

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Outbreak Update

March 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

In order to provide updates on the evolving response and best practices in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, AHP will be delivering brief, critical updates on an ongoing basis addressing important highlights and frequently asked questions.

Personal Protective Equipment

We continue to work on acquiring any allocation of PPE supplies possible to be able to share with those in need. AHP is now able to provide a limited supply of N95 respirators to practices most in need. We will be calling practices who indicated a need for N95s in the survey we issued last week and making arrangements to deliver those supplies. We understand that the next most urgent need relates to gowns, and we are confident that we will have some supply available to us later in the week to allocate to practices in the greatest need.

In the meantime, we have received guidance from CDC, Health Department and Infection Prevention about using the PPE you do have most efficiently:

- While most PPE is disposable and traditionally meant for single use, it is acceptable and recommended to reuse the materials as long as it is not saturated or no longer able to be effectively worn.
- While reusing PPE does not help with patients entering the clinic, the current advisory would be to not allow anyone with a cough or febrile symptoms to enter the clinic, and consider having staff outfitted with PPE go to the patient's car to conduct the evaluation or use telemedicine. This will conserve PPE supplies for staff use only where it can be reused more effectively.

Testing

While COVID processing labs are coming online, there is still a significant limitation on the ability to process these tests at all locations. We expect this to improve somewhat towards week end, but in the meantime, please continue to limit referrals for COVID testing per the criteria reviewed in the [March 13th update](#), and expect that any testing will likely experience delays for at least the next several days, if not longer.

For those who are swabbing for COVID within their offices, we received word today that the labs will accept a nasopharyngeal swab alone, but the CDC guidelines still recommend one nasopharyngeal and one oropharyngeal swab for each patient. If you do obtain two swabs, it is recommended that they BOTH be sent in ONE viral media tube to assist processing. Please avoid sending as two separate media swab vials. Swabbing procedures can be found [here](#).

Waiting Room Best Practices

We have received recommendations from CDC, Health Department and UR Infection Prevention regarding waiting room policies and procedures to minimize risk of infection for patients and staff alike. Here are some ideas to consider implementing in your office:

- Consider removing waiting room furniture or reconfiguring your waiting room to better enforce social distancing with a goal of keeping patients six feet apart.
- Restrict family members who accompany patients into the waiting room/exam room to no

more than one person in addition to the patient.

- Consider inviting patients to give their cell phone number and wait in their vehicle outside the clinic until a room is ready so they can be brought directly to the exam room.
- Post signage instructing symptomatic patients to NOT ENTER your office, but return to their vehicle and call the office from the car. Download sample signage [here](#).

Postponement of Elective Cases

We want to make you aware of the decision by UR Medicine to postpone all non-essential surgeries, procedures and imaging now through March 29. This will apply to Strong Memorial, Highland and FF Thompson hospitals at this time. UR Medicine is also rolling out a plan to reduce non-essential clinic visits, and we will share with you that information when it becomes available.

Care Management

We want to take this opportunity to reassure practices working with an AHP care manager that in most cases our care managers will still be working to support your practices. Remote access has always been a feature of our care management enterprise, so you can be confident that your care manager will be able to deliver support to your patients whether he/she is physically located in your office or not. The care manager assigned to your practice will be in contact with you if he/she needs to work remotely, and we will be sure to communicate quickly if we anticipate any disruptions to care management relative to your office.

We continue to partner with Dr. Mendoza and County Health Department officials on preparedness and response protocols and will convey information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your continued collaboration in this important public health endeavor.

All the best,

J. Chad Teeters, MD
Executive Medical Director, AHP



Resource Links

NEW: American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Site
<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/>

NEW: Archive of AHP COVID-19 Updates
<https://ahpnetwork.com/category/news/covid-19/>

Monroe County Health Department
<https://www2.monroecounty.gov/health-coronavirus>

CDC Coronavirus Site
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

New York Department of Health Coronavirus site:
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

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