

## COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR PHC PARTICIPATING GROUPS – 3/16/20

We have been working with our vendor-partners on ways to best support you and your participants during this period of uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. The situation is changing day-to-day, but following are the most recent updates:

### **Coalition Health Center – message from the CHC**

During this national crisis, Beacon has been working diligently to manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic while delivering the highest level of service to our clients and patients. The Coronavirus has mandated that we make difficult decisions to preserve the health of the medical community and to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As the leading resource for medical operations across the North Slope of Alaska Beacon must also be a leader at our clinics here in Anchorage. Based on the pandemic's trending we feel it necessary for us to proactively take the following steps at the Coalition Health Center:

- **Effective Tuesday, March 17th we will not accept walk-in visits at our Anchorage and Fairbanks locations.** This will allow our dedicated provider more time to provide telephonic consults.
- **Effective Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> we will stop all Saturday appointments until further notice.** During this unprecedented time, it is important to allow our team members adequate time for rest, self-care and support for their families. Appointments currently scheduled will be rescheduled promptly for a weekday appointment.
- Patients experiencing flu like symptoms, upper or lower respiratory symptoms, sore throat, fever, etc., should call the clinic to speak directly to a provider. Provider will assist with necessary triage or care plan.
- All telephonic visits will include follow-up calls to check-in on the patients and adjust care plan or triage based on improvement or progression of symptoms.
- Coalition Health Center appointments will focus on physicals, annual/routine medical care, follow-up care, chronic disease management, minor in office procedures and injuries.
- Anyone with travel history to a CDC Category 3 area in the past 14-days or known exposure to positive COVID-19 patient or someone under investigation for COVID-19 will need to call to cancel their appointment. Coalition Health Center will not be able to see them in the clinic until 14-days post travel or exposure and free of any respiratory symptoms.
- Coalition Health Center will be monitoring the community resources established for Coronavirus testing and utilize those when possible. This plan is being put in place to reduce exposure to our patients and to our medical team and to streamline care and testing.

We appreciate your understanding and support of these actions necessary to manage exposure to the Coronavirus. Beacon is confident that these changes are temporary, and we will re-open our walk-ins and Saturday's appointments as quickly as possible.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Rachel Lawler at (907) 375-4334 or [rlawler@beaconhss.com](mailto:rlawler@beaconhss.com).

## **BridgeHealth** - *message from BridgeHealth*

To Our Valued Customers:

As you are aware, the novel COVID-19 health event is rapidly evolving, and the ultimate extent and duration of its impact are still largely unknown. At BridgeHealth, the health and safety of our members is foremost in our minds as we monitor and navigate this uncharted territory together. We take seriously our responsibility for all our members, especially those who may currently be planning to travel for elective surgery.

Given the current risks, and with an abundance of caution, we have determined that it is in the best interests of our members, our customers, and the healthcare system as a whole, to re-evaluate our travel policy. As a result, BridgeHealth will be pausing our practice of traveling patients for the next thirty days. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust as changes and updates warrant.

For those members impacted by this policy, we will be working with each of them on an individual basis with the goal of rescheduling their surgeries for after June 1<sup>st</sup>. If a member, in consultation and coordination with their surgeon, determines that the benefits of an immediate surgery outweigh the risk associated with travel, we will help facilitate travel for that scheduled surgery on an exception basis with their employer's approval.

At this time, local surgeries, the majority of which can be conducted in an outpatient setting, will continue as planned. Our quality team is continuing to monitor the situation and are tracking advisories from the CDC and WHO on a daily basis. We will continue to update and adjust our policies and practices to best serve our members and our clients.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to discuss this further, please reach out to your account manager. Beginning Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, you may also find additional information and updates on our website at [www.BridgeHealth.com/news](http://www.BridgeHealth.com/news). We will continue to keep you updated as this situation evolves.

## **Alaska Regional Hospital** - *message from ARH*

The emergence of COVID 19 has complicated our usual flu season by presenting in very similar ways. Fortunately, the transmission of both is prevented in the same way. Hand washing, avoiding friends or coworkers who are sick, and taking good care of ourselves by eating and sleeping well so that our immune system is functioning its best.

**Alaskans who have symptoms of flu (cough, achiness, "head cold") that are not severe should stay home and contact their primary care provider or 211 for guidance** on whether testing for flu, COVID 19, or other reasons is indicated, and what they can do to alleviate their symptoms. (800-478-2221 if you live in an area without the 2-1-1 line.)

**Alaskans who are seriously ill should go to the Emergency Department.** If they have a cough, fever, or shortness of breath then they should wear a mask immediately upon entering the hospital.

Alaskans who want to minimize their chance of exposure should review the CDC website and follow their suggestions under the heading "How to Protect Yourself" <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Currently, they are recommending:

- Avoiding close contact with others as much as possible. This may mean avoiding crowded places, handshaking, or even not traveling if you are over 60 years old or have medical illnesses.
- Good self-care—handwashing (soap and water are best, but if that is not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol), staying up to date with your immunizations, and healthy habits.
- Take steps to protect others – stay home and wear a facemask if you’re sick, cover coughs and sneezes, clean and disinfect surfaces.

Alaska Regional Hospital is fully prepared to meet the needs of our community and patients. We are updating staff daily and screening patients and visitors for symptoms of illness. We are also working closely with the state, CDC, and our corporate partners to ensure that we have the latest news and are following the most recent guidelines.

Date of update: 3/16/20