



COVID-19 RECOVERY

GUIDEBOOK FOR
RESUMING SERVICES

SECOND EDITION
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Information for Independent Affiliates/Private Community Providers

Resuming Services for Independent Affiliated/Private Community Providers in Ambulatory Clinics

Trinity Health and your local Trinity Health region want to make resources available to you that will help you make decisions to ensure a safe environment for the care of your patients and you. This guidance is provided by Trinity Health and your local Trinity Health hospital for physicians and clinicians who are in independent practices in the communities we serve.

This represents the best thinking of Trinity Health's clinical leadership and incorporates external resources and recommendations. It is offered to support physicians and practice managers as you consider how to provide patient care in your offices safely during the COVID-19 pandemic and going forward. Separately, information is shared regarding your Trinity Health hospital's resumption of service process and specifically how we are ensuring a safe environment for you and your patients. As a reminder, all physicians and practices can access the Trinity Health [COVID-19 resources](#) website which is updated regularly.

Disclaimer:

Trinity Health is providing you with this information to inform you of decisions made by Trinity Health related to its hospitals and practices and may be of value to you in the decisions you must make as you resume or reopen your practice. These resources are not intended to eliminate the need for you to consult your own advisors or to make your own decisions regarding what is best for you and your practice.

II (d) 1. Ambulatory Clinics – Ambulatory Office Visits and Procedures

Telehealth Visits, Ambulatory In-Office Visits, and Surgery/Procedures

As part of our plan to resume services, Trinity Health will continue to provide telehealth visits and provide guidance on resuming in-office visits and in-office procedures.

Telehealth visits remain Trinity Health's preferred method for seeing patients. In-office primary care and specialty care visits are also available.

Outreach to Patients

It is important to conduct routine outreach to patients to ensure their care needs are met. As your practice is resuming services, consider the following outreach strategy.

Identify and contact:

- Patients who canceled appointments.
- Patients who the Primary Care (PC) provider or Specialty Care (SC) provider practice canceled and did not reschedule.
- Patients who had been advised to schedule a follow-up appointment with their PC or SC Provider and did not.
- Patients who were in the process of being seen by a SC provider for ongoing treatment and appointments were canceled (e.g. patient with a mass needing evaluation by a surgeon, positive PAP smear).

- Patients who have outstanding diagnostic tests or procedures (e.g. echocardiograms, colonoscopy, MOHS surgery, elective surgeries, and discipline-specific).
- Patients for chronic condition management.
 - Appropriate lab testing (e.g. HgbA1c for diabetes).
- Patients for preventative Health visits, including:
 - Adult, pediatric, and adolescent visits – well checks, anticipatory guidance, immunizations, and preventive health screening (e.g. breast cancer screening mammograms, colorectal cancer testing, cervical testing, etc.).
 - Medicare Annual Wellness visits.

Virtual Care

Telehealth remains a preferred platform for Trinity Health, and we have included guidance for your consideration. Independent affiliates/private community providers should seek guidance appropriate for their practices.

Conducting telehealth visits should be through secure platforms. During the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, practices and providers were not required to use secure platforms. In the recovery phase, Trinity Health has advised employed practices and providers to transition to secure platforms.

Trinity Health System Office has developed a standard for all employed physician groups to use Zipnosis for asynchronous telehealth visits with a phone step-up. QliqSoft is now the Trinity Health standard for video visits, allowing for real-time (synchronous) telehealth visits between patients and providers. Please refer to the [CMS telehealth site](#) for a list of approved telehealth vendors. Please refer to the [HHS site](#) on guidance on implementing telehealth in your practice.

In-Office Surgery/Procedures and Procedures at Trinity Health Facilities Guidance

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, treatment for some patient disease processes cannot be postponed indefinitely. The guidance that follows is intended to assist providers in resuming surgeries/procedures as guided by local and state policy. It is important to be aware of procedures that can be performed are dependent on the availability of staffing, supplies and COVID-Free Zones (CFZ). **COVID-Free Zones are areas where we provide care only for people not known to have COVID-19 or COVID symptoms.**

There will be variability among providers as to the timing of procedures based on the local incidence of COVID-19.

Surgery/procedures must be aligned with municipal, county and state health authority regulations and executive orders.

Trinity Health offers the following guidance to assist providers in determining when to resume **in-office** procedures:

- Ensure facilities in the immediate area can receive patients safely.
- Prior to implementing the start-up of any procedures, all areas will be cleaned according to CDC guidelines.

