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**Update to our patients of regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19**

We want to make all of our patients aware of what we are doing in response to COVID-19 (coronavirus). I suspect many of you have already learned a lot about this emerging epidemic. It is fair to say that the situation will likely get worse before it gets better.

The most important things you can do for yourself, your family, and your community:

* Stay at home and avoid contact with others. This is critical to slow the spread of the virus.
* If you do have to go out, avoid touching your mouth, nose and face.
* Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds—especially after being out and before eating.

**Highlights of what we are doing at Kronos Health:**

* We are still seeing patients in the office.
* We have ability to test patients for flu and for coronavirus. We have a process in place to keep these patients apart from other patients and out of areas of the office where other patients are seen.
* At the present time, we have sufficient protective equipment for both staff members and patients.
* We continue to do home visits and see patients in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
* Along with many practices in Massachusetts, with support from Governor Baker’s executive order and all of the health insurance companies, we are able to do telemedicine visits Via Skype, Face Time or over the phone. Most insurers are waving co-pays for these visits. For any patients with insurers were not waving co-pays, we are waiting co-pays for telemedicine visits.
* In the coming weeks and months, it is critically important that patients without true medical emergencies remain out of the emergency room and the hospital. As always, one of our providers is on call by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We are exploring opening up additional hours in the evening and on the weekends to see patients with urgent but non-life-threatening problems.

**What we are doing to protect our patients and our staff:**

* We have acquired additional protective resources including disinfecting wipes, gowns, facemasks, face shields and gloves.
* We are frequently reviewing with all staff members appropriate infection control techniques including hand washing before and after seeing patients, frequent disinfecting of surfaces and equipment, avoiding touching of the face nose and mouth and of course staying home when sick.
* We are prepared to see and evaluate patients with fever and other symptoms of a possible COVID-19 infection.
* We want to stress that we are still in the middle of cold and flu season. At this point, the majority of patients with fever cough and congestion have something other than a COVID-19 infection.
* We are able to do rapid testing for influenza (“the flu”) and are now able to send nasal swabs to our reference laboratory to specifically check for COVID-19 infection.
* Our intention is to keep separate potentially infected patients from patients coming for routine appointments or urgent problems that are not likely infectious.

**What to do if you think you are sick:**

* **Please do not just walk into the office.**
* Call our regular phone number 978-655-6652.
* We will ask a series of questions. If we think you need to be seen, we will give you an appointment time. When you arrive at the parking lot that you call us on your cell phone. We will give you a specific phone number to call. If you do not have a cell phone, please make us aware of that and we will make other arrangements.
* When we are ready, we will call you on your cell phone and one of our providers will then meet you in the lobby area and take you through a side door to the office into an exam room. We will ask you to wear a facemask. The provider who will evaluate you will be wearing protective equipment. These will all be changed between patients. We have bought additional stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs and other equipment which will be sterilized after each use. Depending on our evaluation, we may recommend testing for flu and COVID-19. The result of the test for flu will be available within 10-15 minutes. The test for COVID-19 can take between 3 and 4 days. If we think you need to be evaluated in the hospital, we will make arrangements for that.

We greatly appreciate your assistance and understanding as we learn more about the Coronavirus. A great source of information on this evolving situation is  [https://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.smilereminder.com/sr/msg/2697582_2cc5670da4d775b8a6c4a3b2c9cd8565/link.do)

For Frequently asked questions, visit [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html](http://www.smilereminder.com/sr/msg/2697583_2cc5670da4d775b8a6c4a3b2c9cd8565/link.do)

Sincerely

Kronos Health Team