

COVID-19 Practice Guidance for Licensees and Facilities

Alaska State Medical Board, Board of Nursing,
Board of Examiners in Optometry, Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives
as part of the DCCED CBPL Medical Workgroup, 11/12/20

The purpose of this guidance is to provide guidance for healthcare practitioners and facilities to promote safe interactions with the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guiding Principles

- Base all policies and practice decisions on the most current evidence-based science, following recommendations of the CDC, State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, and relevant State of Alaska licensing boards: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>
- Make decisions regarding infection prevention, environmental controls, testing, and visitation after a careful review of the prevalence of COVID in the community and the facility.
- Remain flexible:
 - Facilities may need to set more restrictive policies based on the unique needs of their population and the safety of their employees.
 - Prepare for state health officials to review facility/practitioner policies based on outcomes: COVID-19 positivity rates within the state will be monitored by location and contact tracing.
 - Develop written plans for facility response to an increase in COVID cases. Consult the Preparedness Checklists published by the CDC.

Delivery of Non-Urgent/Non-Emergent Services, Elective Surgeries, and Procedures

- Implement universal source control measures including face masks and physical distancing.
- Follow CDC recommendations for use and conservation of Personal Protective Equipment and implementation of engineering controls to reduce risk.
- Create policies to reduce potential infections from potential aerosolizing procedures.
- Utilize respiratory-level equipment for aerosol generating procedures, such as N95, Papr, eye protection.
- Promote the use of nurse-directed screening and triage protocols where appropriate.
- Promote the use of telehealth to expand access to essential services.
- Provide resources to healthcare workers to manage stress and build resilience.

Urgent and Emergent Services, Surgeries, and Procedures

- View all patients as COVID-19 positive and proceed accordingly.
- Adopt universal precautions utilizing appropriate PPE.
- Create policies to reduce potential infections from potential aerosolizing procedures.
- Utilize respiratory-level equipment for aerosol generating procedures, such as N95, Papr, eye protection.

Testing

- Take into consideration current community transmission.
- Prepare for testing strategies to evolve quickly based on current technology, standards, and availability.
- Continue to use multiple approved testing strategies.
- Follow State of Alaska COVID-19 testing guidance when applicable: <http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/testing.aspx>

Visitation

- Consider unique or expanded policies for special circumstances such as end-of-life, labor and delivery, pediatrics, transfer of care, care planning, or discharge instructions. (This list is not exclusive.)
- All facilities that receive patients from planned home or birth center deliveries are encouraged to allow the midwife to accompany the patient in addition to the chosen birth support person(s).
- Facilities are encouraged to follow CDC and CMS guidelines for a phased approach to expanding visitation.

This guidance is subject to change. Additional requirements may be set in state law or regulations.
Questions? Contact license@alaska.gov.