

Community Physician Provincial Relaunch Readiness Checklist

Updated May 12, 2020

The Government of Alberta is starting to lift some of the restrictions put in place to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. This checklist was created to support community physicians in Alberta in assessing their clinic's readiness to respond. The checklist is organized by steps to consider taking within each room of the clinic. More detailed information and most up to date guidance for community physicians can be found [HERE](#). Based on your affiliation with other partners (e.g., PCNs) there may be additional resources or updates available on the zone specific community response to COVID-19.

Clinic operations

Policies and procedures

- Design or update your clinic's operational plan, including hours of operation, staffing needs, patient flow, triage, services, and design for your specific clinic situation and environment
 - Consider impacts of potential open/close cycles during relaunch on staffing
 - Minimize staff in the clinic. Consider what tasks can be done from home or outside of regular hours to minimize staff interactions with each other and patients.
 - *While gatherings of more than 15 people are prohibited, healthcare settings are not prohibited from having more than 15 staff in a workplace.*
 - Consider a contingency plan for at-risk staff (i.e., within a defined risk group)
- Space out appointments to reduce or eliminate time in the waiting room and minimize the number of patients entering/exiting clinic at the same time. Consider fitting in virtual appointments between in-person appointments to facilitate social distancing
- Limit the number of physicians taking in-person appointments at a given time. Potentially create two separate teams to manage patient flow, if team is large enough
- Create a plan for communicating with patients about changing clinic hours, services, protocols
- Keep updated lists of clinic staff and patients to identify those at risk in the event of an exposure and facilitating contact tracing, and create a plan for alerting them
- Consider planning for cross-coverage with other physicians in your PCN or community
- Identify PPE, cleaning supplies and other materials required for your planned patient load. Order appropriate supplies and set up reminders to monitor supply and reorder
- Contact your clinic's waste-disposal service regarding plans for appropriate waste disposal so that they can prepare for an increased amount of waste materials
- Require clinic staff/ providers to complete the daily fit for work questionnaire (found [HERE](#))
- Follow the return to work guidelines for clinic staff, where applicable (found [HERE](#))
- All staff must practice effective hand hygiene after interacting with each patient - washing their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Encourage staff to interact at a 2-metre distance and wash hands frequently
- Stay informed of the availability of diagnostic imaging and lab services, referral services, and drug shortages
- Stay informed about the Government of Alberta's relaunch strategy [HERE](#)
- Consider frequent team huddles for knowledge translation and provider wellness check-ins

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Clinic staff education

- Educate staff about COVID-19 and clinic operational changes in response to the pandemic and provincial relaunch strategy
- Cross-train staff for essential office and medical functions, where possible
- Train staff and assess [donning and doffing of PPE](#), and cleaning procedures (guidelines [HERE](#) [page 8], [HERE](#) [Primary Care FAQ question #8], [AHS Cleaning Surfaces](#), [Environmental Cleaning](#), [Electronic Disinfection](#), [Stethoscope Cleaning](#), [Isolation Rooms](#))
- Consider working through routine clinical scenarios with support and guidance. Request information on accessing a free, in-person or virtual 'tabletop simulation' [HERE](#)

Outside the clinic

- Actively manage patient panel, particularly at-risk populations. Info [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)
- Continue to provide virtual visits where appropriate. CPSA has guiding questions to help you determine when to bring a patient into your clinic [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)
- At time of booking (via phone or your web-based booking system):
 - Inform patients about public health measures
 - Screen for COVID-19 symptoms
 - Ask patients not to bring additional people to their appointment, where possible
 - Ask patients to consider wearing their own (cloth) mask, if they have one available
 - Advise patients to wait outside clinic (i.e., in car or at a distance) upon arrival. Clinic will call or text once they are ready for the appointment
- If your clinic sees walk-in patients, advise them to call prior to coming into the clinic (post on clinic website, update phone line and answering machine, email current patients, post on social media, post signage at clinic entrance)
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer in building entranceway with signage asking patients to use it and alerting patients with respiratory symptoms to call prior to entering and/or notify staff immediately. Staff can then provide a mask to those patients prior to entering.

