

COVID-19 Practice Guidance for Licensees and Facilities

The Alaska State Board of Chiropractic Examiners, 08/31/2021

The governor and Alaska health care authorities have lifted Health Mandate 15, so the board is reaching out to provide guidance for licensees.

The Alaska State Board of Chiropractic Examiners recognizes our licensed professionals and your staff members have faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overwhelmingly, Alaskan chiropractic physicians and their teams have a sterling record of safe and efficient practice in a challenging environment. As we have learned, COVID information changes rapidly and it is still the responsibility of every licensed professional to stay informed and practice safely.

The board recommends all licensees consider following the guidance. By continuing with meticulous active care, you may reduce your legal risk. All chiropractic physicians licensed under AS 08.20 are obligated to practice within the codified statutes and regulations of the State of Alaska. Rescinding of Mandate 15 only relieves practitioners of the additional rules imposed during the emergency declaration.

Recommendations for mitigating COVID-19 exposure risk include, but are not limited to:

1. Screen and Triage Every Individual Scheduling and Entering a Healthcare Facility for Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

Although screening for symptoms will not identify asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection, symptom screening remains an important strategy to identify those who could have COVID-19 so appropriate precautions can be implemented. The board recommends:

- Following State of Alaska COVID-19 testing guidance when applicable: <http://www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/testing.aspx>
- Delaying care or utilizing telehealth options if an infected individual is identified.
- Following all additional CDC state and federal guidance relating to screening for COVID-19 in symptomatic and asymptomatic patients: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

2. Educate and Direct and Maintain Social Distancing

Take steps to ensure that everyone adheres to source control measures and hand hygiene practices while in a healthcare facility

- Post visual alerts at the entrance and in strategic places (e.g., waiting areas, restrooms, etc.) providing instructions about wearing a cloth face covering for source control and how and when to perform hand hygiene.
- Provide supplies for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, including alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) with 60-95% alcohol, tissues, and no-touch receptacles for disposal, at facility entrances, waiting rooms, and patient check-ins.
- Limit and monitor points of entry to the facility
- Screen everyone (patients, HCP, visitors) entering the healthcare facility for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or exposure to others with SARS-CoV-2 infection and ensure they are practicing source control.
- Set up waiting rooms to allow patients/clients to be at least 6 feet apart. Use partitions or signs to create designated areas or waiting lines.
- Patients may wait outside in their vehicles until called into the facility for their appointment
- Actively take their temperature and document absence of symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Fever is either measured temperature $\geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$ or subjective fever.

- Ask them if they have been advised to self-quarantine because of exposure to someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

3. Complete thorough cleaning and disinfection of hands, all surfaces, equipment and tools with patient/provider contact.

Any provider-patient contact requires immediate sanitization and handwashing before and after contact. The board recommends following CDC guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting.

Proper Handwashing technique:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can’t Use Soap and Water

If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Surface Cleaning Policy:

DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

- DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED.
Areas unoccupied for 7 or more days need only routine cleaning.
- DETERMINE HOW AREAS WILL BE DISINFECTED.
Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched.
Prioritize disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- CONSIDER THE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED.
Keep in mind the availability of cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for cleaners and disinfectants.

IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN

- CLEAN VISIBLY DIRTY SURFACES WITH SOAP AND WATER prior to disinfection.
- USE THE APPROPRIATE CLEANING OR DISINFECTANT PRODUCT. Use an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19, and read the label to make sure it meets your needs. Recommended EPA Disinfectants can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABEL.

The board recommends you read all labels/instructions as some disinfectants require longer kill times. The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.

MAINTAIN AND REVISE YOUR PLAN AS NEEDED

**For more information on handwashing, visit CDC’s [Handwashing website](#) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

4. Use of PPEs (masks and gloves):

- Health Care Providers should wear a surgical-grade mask. Follow current CDC Guidelines to provide safe patient care intervention.
 - Cloth face coverings are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE); they are source control. Health Care Providers should wear [appropriate PPE](#). Cloth face coverings may be used by non-treating staff and patients.
 - The owner or employer of health care providers and staff is responsible for providing appropriate PPE for all workers in the facility.
 - For visitors and patients, a cloth face covering may be appropriate. If a visitor or patient arrives to the healthcare facility without a cloth face covering, a facemask may be used for source control if supplies are available.
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children under age 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
5. **The board recommends telehealth services** if treatment cannot be safely provided through direct contact or the client has co-morbidities with increased risk should they contract COVID-19.

Chiropractic Physicians providing service to Alaska residents currently in Alaska must be licensed in Alaska. Alaskan physicians must be licensed in another state to treat or consult with a patient in that other state.

Providers must complete an application with the Telemedicine Business Registry prior to provision of such care.

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/TelemedicineBusinessRegistry.aspx>.

6. Employing Massage Therapists (LMTs), Physical Therapists (PT, LPT) or other Licensed Professionals

Be aware that other licensed professionals may have regulatory obligations to follow directives of national organizations or federal codified regulation. As employers, chiropractors have the obligation to be familiar with and supportive of those professionals. Be a good team member.

The Board reminds licensees that the conditions under which they provide care should be provided in accordance and compliance with CDC as well as OSHA Guidelines. Should a provider be unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions of the CDC/OSHA guidelines, the board recommends they postpone such care until such time that they are able and willing to comply or until the CDC/OSHA guidelines are amended or rescinded.

Make certain to follow guidance from state and local authorities as well as your facility guidelines

Navigating CDC Website for reference <https://www.cdc.gov/>

You can either use the search bar to type in what you are looking for or:

- Click on Coronavirus Disease, then
- Click on Healthcare Workers and Labs, then
- Click on Guidance for US Healthcare facilities