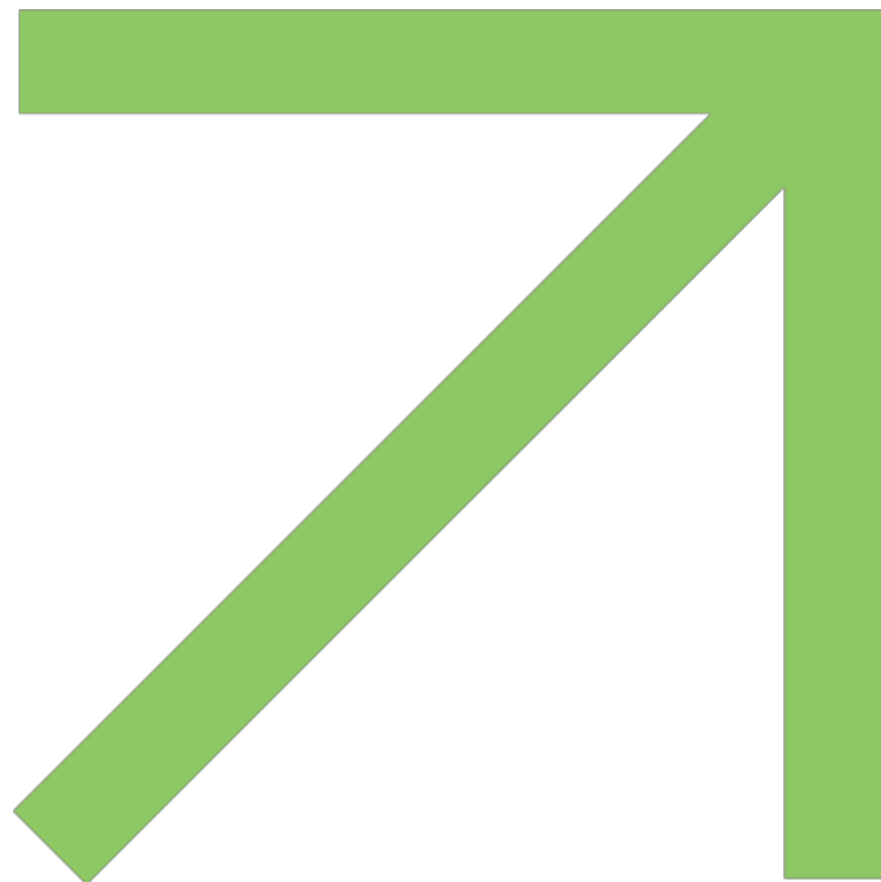
# AGENDA

- Prevention
- Exposure
- Communication



# PREVENTION

- Screening
- Operational Procedures
- Social Distancing
- Cleaning
- PPE



# PRE-APPOINTMENT SCREENING

- **Identify yourself, the office/doctor's name and ask to speak with the patient or the patient's parent or legal guardian.**
- **After explaining the purpose for the call, such as an appointment reminder, proceed with the Patient Screening Form (English) / (Spanish) questions .**
- **Positive responses to any of these would likely indicate a deeper discussion with the doctor before proceeding with elective treatment.**
- **Inform patients that these questions will be repeated, and their temperature will be taken when they arrive at the office in order to ensure nothing has changed since the phone conversation.**
- **Remind patients/guardians to limit extra companions on their trip to your office to only essential people in order to reduce the number of people in the reception area.**
- **If patients/parents/guardians seem reluctant in any way, reassure them that although this may seem strange, it is all being done out of an abundance of concern for their health, as well as that of the other patients being seen in the office, the doctor and the staff, and any public with whom they might come in contact.**
- **If you need to leave a voicemail or are sending a text message, ask the patient to call the office prior to their appointment for preliminary screening. If your website is capable, you may install the questionnaire and instructions on there for them to access pre-appointment.**

# IN-OFFICE PATIENT REGISTRATION

In this section, offices can use the following checklist and resources to help prepare staff for accepting patients before they arrive, when they arrive, during their consultations, and after.

- Complete Patient Screening Form [here](#) (regardless of presence of fever ).
- Remotely via email or text link when possible.
- Positive responses to any of these would likely indicate a deeper discussion with the doctor before proceeding with elective treatment.
- If there is a need to refer patients for testing, their primary care provider can place the order with a testing facility.
- Remember to maintain the confidentiality of the patient.