Reception / common areas

- Common areas and other high-touch surfaces and objects should be cleaned and disinfected after each use, including reception counters, seating areas (including clinic room seats), doors, handrails and objects or machines used in therapies
- Wherever possible, discourage staff from sharing phones, desks, offices and other tools
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer and tissue boxes, and no-touch waste containers with disposable liners in clinic reception, waiting room, and restroom areas with signage asking patients to use them. Masks should be made available through clinic staff, to conserve PPE.
- Consider posting the following inside clinic (find samples [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)):
 - Signage re: COVID-19 symptoms, isolation procedures, link to self-assessment tool, testing instructions
 - Signage with pictures to teach/remind all patients about correct respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. Specifically, they should cough and sneeze into a tissue (which then should be properly discarded), or into the upper sleeve. Remind patients to use appropriate hand-washing technique

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- Signage with information about stress responses, resilience and available professional mental health/ behavioral health resources (find information [HERE](#))
- Space chairs in waiting room at minimum 2 metres apart and remove all extra objects in waiting area and reception desk (i.e., coffee tables, magazines, toys, brochures, pens)
- Visual cues for areas where patients/clients are required to queue should be marked and a directional flow through the facility established
- Use a Plexiglas barrier between patient and reception to prevent spread. If a Plexiglas barrier is not available, staff should maintain a 2-meter distance. Mark this physical distance on the floor of the clinic. If a 2-meter distance cannot be maintained, staff should use contact precautions
- Scan health cards or identification visually (i.e., “hands free”)
- Screen all patients for COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival at the clinic (i.e., cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat)

Clinic exam rooms

- Minimize the number of exam rooms in use and clear rooms of extraneous objects and/or cover up the things that you can't move, like wall mounted ophthalmoscopes. Consider removing computer keyboard and mouse, chart in another room.
- In-person visits are generally for exams, so have patients move directly to the exam room and onto table/beds (remove chairs)
- Consider the use of disposable equipment when possible (i.e., blood pressure cuffs)
- Provide no-touch waste containers with disposable liners in all exam rooms
- Minimize people entering the exam room, ideally have one provider do all aspects of the assessment in the exam room, including vitals as necessary
- Keep distance until exam, and use appropriate PPE
 - ***All staff providing direct patient care or working in a patient care area are required to wear a surgical/procedure mask continuously, per [Order 16-2020](#) [page 9]. Recommended approach [HERE](#)***
- Exam room table/bed/chair and equipment should be cleaned with appropriate cleaning solutions immediately between uses.

Additional considerations when caring for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients

- Consider a [remote assessment](#), if appropriate
- Schedule appointments at the end of a day
- Consider arranging a separate entrance for symptomatic patients, where possible
- Dedicate a specific exam room and equipment, such as stethoscopes and thermometers, to these patients
- Provide patient with a procedure mask and room immediately with the door closed
- Evaluate promptly. A point of care risk assessment must be completed and appropriate PPE utilized for protection (i.e., procedure mask, face shield, gown, gloves). More info [HERE](#)
- After delivering care, exit the room as quickly and directly as possible (i.e., complete documentation in a clean area)

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- Develop care plans that reduce the number of staff caring for suspect/confirmed cases and protocolize care
- Notify the recipient of a referred/transferred patient that the patient is a confirmed / suspected COVID-19 case

PPE / cleaning supplies checklist

- N95 respirators (if required for [aerosol generating medical procedures](#))
- Procedure masks for continuous use by providers/staff
- Face shields, gloves and gowns for providers/staff to use with symptomatic patients
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Masks for patient use, where appropriate
- Boxes of disposable tissues
- No-touch waste baskets and disposable liners
- Appropriate disinfectant for environmental cleaning

****Masks: Clinics should follow the most current provincial guidelines on the use of masks by the public when determining if and how to distribute masks to patients.***

Instructions on ordering PPE and cleaning supplies:

[PPE Distribution to Community Obstetricians, Gynecologists and Pediatricians](#)

[PPE Distribution to PCNs](#)

[PPE Distribution to non-PCN Primary Care Providers](#)

[PPE Distribution to Community Specialist Physicians](#)

Additional resources

[Meeting Patients' Needs: Algorithm for Today's Primary and Specialty Care Teams](#)

[CMOH Order 16-2020 re: COVID-19 response](#)

[Considerations for Family Physicians: In Person Visits When Phone/Video isn't Enough
Virtual Care Playbook](#)

[CPSA COVID-19: Reopening Practice](#)

[COVID-19 Guidance: Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting](#)

[COVID-19: Tips for Family Doctors](#)

[AHS Primary Care FAQ](#)

[Daily AHS CMO Update](#)

[Alberta Health bulletin on virtual care codes - March 23, 2020](#)

[Public health disease management guidelines : coronavirus – COVID-19 \(guidelines in event of staff exposure\)](#)

[COVID-19 Assessment tool for Health Care Workers](#)

[Calgary Zone / Specialist Link COVID webpage](#)

[Central Zone COVID 19 Primary Care Pathway](#)