

# CMO SPECIAL REPORT: COVID-19 UPDATE

FROM THE DESK OF

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UPSTATE  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

MARCH 16, 2020

## PAPR hoods are in short supply

We have a VERY limited and dwindling supply of PAPR hoods. In other COVID-19 affected areas around the world and within the US, some men with facial hair who are able to do so have opted to shave in order to conserve PAPR hoods.

## Ambulatory Clinic Visits

A reminder to all physicians, NPs, and PAs in ambulatory clinics—please work with your clinic teams to review your upcoming clinic schedules and identify patients who are scheduled for routine follow ups, annual exams, routine screenings, and non-urgent chronic issues who can be managed by phone, seen by telehealth videoconferencing, or rescheduled. IMT is expediting a WebEx videoconferencing platform in our clinics. We would like for all on-site clinic visits to be restricted to patients with acute issues or who require time-sensitive follow up by week's end. Thank you so much for doing this heavy lift to help keep patients and staff safe.

## Changes to testing for COVID-19

The criteria for those authorized to order COVID-19 tests has expanded to include all physicians, NPs and PAs. The change from previous policy is that residents can now order the testing. Clinical triggers to consider ordering COVID-19 testing include unexplained febrile or respiratory illness. The COVID-19 order will go-live in EPIC early this week. Currently, to get COVID-19 testing, a standard respiratory viral panel (RVP) should be ordered in EPIC and the COVID-19 testing ordered separately on a downtime form. If the RVP is negative, then the COVID-19 testing is sent out by the lab to be run. If the RVP is positive for one of the common viral respiratory pathogens, then the COVID-19 testing is automatically cancelled. If you have strong clinical suspicion that the pathogen detected by a positive RVP does not account for the clinical picture, you can call the lab and override cancellation of the COVID-19 test. This should be an infrequent scenario. We are acquiring additional equipment this week to expand our RVP testing capacity. We have also been approved as one of the NY labs designated for on-site COVID-19 testing, which we expect to go live in several weeks.

**ALERT** —  
**ADVISORY** —  
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## Elective surgery cancellation

Thanks to the Chairs and Chiefs of Service for working with their surgeons and/or proceduralists to cancel upcoming elective operations and procedures that can safely be postponed for  $\geq 2$  months. Hopefully, this will increase inpatient capacity, conserve PPE, and reduce COVID-19 illness in our patients and staff. We are targeting week's end to have all elective surgeries and procedures that meet criteria for rescheduling off the surgical/procedural schedules. Non-urgent cases that cannot wait for 2 months should be moved up if possible, so that by the end of the week we create more inpatient capacity.

## Visitation policy

Starting this week, tighter visitation guidelines will be implemented, including no visitors for adult inpatients. Exceptions will be made in special clinical situations, such as end-of-life care, critically ill patients, etc. Visitors will be allowed in other special clinical circumstances at the discretion of the attending physician and/or administrative supervisor. Parents and/or guardians will be allowed to visit pediatric patients. Surgical and ambulatory patients will be allowed one companion. Please be on the lookout for updated policy CAMP L-NN (Visitor Restriction During Prevalence of COVID-19) which will be released shortly.

## Be safe

Use social distancing. Do as many meetings remotely as possible, avoid large groups. Wash your hands. If you get sick, please do not come to work and use self-quarantine to avoid infecting others.

Thanks to you all for the work you are doing to help us manage the COVID-19 crisis.

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