

RISK MANAGEMENT RESOURCE
COVID-19: CHECKLIST FOR REOPENING YOUR PRACTICE

1. CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO PROTECT YOUR PATIENTS AND STAFF

- Supplies:** Determine the amount of PPE needed for both your patients and staff and be sure this amount is stocked. Base your maximum scheduling capacity on the quantities you can secure on a recurrent basis. Ensure you have needed test kits and laboratory supplies for any new testing you plan to implement.
- Environmental Services:** Contact your existing biohazard waste vendors to identify whether there are special procedures that need to be followed for COVID-19 related waste. Fully understand your existing contract and determine if the this needs to be adjusted to account for additional waste disposal.
- Infection Control:** Provide training to both your medical and non-medical personnel regarding proper use of PPE, infection control standards, and health screening measures for employees as per CDC guidelines. Optimize your office to ensure social distancing:
 - Place staff outside of entrance to triage patients and non-patient visitors including delivery personnel
 - Limit non-patient visitors
 - Allow symptomatic patients to wait outside or in cars if possible, otherwise create a separate waiting room inside, or place the patient directly in a private room upon check-in
 - Place chairs for patients and staff approximately 6 feet apart and add barriers like screens or windows at counters to protect staff
 - Designate certain exam rooms for well visits only or sick visits only
 - Remove communal objects in waiting areas and exam rooms that cannot be cleaned, such as reading materials and communal toys if cleaning after each use not possible
 - Leverage technology such as mobile payment apps, patient portal billing, or online bill pay to allow for contactless transactions
 - Adjusting scheduling and office hours to limit the number of people in the office
 - Continue to promote and utilize telehealth services when applicable

2. PATIENT PRIORITY AND SCHEDULING

- Formulate a protocol for determining which patients should be scheduled first to aid in triaging appointment requests for potentially limited scheduling slots.
- Cancelled appointments that occurred as a result of closure should be reviewed in detail with priority given to patients who were unable to substitute a telemedicine visit.
- Leverage telemedicine visits as appropriate to maximize scheduling efficiency in line with implemented social distancing measures and PPE availability.
- Consider adding time to appointments to account for questions related to COVID-19 and new office protocols.
- Adjust existing scheduling cancellation policies and fees to allow more flexibility and understanding for your patients.

3. COMMUNICATION

- Identify effective modes of communication that work best for your practice and your patient population to keep them informed as you near reopening with new processes in place:
 - Patient portal
 - Website
 - Telephone
 - E-mail
 - Pre-recorded messages
- Provide communication to patients about reopening, such as the available care and limitations of care, new office policies and procedures, adjusted office hours and continued use of telemedicine services. Ensure they understand how the social distancing implementation based on the continued efforts to reduce COVID-19 exposure will affect their experience while in the office.
- Educate patients continuously of the current and fluid changes related to COVID-19 through the established communication methods. Information should include active care, availability of care and resources available such as vaccines, test kits, etc.

Our Risk Management team is committed to assisting you:



Monday-Friday from 8am – 8pm ET



855.882.3412



risksolutions@norcal-group.com

ABOUT NORCAL GROUP

The NORCAL Group of companies provide medical professional liability insurance, risk management solutions and provider wellness resources to physicians, health-care extenders, medical groups, hospitals, community clinics, and allied healthcare facilities throughout the country. NORCAL Group includes NORCAL Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliated insurance companies. Please visit norcal-group.com/companies for more information.

The information contained in this document is intended as risk management advice. It does not constitute a legal opinion, nor is it a substitute for legal advice. Legal inquiries about topics covered in this document should be directed to an attorney.

Recommendations contained in this document are not intended to determine the standard of care, but are provided as risk management advice.

Recommendations presented should not be considered inclusive of all appropriate risk management strategies or exclusive of other strategies reasonably directed to obtain the same results.

The ultimate judgment regarding the propriety of any specific procedure must be made by the physician/ healthcare provider in light of the individual circumstances presented by the patient.