Outpatient Clinic COVID-19 Readiness

March 26, 2020 (Reviewed April 30, 2020)

Before Patients Arrive

Prepare the clinic.

- Know how to contact KDHE
  - COVID hotline for general questions: 866-534-3463 or covid-19@ks.gov
  - KDHE Epidemiology Hotline for questions about testing criteria and isolation/quarantine: 877-427-7317
- Stay connected with COVID-19 updates for your community and abroad
  - [KDHE COVID-19 Updates](#)
  - [KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center](#)
  - [CDC COVID-19 Travel](#)
  - [CDC COVID-19 Healthcare Facilities](#)
  - [CDC COVID-19 Healthcare Professionals](#)
- Assess and restock testing and PPE supplies now and on a regular schedule
- Know which of your patients are at higher risk
  - older adults
  - those with serious chronic medical conditions
- Consider and plan for providing more telemedicine appointments

Communicate with patients.

- Post signs at entrances and throughout the clinic about prevention actions
- Create a question guide for staff; use it to ask patients about symptoms during reminder calls
  - Is patient experiencing fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath?
  - Has the patient traveled in the last 14 days?
  - Has the patient been in contact with a person(s) diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Consider rescheduling elective procedures/non-urgent appointments

Prepare the waiting area and patient rooms.

- Provide adequate supplies for respiratory and hand hygiene:
  - Masks (for those displaying respiratory symptoms)
  - Tissues
  - Alcohol-based hand rub (≥60% alcohol content)
  - Soap at sinks
  - Trash cans
- Place chairs at least 6 feet apart when possible

- Remove any communal objects:
  - Toys
  - Reading materials

When Patients Arrive

Place staff at entrances to ask patients about their symptoms.

- Consider limiting entrances to facility
- Limit non-patient visitors
- Provide facemasks to symptomatic patients

Separate sick patients with symptoms.

- Place sick patients in a private room as quickly as possible
- If these patients need to wait:
  - Allow stable patients to wait outside or in their cars
  - Create a separate waiting area for sick vs well patients

COVID-19 Symptoms
(observed, not subjective):

- Fever (≥100.4°F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

After Patients are Assessed

Notify KDHE if you suspect a COVID-19 case – since this is a novel disease a mandatory report is required within 4 hours of suspicion of a case.

- Collect an NP swab specimen and keep cold for potential testing
- Testing is now available through some commercial/reference labs
- For notification to KDHE fill out a reportable disease form or the new testing approval form and send via secure fax 877-427-7318

Provide at-home care instructions to patients with respiratory symptoms who are stable enough to go home.

- Information and handouts can be found at the KDHE COVID-19 Resource Center
- Consider telehealth options for follow-up with patients

Cleaning/Disinfection

- Clean surfaces before disinfecting – use EPA-registered disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2
- Hit high-touch surfaces multiple times per day (e.g., door handles, chairs, registration counter)

- After respiratory patients leave, close door to room and allow 1-2 hours for air changes before cleaning, if able to maintain normal clinic function during the time the room is not in use

Train and Prepare Your Staff Now!

- Emphasize hand hygiene and cough etiquette for everyone.
- Ensure your clinical staff know the correct ways to put on, use, and take off PPE safely.
- Make a plan for handling patients with respiratory symptoms and those suspected to have COVID-19; share with staff and practice the plans to ensure everyone understands.
- Recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 – fever, cough, shortness of breath.
- Implement procedures to quickly triage and separate sick patients.
- Ask staff to stay home if they are sick.
- Send staff home if they develop symptoms while at work.

References:

CDC. *Get Your Clinic Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. March 11, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinic-preparedness.html. March 24, 2020.

CDC. *Get Your Clinic Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, infographic. March 15, 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Clinic.pdf. March 24, 2020.

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