

Attention Providers and Staff,

Apologize for the long email on a Saturday but this is the first moment I have had to prepare it for you. Please read to the bottom. Remind your colleagues to check their email and reinforce the contents of this email.

As we are all aware, the President has declared a Federal emergency due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease). In an effort to keep you and our patients safe, we are asking that as leaders you model safe practices such as wearing masks and PPE appropriately according to Infection Prevention and Public Health Recommendation. Please follow the updated workflows for your roles, read and adhere to policies & procedures. We appreciate your flexibility, patience, creativity and dedication to our mission during this fluctuating time. In light of this pandemic, please read and adhere to the following:

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Any provider or back office staff member treating a patient with URI symptoms must wear a face shield, face mask AND gloves. This is with every URI encounter.
- All patients with URI symptoms need a face mask. Attempt to protect the supplies from excessive distribution or pilfering.
- A face shield needs to be assigned to every back office clinical staff member and provider coming into direct contact with patients for rooming and treatment along with the provider. This should be able to last several days with routine cleaning and maintenance.
- Masks and Face Shields are expected to be reused or used for extended periods of time to conserve their supply. Hopefully we will be getting more masks soon but we need to make our current masks last as long as possible. See attached Respiratory Equipment Reuse policy and go over it with your Nurse Manager. [Mask Reuse Policy](#)
- Any patient that has a high suspicion for COVID-19 AND will be getting a Neb treatment, flu testing, strep swab testing or COVID-19 testing, the provider partner collecting the sample should wear N95 face mask, face shield, gown and gloves when collecting these samples. All labs should be collected in the patient's room.
- No need to use gowns when patients are asymptomatic.
- **NEW ITEM:** In an effort to preserve gowns for high risk procedures like Throat or Nose Swab Testing and Neb Treatments, we may start reserving gown usage for Provider Partners collecting samples. We are working on putting into place a process starting Next Week where providers will wear their lab coats in place of a gown for any URI encounters and change them frequently throughout the day. We are working with our vendor to get them laundered daily. Once this is in effect we will roll it out in clinic.

Workflows:

- **NEW TESTING CRITERIA via PROVIDER CHECKLIST**
- Please check the LA county Website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> for updates to the Provider Checklist and Home Care and Home Isolation Instructions. These are constantly being updated and we are trying our best to update them on Townsquare.
- COVID-19 policies, documents and workflows on Townsquare can be found [here](#).

Testing:

- Please see testing workflows on Townsquare. Both LabCorp and Quest are providing testing for patients that are Symptomatic only. Please reserve testing for higher suspicion for COVID-19 or for patients >65 or those with other comorbidities that put them at higher risk for developing severe COVID-19 disease.

- We need to reorder our testing tube supplies daily through Quest and LabCorp to make sure we have them in stock. It's my understanding we can order 10 sets of tubes from quest per clinic per day.

Supplies:

- Currently, all PPE supplies orders are going through SupplyChainInquiry@altamed.org
- Distributions are based on your number of URI encounters that you are seeing in clinic so please make sure you are using your PPE appropriately so that you will not run out of stock. We set the temporary PAR level of three days for clinics so that they do not get dangerously low but if you are going through all your supplies daily we need to take a look at your process and supplies more closely. Ultimately PAR levels will be set to a higher level once the supply chain gets replenished.
- **NEW:** Starting next week we will be bringing the excess supplies that some clinics have into the central warehouse so that we have better access to them for distribution throughout the company and this will make it easier to take daily inventory. More info to come.

Staffing:

- For now, anyone with a fever >100.4 needs to be excused from work. Anyone with cough, cold, sniffles should wear a mask the entire day and adhere to strict hand hygiene. Avoiding meetings and use Webex instead.
- Attempt to make arrangements for childcare if your kids are out of school so you can return to work if possible to help with our workforce and clinic staffing. [Workforce Exposure Policy](#)

Policies:

- We have developed a policy for our workforce who have traveled or have confirmed close contact with a COVID-19 patient to help answer some of those questions that have come up. See attached. [Workforce Exposure Policy](#)

Contingency Planning:

- We are working on implementing a plan for alternative assessment for patients with URI or COVID-19 symptoms. This may include dedicated teams that can wear their PPE continuously, special clinics dedicated to assessments, outdoor triage and testing, separated waiting rooms for sick and well, and increasing our Telephone visits to divert symptomatic patients from face to face visits.

My ASKS FROM YOU:

1. If you have less than 5 lab coats:
 - a. Please send number to bring you up to 5
 - b. What size you wear
 - c. Work location.
 - d. Get extra for floats, per diems and locums providers.
 - e. Please send that info to Deisy Romero-Saucedo drsaucedo@altamed.org , who is attached to this email. DO NOT REPLY ALL.
2. Remember you are a role models for all staff, providers and patients. Reinforce safe practices.
3. Be discreet with any patient care or staffing discussions.
4. Error on the side of caution with patient care and protecting yourself and practice hand hygiene. Sherrill's tips for peace of mind:
 - a. Consider keeping an extra pair of shoes at work dedicated to clinical care.
 - b. Keep hair tied back.
 - c. Avoid ties and keep badges clipped up high away from patients or contamination.
 - d. Ok for all staff including providers to wear scrubs if you have them.

- e. Launder your clothes frequently.
- f. Wash your hands or body if you think you be bringing germs home prior to interacting with your loved ones.

Again, thank you for all of your hard work and dedication. Know that we have a large amount of staff that are working day and night to roll out all of these new programs, workflows, communications and procedures to keep all of us safe.

Sincerely,

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