# IN-OFFICE PATIENT REGISTRATION (CONTINUED)

- **Have hand sanitizer available for use or ask patient to wash hands for 20 seconds.**
- **Check patient's temperature (less than 100.4°F) with thermometer.**
- **Touchless forehead scan is convenient and produces less waste, though any thermometer is appropriate as long as cleaned appropriately between uses.**
- **Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.**
- **If elevated temperature is noted, supply patient with mask and instruct them how to do it; follow through with asking screening questions and alert the doctor.**



# IN-OFFICE PATIENT REGISTRATION (CONTINUED)

- **Consider providing pens for each patient and then giving it to them, rather than reusing. If reusing pens, remember to wipe down pens between transfers back and forth.**
- **Provide wipes or materials to clean pens, clipboard, counter, phone, keyboards, light switches, surfaces, and anything else high touch.**
- **If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.**
- **To disinfect, use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV2, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.**

# PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST

- **Informed consent: check with your malpractice carrier for any consideration of a revised informed consent form.**
- **Limit paperwork in the operator or exam room as much as possible.**
  - **If using paper charting, cover it with clear barrier so you may read what is needed for appointment.**
  - **Place new chart notes into document away from patient contact area when possible.**
- **Cover keyboard of computer with disposable, flexible, clear barrier (e.g. plastic wrap) and change between patients. Or, disinfect reusable plastic barrier.**
- **Limit access to the operator / exam room to the patient only when possible. Supply a mask and shield to anyone who accompanies the patient.**
- **Reminder: In certain circumstances, it may be impracticable to limit others in the operator when their presence is legally required (e.g., translators, service animals).**

# PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

- **Keep staff level in operatory / exam room to the minimum required.**
- **Mask pre-entry (for chairside staff also) as virus-containing aerosol particles may exist.**
- **No hand shaking, or physical contact.**
- **Wash hands in room.**
- **Review overall health history, confirming that the screening questions were asked during the check-in procedure, and review if necessary.**
- **Decide on treatment using clinical judgment and known facts, combining:**
  - **Patient health/risk factors/geographic incidence of COVID-19.**
  - **COVID-19 cases by county (CDC data).**
  - **COVID-19 cases by zip code (Johns Hopkins data).**
  - **Procedural requirements/clinical risks (production of aerosol, inducement of patient cough during Procedure, ability to employ use of devices to reduce aerosol when feasible).**
  - **Availability of PPE with relation to risk.**

# PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

- **Use professional judgment on mask removal and replacement between patients.**
  - **If you are removing your mask, do so outside the treatment room.**
  - **If the mask is soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through, it must be replaced.**
  - **Clean the operatory while wearing gloves, a mask, and face shield or goggles.**
  - **Dispose of surface barriers after each patient.**
  - **If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.**
  - **For disinfection, use products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 (the cause of COVID-19) and are appropriate for the surface, following manufacturer’s instructions.**
  - **Replace surface barriers.**
  - **Limit paperwork in operatory.**



# POST-PROCEDURAL PATIENT EXIT

- **Ask patient to use hand sanitizer before leaving operatory/exam room.**
- **Post-op instructions should include a reminder to report any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 within next 14 days.**
- **Direct patient to the correct exit if different from the entrance to avoid cross-traffic.**

# OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING

- **Sign on front door and in reception areas indicating mandatory mask wear and remaining at 6 feet apart distance at all times.**
- **Where helpful, floor markings at 6 feet apart to encourage distancing.**
- **Reception room chairs spaced six feet apart, and possibly numbered to guide patient seating.**
- **Discourage family members from being in the office unless necessary (accompaniment of a minor or for translation assistance). Utilize remote translation where appropriate.**

# RECEPTION AREA PREPARATION

- **Prepare the entrance to the building or office:**
  - **Provide a hand sanitation station upon entry into facility, with a notice to people to use it before entry into the rest of the office.**
- **Prepare the waiting area, bathrooms and patient consultation rooms:**
  - **Provide supplies:**
    - **Tissues**
    - **Alcohol-based hand rub**
    - **Soap at sinks**
    - **Trash cans**
- **Place chairs 6 feet apart, when possible. Use barriers (like screens), if possible.**
- **If your office has toys, reading materials, remote controls or other communal objects, remove them or clean them regularly.**
- **On a regular schedule, wipe all touchable surface areas with an approved surface cleaner.**
  - **Remember to include tables, chair arms, doorknobs, light switches, hangers, and anything else with which people come in contact.**
  - **If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.**
  - **To disinfect, use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.**

