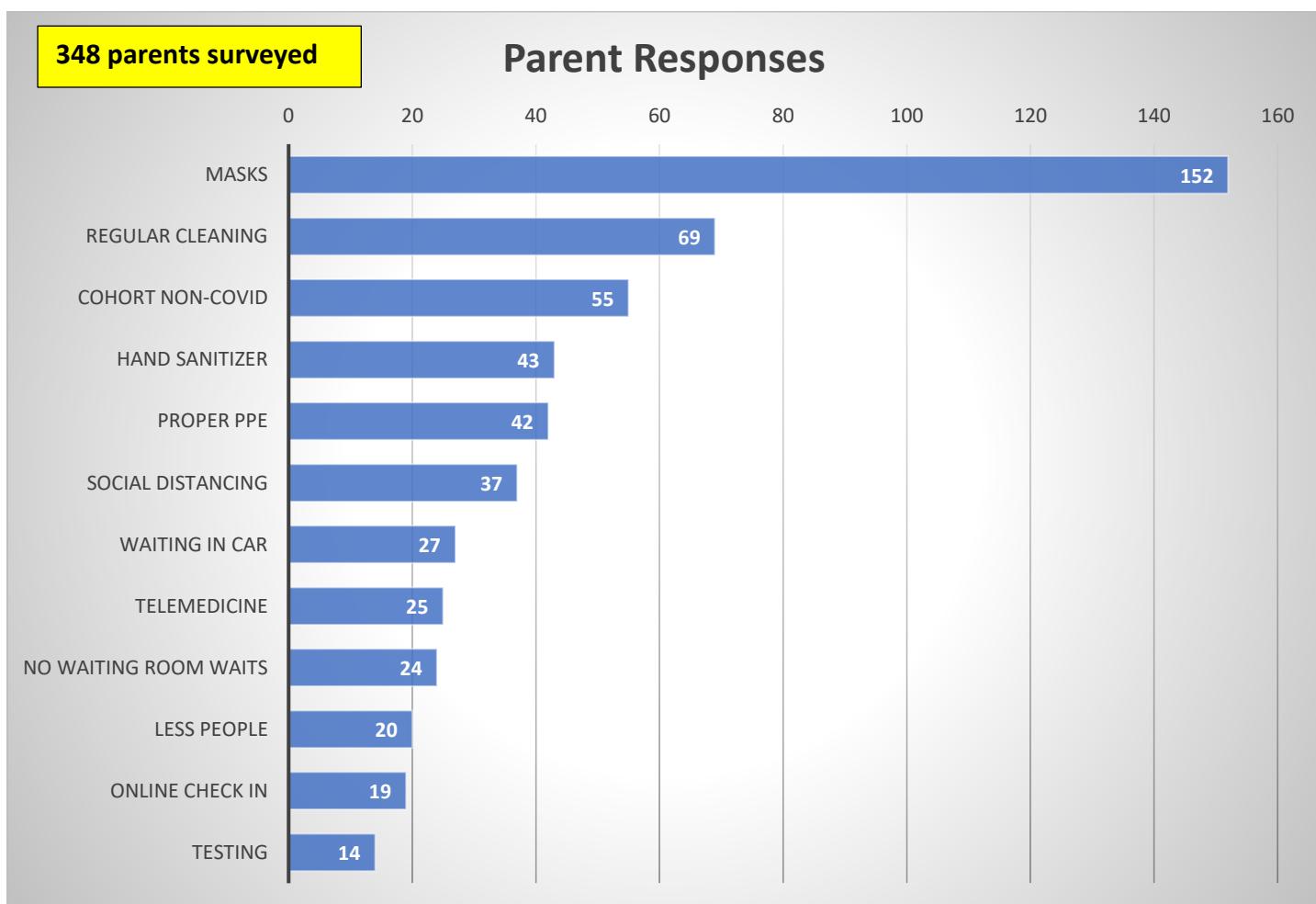


**Introduction:** To re-engage patients in returning to clinic, it is imperative to make them feel safe. Children's surveyed 348 parents for what they felt was important. Based on this information, TCCN has put together this guide to assist you in protecting your patients, your staff and yourselves as much as possible. Remember, when you put these activities in place, reminding patients on the phone, in your offices and on your websites of what you have done will reinforce and support their comfort (see attached sample script).

