

June 29, 2020

Dear Healthcare Provider:

We continue to experience an unprecedented public health condition in our city. We appreciate the providers who have been on the front line of the pandemic medical response. DC Health is providing general guidance to all healthcare providers in the District regarding the critical need for routine and preventive clinical services and the operating status of healthcare facilities, private practices, and community health centers in the District.

Healthcare Services in the District

As we enter our 4th month of the COVID-19 pandemic in the District of Columbia, we have observed disturbing declines in childhood vaccination, cancer screenings, HIV/STI testing and care, and prenatal care, similar to the rest of the nation. Unlike the rest of the nation, we have one of the highest health insurance rates as well as primary care capacity across all 8 Wards. It is critical to use this robust infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of the services our residents need. All healthcare providers and facilities may continue to optimize telehealth services, when available and appropriate. Care that cannot be provided virtually should be offered to patients/clients, as clinically appropriate, in locations that have the resources to provide such care.

Throughout the pandemic, it has always been the responsibility of all practitioners to assess the needs of their patients to determine whether any service or procedure is appropriate under current circumstances. When in-person care is required, DC Health recommends to follow appropriate guidelines.

General Considerations & Proper Safeguards

DC Health offers guidance around the delivery of safe care, and all healthcare providers should follow these best practices and protocols. We realize that a guidance may not exist for all healthcare disciplines, or for all possible healthcare services currently allowed; however, there are proper safeguards all healthcare providers can put in place to maximize patient safety and patient access. This includes screening all patients for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to providing services, scheduling patients in a manner to ensure your facility is minimizing time in waiting areas with proper social distancing, ensuring staff is properly educated on best practices and use of PPE, hand sanitization, infection control practices and to remain home when sick. Lastly, healthcare providers should communicate extensively to their patients that they are available to meet their preventive and chronic health care needs.

DC Health thanks all healthcare providers for your continued dedication and service to the residents of the District of Columbia. It is because of your tireless efforts that the District's response to COVID-19 has been, and will continue to be, a successful one. DC Health strongly encourages all providers to routinely check <https://coronavirus.dc.gov> for the most up to date information related to COVID-19.

Sincerely,



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Director