# HAZARD CHECKLIST

- **Conduct initial and periodic inspections of the workplace to identify new or recurring hazards.**
- **Measure the type and availability of PPE to ensure an adequate supply of the necessary PPE on hand.**
- **Consider that the spread of virus is possible through Airborne transmission of COVID-19, which may be affected by the following:**
  - **Length of procedure**
  - **Amount of aerosol generation during procedures**
  - **Room air flow patterns should be examined**
  - **Surface contact (treatment areas as well as throughout office space)**
  - **Unnecessary items resulting in cluttered counter tops**
  - **Magazines, toys, coffeemakers in reception area**
  - **Appointment scheduling such that patients (and any companions) overlap in the reception area, resulting in closer contact than social distancing prescribes.**



# HAZARD CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

- **Examine the office layout and traffic flow to identify where inadequate social distancing might occur as people move throughout the facility.**
- **Remove unnecessary items on surfaces that may act as potential sources of contamination.**
- **Review general housekeeping protocols for the practice, including touching base with any outside contractor maintenance crews to make sure they are using approved disinfecting agents.**
- **Identify any individual employee factors present that have potential to increase risk of infection for that employee.**
- **Develop a plan to investigate incidents of disease transmission. It should include, at a minimum:**
  - **Referral of patients with COVID-19 signs or symptoms.**
  - **Evaluation and subsequent action for any employee with COVID-19 signs or symptoms.**

# PHYSICAL PLANT MODIFICATIONS

- **If suitable given your office design, you might consider having your patients wait in their car, and you can call or text when they should enter the practice. This is not practical for all offices, so use your own judgment. For patients who use other forms of transportation, devise a plan and provide instructions for entering the practice prior to their office visit. You might consider asking patients to bring their own pens to use (or supply them with a pen to take with them). If they need to cancel due to illness, you might consider waiving any last-minute cancellation fee policies that might exist.**
- **OSHA requires employers to provide employees with employment and a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to such employees. If all appropriate steps are taken to protect an employee, then under OSHA, it would not be reasonable to believe there is risk of danger of death or serious injury such that an employee could refuse work. The key is ensuring training, engineering controls, administrative controls and proper personal protective equipment.**

# PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Staff Protection Strategies
- Hand Hygiene
- Clothing
- Pregnancy
- Testing
- Shopping

# STAFF PROTECTION STRATEGIES

## General

- **Help protect office staff as you reopen the practice by utilizing the following strategies. Owner/operators should consider a soft launch where they discuss the new strategies to be implemented and the reasons behind them. Practice these routines with staff before welcoming patients. This should include, among other things, consideration of patient flow into and through the practice, timing for operator usage and sterilization, staff routines as they don and doff PPE, and how-to best time the daily schedules when returning to patient care.**

## Front Desk / Reception

- **Front desk staff can wear masks and goggles, or face shields, or offices can install a clear barrier.**
- **Consider individual phone headsets for each front desk staffer to reduce virus spread through the phone.**



# HAND HYGIENE

**With strict attention to staff hand hygiene, instruct staff to clean hands thoroughly:**

- **Upon entry into the workplace.**
- **Before and after any contact with patients.**
- **After contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment.**
- **After removing PPE.**

# CLOTHING

**If available, gowns should be considered.**

- **Change gown if it becomes soiled.**
- **Disposable gowns should be discarded after use. Cloth gowns should be laundered on site.**
- **If scrubs are to be worn, change between street clothes and scrubs upon entry and exit, or do the same with other office garb.**
  - **Provide laundry facilities in the office.**
  - **Contracting with a laundry service is another option.**
  - **Long sleeved garments should be worn.**
  - **Professional judgment should be exercised with regard to the use of disposable foot covers or head covers.**

# PREGNANCY

- **Pregnant staff members should seek and follow medical guidance from their physician regarding work.**
- **Information on COVID-19 in pregnancy is very limited; offices may want to consider limiting exposure of pregnant staff to patients, especially during higher risk procedures (e.g., aerosol-generating procedures) if feasible, based on staffing availability.**

**Resource: American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology**



# DIAGNOSTICS TESTING

- **Currently, there is not an FDA-approved, reliable test that is widely available for small practices. A local hospital, community-based testing service, or urgent care may be contacted for additional testing options.**



# SHOPPING LIST

Think broadly for securing products and supplies. Consider janitorial supply companies, restaurant supply houses, local hardware stores and other places as resources for some materials. Be sure to add yourself to wait lists for products/supplies. It is unclear when supply chains will return to normal, but if you are not on a list you may miss out. Be cautious of the 'gray market' products when shopping.

