March 13, 2020

Dear Clinic Providers,

As you are aware, the Ventura County Public Health Department declared a local health emergency on 3/12/2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The declaration states that as healthcare providers, we are responsible for implementing social distancing plans. I am reaching out to you to do what we can to prevent the spread of this disease.

As healthcare providers, I would like for us to follow the steps below:

1. Screen all visitors and staff daily for fever, respiratory symptoms, travel to high-risk areas, and exposure to COVID-19 before entering clinic.
2. Give surgical masks only to patients who have risk factors or symptoms.
3. Have a triage system in place when making reminder calls and at the clinic entrance (see flowchart below).
4. Implement screening and testing with a drive-through or parked car option to maintain distance between patients.
5. Use PPE if you will come into contact with a patient who has risk factors and requires COVID-19 testing.
6. Limit non-essential visits, such as well-child visits (without imminent need for vaccines), well-woman exams, routine follow-up for HTN, etc.
7. Pregnant patients, patients with semi-urgent symptoms, and patients who require follow-up of potentially serious medical conditions (e.g., infection, rash, wounds) should be scheduled and seen in clinic.
8. Offer phone visits or teleconference visits (coming soon) to provide basic advice and address medication refills instead of a visit to the clinic for healthy or mildly ill patients.
9. Please consider reviewing patient schedules in advance to identify patients whose needs can be met via phone call.

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**Risk factors and symptoms present**

- **No**
  - Advise patient to stay home
  - Offer phone appointment

- **Mild sx, not high risk**
  - Advise patient to stay home
  - Offer drive-through testing

- **Moderate sx or Mild sx with high risk**
  - Advise patient to come to clinic
  - Evaluate patient in car
  - Move patient into isolation exam room if further evaluation needed

- **Severe symptoms**
  - Advise patient to go to nearest ED
10. Limit to only one family member to accompany each patient to clinic.
11. Keep patients at least 6 feet apart. Consider separating sicker patients by space or by time (e.g., use Urgent Care for sick; schedule healthy in AM, sicker in PM).

Highest risk groups include people over 60 and patients with heart/lung disease, chronic kidney disease, uncontrolled diabetes, receiving immunosuppressive medications, or significant smoking history.

We understand your concerns about how these measures will affect clinic encounter volumes. We will work together to get through this as a system once we get through this pandemic.

Thank you for all of your hard work, especially during this challenging and uncharted time.

Terry
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