*Q: In the current COVID-19 crisis, what would make you and your child feel safe in seeking care at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in any of our care areas (outpatient clinics, radiology and testing, elective surgeries, emergency rooms and urgent cares)?*



We have identified the following measures to help reassure parents re-entering your office:

- 1) **Personal Barriers (PPE):** Universal masking, additional PPE
- 2) **Enhanced Office Cleanliness:** Regular cleaning, reduced touch
- 3) **Social Distancing:** Limited people in the office, reduced time in public areas, cohort non-COVID patients
- 4) **Staff Exposure:** Reassurances that Staff have been screened and are COVID-negative

## 1) PERSONAL BARRIERS (PPE)

### a. **UNVERSAL MASKING:**

**Guidance:** *CDC now recommends universal masking for all Health care facilities including practices, if supplies are available.* While we know that masks are in short supply, there are steps you can do to reduce use of N95 and procedural masks.

- Use N95 only with aerosol generating procedures. For example, if nebulizer treatments are necessary (consider MDI as first line) you may use a procedural mask. N95 can also be worn, if available.
- *For patient facing staff* use procedural masks.
- *For non-patient facing staff* (back office) use cloth masks.
- Minimize the staff who go into the patient room.
- One recommendation to save supplies from one of our ID specialists was to set up a plan so that you can cycle masks for daily use for at least 2-3 cycles unless visibly soiled or torn. For example, if you work 4 days a week seeing patients, you have a Monday mask, Tuesday mask, Wednesday mask, Thursday mask. After Monday shift put it in a brown bag and don't use it until the following Monday. The disease will be inactivated over the course of the week. On Tuesday do the same, etc. You could potential have 4 masks lasting 2-3 weeks.
- Implement universal masking in your office including asking patients and families to come with their own masks

### b. **ADDITIONAL PPE** – Besides masks, parents want to see providers change **gloves** between patients

- **Eye protection (goggles, not glasses, are highly recommended):** These can be washed and reused

## 2) ENHANCED OFFICE CLEANLINESS

### a. **REGULAR CLEANING:** –Parents want all surfaces to be wiped down at regular intervals and they want to be informed of this process

#### Guidance:

- Remove all toys, books and magazines from waiting areas, exam rooms, and common areas
- After each visit, enhance your cleaning practices on all high touch surfaces (doorknobs, exam tables, drawers)

### b. **REDUCED TOUCH** – Parents want to minimize what they have to physically touch (doors, pens, etc.)

#### Guidance:

- Use disposable pencils to sign in; use clipboards that are easily cleanable such as acrylic or plastic
- If on-line check in through patient portal, is available, have your staff encourage families to do this before they arrive or on their phones in their cars when they arrive.
- Create a physical distancing barrier between front desk and patients. Amazon and others sell barriers that are quickly installed.
- Payments are handled virtually, when possible

### **3) SOCIAL DISTANCING**

a. **LIMITED PEOPLE IN THE OFFICE**– Parents don't want to be near other families (sick or well) when they come to your office.

**Guidance:**

- Triage patients prior to visit and redirect those with mild symptoms to **phone consultation or Telehealth**, if available.
- Screen patient who arrive immediately and direct those with symptoms to sick room.
- Staggering patient appointments in 5 to 10 minute intervals and shortening the arrive window. This may improve this workflow.
- Limit visit to the child/children and one adult, if possible (encourage sibling appointments)
- Create one-way patient flow in the office if possible.
- Suspend Walk-in visits

b. **REDUCED TIME IN PUBLIC AREAS** – Parents want online check-in, to go directly to exam rooms, *telemedicine*, and/or waiting in car until room is ready.

**Guidance:**

- Offered check in at the desk with return to their vehicle until visit or check in via phone or check in inside the exam room.
- Create 6-foot distant seating arrangements, if possible, for those who must be in your waiting area

c. **COHORT NON-COVID PATIENTS** –Parents want a separate lobby for non-respiratory illnesses or non-COVID patient care. Since we don't know all the children/parents who have COVID:

**Guidance:**

- Scheduling well/sick at specific time of day (morning/afternoon)
- Creating separate waiting areas (with separate entrances, if available)
- Send patients to different offices or partner with another practice to separate per office
- Schedule the most vulnerable patients for the first visits (newborns, patient with chronic conditions)
- Designate sick and well exam rooms

### **4) STAFF EXPOSURE**

a. **REASSURANCES THAT STAFF HAVE BEEN SCREENED AND ARE COVID NEGATIVE**

**Guidance:**

- While parents want to know if your staff is infected, this gets a little tricky without universal testing. Testing site availability for healthcare workers is an evolving process and beyond the scope of this document. We recommend check GA DPH for testing updates. (<https://dph.georgia.gov/>)
- CDC recommends screening your staff daily for symptoms which are defined as : cough and/or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing OR at least two of these symptoms: Fever>100°F (37.8°C) ; Chills; Repeated shaking with Chills; Muscle pain; Headache; Sore throat; or new loss of taste or smell. With any sign of illness, they should be sent home immediately.
- You can assure your families that everyone is being screened daily.