



16 March 2020

URGENT COMMUNICATION RE: COVID-19

Our Fellow Colleagues:

The COVID-19 pandemic is a rare circumstance and great opportunity for us to fulfill our sacred obligation to help our patients and do our part to flatten the incidence curve and protect our friends, our families, and ourselves. The safety and wellbeing of our fellow healthcare providers are our most important priorities. With that goal in mind, we have been regularly monitoring developments.

The Center of Disease Control (CDC) is providing daily updates and recommendations regarding protecting all patients and healthcare workers. We wanted to take a moment to assist our providers with the most salient CDC recommendations for all of us to know:

BEFORE OFFICE VISITS:

- Remind entire staff to follow universal precautions with all patients assuming anyone can be affected
- Practice diligent hand hygiene and wash hands for 20 seconds before and after every patient encounter, cover up cough/sneeze with Kleenex and dispose of immediately, socially distance staff 6 feet from each other when feasible
- Remove magazines, toys, or any other shared items from the waiting areas
- Contact patients prior to scheduled routine appointments to re-schedule if they are having symptoms in order to avoid spreading any virus contagion
- Advise patients to call and re-schedule routine appointments if they develop symptoms
- Post Alert Signs at facility entrance to passively screen for respiratory illness (see enclosed example) and advisory signs at reception desk and wash room entrances on proper handwashing technique (see enclosed example)

PATIENTS WHO ARE ILL AND CALL OFFICE:

- Screen for potential COVID-19 infection:
 - Fever, cough, shortness of breath
 - Recent travel or close contact with affected patient
- Consider telemedicine services via electronic communications (separate memo pending)
- Advise at risk patients with symptoms who call office to contact the local Health Department hotline for disposition **(559) 600-3332**

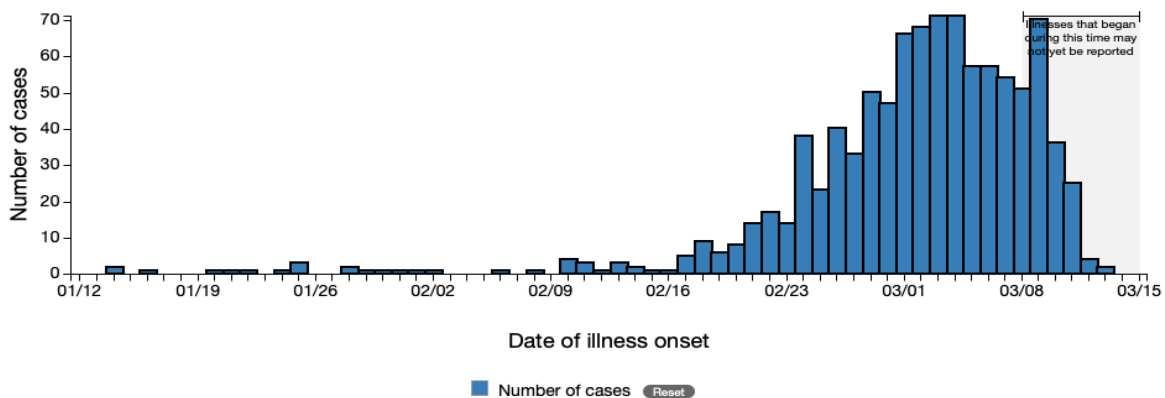
PATIENTS WHO ARE ILL AND ARRIVE AT OFFICE:

- Post Alert Signs to advise at risk symptomatic patients to avoid entering your waiting room and spreading possible contagion
- When an at-risk symptomatic patient shows up for medical care in the office:
 - immediately provide a face mask to the patient (if available)
 - room the patient in an isolation room
 - limit the number of staff and visitors exposed to patient – log exposure risk and maintain record
 - interact with patient while wearing a properly fitted facemask and personal protective equipment (if available)
 - provide appropriate medical care as indicated
 - contact the local Health Department hotline for disposition
 - follow Health Department recommendations – generally they will have the patient tested at their drive-by testing facility or will have a provider meet patient at their home and will properly quarantine appropriate patients
 - After patient exits the room, conduct surface disinfection while continuing to wear protective equipment, and then disposing as per usual medical waste practice
- If patient is deemed stable, then have patient remain home and advise to self-isolate themselves, until test results are known, and feeling better, and cleared by provider
- If EMT transport is deemed necessary, contact 911 and inform them that a suspected case of COVID-19 needs transport so that they can take appropriate precautions
- If Emergency Room care is deemed necessary, refer to the nearest ED and contact the ED to alert them to take the appropriate precautions for suspected case of COVID-19

TAKE TIME TO EDUCATE YOUR STAFF:

- Educate your team about the facts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Reassure your team that you are working to help provide a safe workplace for them.
- Less than 1-4% of at-risk symptomatic patients who are tested actually have a COVID-19 infection. The remaining have other causes of their respiratory illness e.g. cold or flu.
- The most recent incidence curve from the CDC:

COVID-19 cases in the United States by date of illness onset, January 12, 2020, to March 15, 2020, at 4pm ET (n=920)**



REMEMBER NEW GOVERNMENT MANDATES:

- Waiver of Cost-Sharing Amounts - No Co-Pays, Coinsurance or Deductibles for all medically necessary screening and testing related to COVID-19
- Ensuring Members Have Timely Access to Care - No balance billing for all medically necessary related services and treatment related to COVID-19 AND no Prior Auth required for all medically necessary related services and treatment related to COVID-19
- CDC has provided [official coding guidance related to COVID-19 encounters](#) listed below:
 - Any related confirmed services should include diagnosis code of B97.29
 - Any related possible exposure to COVID-19
 - Z03.818, Encounter for observation for suspected exposure to other biological agents ruled out
 - Z20.828, Contact with and (suspected) exposure to other viral communicable diseases
 - Diagnosis Code B34.2, Coronavirus infection, unspecified, **must not** be used to code for COVID-19

Meeting and defeating this pandemic are a responsibility of our entire society collaborating together with each of us doing our part. The tactics that have been shown to be most successful are being deployed widely across our country. Social distancing, proper hygiene, careful evaluation of persons under investigation, and containment will flatten the incidence curve and hopefully shorten the duration of the outbreak.

Thank you for your ongoing compassion and dedication in the care of our mutual patients.



Michael Synn, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer
Santé Health Systems



Tom Utecht, M.D.
Chief Quality and Medical Officer
Community Medical Centers

POSSIBLE COVID-19 EXPOSURE?

STOP

DO NOT ENTER OUR FACILITY IF...

You have been exposed or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19 (corona virus)

We do not have on-site testing capabilities!

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include

FEVER

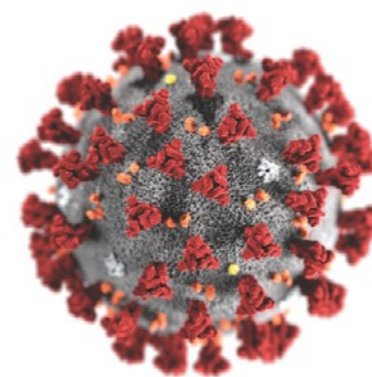


COUGH



Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH



Contact the Fresno County Health Department if you develop symptoms, and been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19

FOR GUIDANCE, CONTACT FRESNO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AT (559) 600-3332



KEEP
CALM
AND
WASH
YOUR
HANDS



U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention



Hands that look clean can still have icky germs!



WASH YOUR HANDS!



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention