

New Jersey Administrative Order No. 2020-07
COVID-19 Practice Policies Checklist

Practice Name: _____

License Type of Healthcare Professional:

- State Board of Medical Examiners
- New Jersey State Board of Dentistry
- New Jersey Board of Nursing
- New Jersey State Board of Optometrists
- New Jersey State Board of Ophthalmic Dispensers and Ophthalmic Technicians
- State Board of Respiratory Care
- Board of Pharmacy
- Acupuncture Examining Board
- State Board of Chiropractic Examiners
- Occupational Therapy Advisory Council
- State Board of Physical Therapy Examiners
- Orthotics and Prosthetics Board of Examiners
- State Board of Polysomnography
- Athletic Training Advisory Committee
- Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Committee

1. Policies to Avoid Person-to-Person Contact in the Office

Date:

_____ Utilize telemedicine to the greatest extent possible to treat, order tests and triage patients.

_____ Call all patients seeking in-person appointments (or the patient's parent or guardian) to:

_____ assess whether an in-person visit is necessary;

_____ determine the patient's current health status;

_____ determine whether the patient has had known exposure to COVID-19, or has compatible symptoms, or has tested positive;

Date:

_____ determine the length of time since the onset of symptoms or from the positive test results; and

_____ advise the patient during scheduling of in-person appointments of the face-covering requirement below.

_____ Prioritize services that, if deferred, are most likely to result in patient harm.

_____ Prioritize at-risk populations who would benefit most from those services (for example, those with serious underlying health conditions, those most at risk for complications from delayed care, and those without access to telehealth services).

_____ Require anyone coming to the office for an in-person visit to wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering, in accordance with CDC recommendations, while on the premises, except if doing so would inhibit the individual's health or the individual is under two years of age. If a visitor arrives without a cloth face covering, at a minimum, and is not exempt from this requirement, the office must either provide the individual with a suitable face covering or decline entry to the individual.

_____ Screen all patients upon arrival, regardless of symptoms, by means of a no-contact temperature check or thermometers with disposable covers, and record the result within the patient chart.

_____ Space appointments to minimize patient-to-patient contact and the number of people in the office at any given time. If feasible and consistent with social distancing, patients should remain in their cars or outside until they are ready to be seen, or wait in separate rooms to minimize contact with other patients.

_____ Schedule patients with known exposure or compatible symptoms for the end of the day or in a dedicated room.

_____ Schedule patients with increased susceptibility to infections or complications from COVID-19 when the fewest patients and staff will be present, and not during times reserved for patients with known exposure or compatible symptoms.

_____ Provide follow-up care using telemedicine, to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the standard of care.

2. Policies to Facilitate Social Distancing Within the Office

Date:

- _____ Install physical barriers and minimize patient contact with staff in the reception area during triage, check-in and check-out, or arrange the in-take and waiting areas to maintain six feet or more distance between individuals wherever possible.
- _____ Isolate patients with symptoms of respiratory illness to a separate location or single-patient room immediately upon entry into the office and close the door.
- _____ Restrict companions unless medically necessary to assist with mobility or communication, or if the patient is a minor. All companions are required to undergo the same screening as the patient and to wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering, except where doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- _____ Minimize the number of individuals in examination and other rooms.
- _____ Arrange for contactless patient registration and payment options. Disinfect pens and credit cards after each use in accordance with CDC guidelines, if pens and credit cards are utilized.
- _____ Rearrange workspaces, to the extent feasible, to ensure that individuals maintain six feet or more distance between them wherever possible.
- _____ Provide administrative staff their own workspace, if feasible, and provide sufficient supplies and equipment (phones, computers, pens, paper, medical equipment) to avoid sharing. If items are shared, they must be frequently disinfected.

3. Policies to Adopt Enhanced Office Cleaning and Disinfection

Date:

- _____ Allocate sufficient time between appointments to ensure that there will be ample time for appropriate disinfection between patients.
- _____ Adhere to CDC guidelines to clean and disinfect high-touch areas routinely, and after each use, particularly in areas that are accessible to staff or other individuals, including restroom facilities, toilet and sink knobs, countertops, door knobs, water fountains, and shared medical equipment, consistent with CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>.
- _____ Dispose of any medical waste produced, consistent with routine procedures.
- _____ Remove from any waiting area materials (books, magazines, toys) that are intended to be reused and are difficult to disinfect.
- _____ Maintain staffing levels sufficient to perform the above protocols effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of patients and staff.
- _____ Allow all staff to have break time for repeated hand washing between patients, throughout the day and after removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- _____ Provide supplies for regular hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60 to 95% alcohol or antiseptic hand wash and have staff practice respiratory hygiene (coughing and sneezing) and proper tissue usage etiquettes, and use no-touch receptacles for disposal.

4. Policies to Establish Rigorous Protections for Staff

Date:

- _____ Accommodate telework and work-from-home arrangements to the greatest extent possible, particularly for administrative staff who may be able to work remotely.
- _____ Require staff to stay home if they are ill, and isolate and send them home if they become sick at work.
- _____ Record temperatures for all staff members upon arrival and advise staff to go home if the temperature is over 100 degrees.
- _____ Direct all administrative staff to wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering within the office, except where doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- _____ Require clinical staff to wear PPE, consistent with the level of risk, exercising professional judgment regarding the potential for exposure and PPE resource constraints, consistent with CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>.
- _____ Optimize the supply of PPE if PPE is in short supply, utilizing techniques as recommended in CDC's Strategies to Optimize the Supply of PPE and Equipment at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>. These optimization techniques should not be utilized when performing surgery or invasive procedures, when providing care that presents a greater risk of infection or when among those with increased susceptibility to infections or complications from COVID-19.
- _____ Train staff in the proper techniques for donning and doffing PPE and for disposal or laundering of PPE.
- _____ Stagger schedules or implement rotations to reduce the number of people in the office at a given time.
- _____ Schedule staff with increased susceptibility to infections or complications from COVID-19 when the fewest patients and staff will be present.

5. Policies to Stay Informed About Developments and Obligations; Share Guidance with Patients

Date:

- _____ Review guidance provided at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/> relating to infection control, ambulatory care settings and specific practice fields.
- _____ Monitor guidelines and directives issued by the New Jersey Department of Health, professional boards, the CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on an ongoing basis.
- _____ Maintain a log of patients treated to facilitate contact tracing and submit such information if requested to do so by, or on behalf of, the Department of Health or the local board of health.
- _____ Report COVID-19 cases and exposures consistent with board rules, if applicable, and N.J.A.C. 8:57, to local boards of health.
- _____ Develop a plan to respond to potential surges.

Additional Policies Applicable to Services Which Involve Direct Contact with the Patient’s Face, Eyes, or Mouth or Presents a High Risk of Aerosolization

Licensee Description:

- Dentist
- Oral Surgeon
- Pulmonologist
- Otolaryngologist
- Eye Care Professional (Collectively, Ophthalmologists, Optometrists, and Opticians)
- Other (Involves Direct Contact with Face, Eyes, Mouth or Presents a High Risk of Aerosolization)

Date:

- _____ Defer any elective surgery or procedure or routine dental or eye care, if a patient is COVID-19 positive or symptomatic, until at least 10 days after the patient first experienced symptoms and at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of a fever, without use of fever reducing medications.

- _____ Postpone any elective surgery or procedure for asymptomatic patients if, in the healthcare professional’s judgment, a postponement will be unlikely to result in an adverse outcome.

- _____ Weigh, and review with the patient, the risks of any elective surgery, invasive procedure or routine dental or eye care if the patient is identified to be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 or complications (with pre-existing comorbidities) or immunocompromised.

- _____ Wear PPE, which shall include respiratory protection such as N95 masks, gloves, fluid-resistant gowns, hair covers, eye protection with solid side shields or face shields, to protect mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth during aerosol-generating procedures as well as those likely to generate splashing or spattering of blood or other bodily fluids, as dictated by the procedure to be performed, consistent with guidelines from the CDC.

Date:

- _____ Implement additional infection control measures, assuring that all surfaces are disinfected between patients.
- _____ **Policy Applicable to Dental Professionals:** Dental professionals, consistent with N.J.A.C. 13:30-8.5, should continue to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations and CDC Recommended Infection Control Practices for Dentistry, including guidance found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html>, and should use high volume evacuators and isolation strategies including rubber dams when appropriate to limit exposure to aerosols.
- _____ **Policy Applicable to Eye Care Professionals:** Eye care professionals should use a slit lamp “breath” shield/barrier that is as large as possible without interfering with clinical care.

Definitions:

The following words and terms when used in this rule shall have the following meaning, unless the context indicates otherwise:

- “Elective surgery and invasive procedures” are those that can be delayed without undue risk to the current or future health of the patient, as determined by the patient’s treating healthcare professional.
- “In-person medically necessary or therapeutic services” are those which, in the judgment of the healthcare professional, are needed to treat or restore or improve a patient’s health, and which cannot be reasonably delayed without an adverse medical outcome.
- “Office” means a practice setting, not licensed by the Department of Health, including but not limited to healthcare professional offices, private practices, clinics, urgent care centers, community medical centers.

Important Notes:

This Checklist was created on May 22, 2020 based on the DCA guidelines issued on May 18, 2020. Guidance as to these policies is changing rapidly.

As a result, practices should monitor DCA updates as to the guidance in effect at the time the services are provided. The checklist is intended as a tool and is not meant to provide legal advice.

If you are a licensed healthcare professional with questions about your operations during the public health emergency, please contact Grace Mack or any member of the Wilentz Health Law and Corporate Teams.

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