

May 15, 2020

**COM-2020-037**

Dear provider of healthcare-related services,

As part of our effort to support you and keep you informed regarding rapidly changing measures taken in response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), we are sharing important considerations for pharmacies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Considerations for pharmacies during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published an updated guidance for pharmacies during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the most recent information regarding safety practices and precautions for the disease. The CDC explained that these guidelines should be applied to all staff in pharmacies to minimize risks to the health of staff and customers and to ensure that pharmacies are able to continuously stay open to support public health.

Some of the recommendations where:

#### **1. Implement universal use of face coverings**

- Everyone entering the pharmacy should wear a face covering.
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should always wear a facemask while they are in the pharmacy.
- When available, facemasks are generally preferred over cloth face coverings for healthcare professionals (HCP).

#### **2. Advise staff who are sick to stay home**

- Sick staff must stay away from the workplace until they have recovered.
- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible, non-punitive, and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.

#### **3. Filling prescriptions**

- Pharmacy staff should:
  - Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol on counters for use by customers.
  - Have sufficient and easy access to soap and water or hand sanitizer.
  - After a prescription has been prepared, the packaged medication can be placed on a counter for the customer to retrieve, instead of being directly handed to the customer. Other strategies to limit direct contact with customers include:
    - Avoid handling insurance or benefit cards. Instead, have the customer take a picture of the card for processing or read aloud the information that is needed (in a private location so other customers cannot hear).



- Avoid touching objects that have been handled by customers. If a transfer of items must occur, pharmacy staff should wash their hands afterward with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. They should also always avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- 4. Use strategies to minimize close contact between pharmacy staff and customers and between customers:**
- Maintain social distancing (6 feet between individuals) for people entering the pharmacy as much as possible.
  - To shield against droplets from coughs or sneezes, install a section of clear plastic at the customer contact area to provide barrier protection.
  - Pharmacists who are providing chronic disease management services, medication management services, and other services that may be provided without face-to-face encounters, should make every effort to use a telephone, telehealth, or tele-pharmacy strategies.
  - Post-pone and reschedule delivery of some routine clinical preventive services, such as adult immunizations, which require face-to-face encounters.

Additional information can be found on the websites from the [CDC](#) or the [FDA](#).

Remember that medical literature is dynamic and is continuously changing as new scientific knowledge is developed. We exhort the frequent revision of treatment guidelines to assure that your recommendations are consistent with the most updated information.

PharmPix is committed to the health and wellness of our members. It is our priority to offer high-quality services and support practices for health promotion and diseases prevention. If you have any questions or wish to have more information regarding this document, you can call us at 787-522-5252, extension 137.

Regards,

Clinical Department

References:

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