- Front desk barrier
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand sanitizer stations for entry/exit of practice
- Tissues: available throughout practice for cough/sneeze etiquette
- Wastebaskets: near tissues
- Thermometer(s): for entrance/registration stations
- Soap with touchless dispensers
- Paper goods
- Disposable pens: may want to order customized pens to give each patient their own or suggest in screening call that patients bring their own.
- PPE

# APPENDIX A – LINKS TO HELPFUL RESOURCES

<https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory>

<https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Local-Health-Department-COVID-19-Directory.pdf>

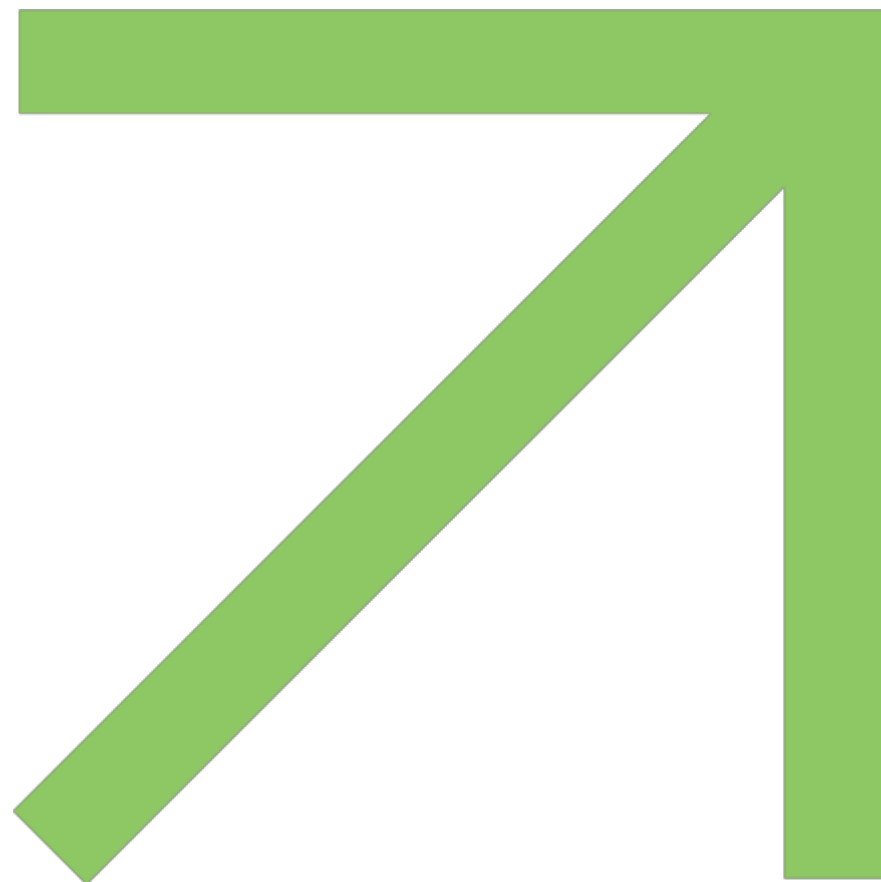
<https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/1296/Coronavirus-Disease-COVID-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ambulatory-care-settings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/pharmacies.html>



# RECOVERY ASSISTANCE

## Grant Program

- Grants for working capital and physical retrofit costs
- \$10m available early-mid June for first round targeting companies with <20 employees
- Not a first-come first-served basis. Application window will open for 1 week with notice and instructions in advance

\*Visit [www.recoverylancaster.com](http://www.recoverylancaster.com)  
for more information and  
applications

## Free COVID-19 Supply Kits

- COVID-19 Supply Kits: Package for Lancaster companies with Free PPE /Sanitizing equipment for Lancaster companies with <100 employees
- Package includes some combination of re-usable and/or disposable masks, face shields (for some), thermometer, hand sanitizer and cleaning wipes (based on supply at time of order)

# THANK YOU!



Thank you for joining us today!

We wish you and your business the best and encourage you to check out the other resources available.

We are all in this together and will come out stronger... together!