- All in office procedures must be done in a non-FURI setting (except for COVID19 patients or Persons Under Investigation (PUIs).
 - Note: Trinity Health has designated Fever, Upper Respiratory Infection (FURI) Clinic sites. Please contact your Trinity Health representative to learn more.
- It is recommended not to resume surgical procedures until adequate PPE and medical surgical supplies are available. This determination must be made in coordination with your supply vendor and/or Trinity Health facility.
 - All patients and colleagues must be masked at all times. Refer to Trinity Health's [Ambulatory Masking Policy](#).

Trinity Health offers the following guidance to assist providers when performing **procedures at a Trinity Health facility**:

- Coordinate with Trinity Health facilities prioritizing cases, OR block times and related processes.
- Provide sufficient lead time from a scheduled/re-scheduled patient for pre-operative testing to be completed – refer to hospital policy.
- Understand any new scheduling processes and pre-procedure testing requirements and paperwork; incorporate into workflow.

Testing Laboratory and Radiology

Resuming routine diagnostic testing must be aligned with municipal, county and state health authority regulations and executive orders.

Please check with your local Trinity Health laboratory and radiology locations regarding testing and requirements.

COVID-19 testing

Testing requirements and frequency for testing patients is determined locally. Please check with your local Trinity Health locations regarding availability of testing.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

This is the Trinity Health Ambulatory Clinic Guidance for your consideration. If you are interested in learning more on how to prolong the use of PPE, reach out to your Trinity Health Hospital Infection Control Department.

Trinity Health has developed guidance for PPE use in a COVID-Free Zone and a non-COVID Free Zone.

COVID-Free Zone

Role	Required PPE for COVID Free Zone
Colleague (as a greeter)	Cloth gown, surgical mask, and eye protection
Reception	Surgical mask and gloves should be worn if exchanging anything with a patient
MA (Rooming)	Surgical mask
Nurse (no direct care, triage)	Surgical mask
Nurse (patient care)	Surgical mask, eye protection, gloves and disposable or cloth gown
Provider (evaluating patients)	Surgical mask, eye protection and gloves and disposable or cloth gown

Patient & Persons Accompanying Patient	Patient may wear their personal mask; if they do not have one, a mask will be provided
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Non-COVID-Free Zone

Role	Required PPE for non-COVID Free Zone
Colleague (as a greeter)	Cloth gown, surgical mask, and eye protection
Reception	Surgical mask and gloves should be worn if exchanging anything with a patient
MA (Rooming)	Surgical mask, eye protection, gloves and cloth gown
Nurse (no direct care, triage)	Surgical mask
Nurse (patient care)	Surgical mask, eye protection, gloves and cloth gown
Provider (evaluating patients)	Surgical mask, eye protection and gloves and disposable or cloth gown,
When testing patients for COVID-19 (MA, RN, Provider)	N-95 mask, disposable gown, eye protection, gloves
Patient	Patient is provided a surgical mask

II (d) 2. Ambulatory Clinics – Office and Ambulatory Clinic Operations

COVID-19

Below are the Trinity Health actions and tasks required and recommended to safely care for patients. Independent affiliate and community providers are welcome to adopt this guidance.

1. **Cleaning: Enforce the standard process for cleaning rooms**

Note: Ensure staff are trained and focused on high touch surfaces for cleaning:

- Exam tables
- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Coffee pots – and reusable dishware
- Elevator buttons – if office practice or clinic is in multi-story facility
- Countertops
- Handles used to operate handwashing sinks,
- Workstations / desks, e.g., reception areas and common use horizontal work areas
- Phones
- Keyboards
- Toilets
- Touch screens
- ATM machines
- Clipboards used for patient registration
- Soap, sanitizer and paper towel or tissue dispensers
- Sinks and faucets

Always follow the directions on the label of any disinfectant to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many product labels recommend keeping the surface wet for a specific amount of time. The label will also list precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product. Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children.

- **Consult with your infection prevention team for additional guidance.**
2. **Supplies: Recommendations based on** Trinity Health and CDC guidance and OSHA's standards (29 CFR 1910).
 - Boxes of disposable tissues.
 - Single-use towels for use throughout the office.
 - No-touch waste baskets and disposable liners
 - Alcohol-based hand rub for entrance, reception, waiting, patient care and restroom areas.
 - Personal protective equipment (see above)
 - Appropriate disinfectant for environmental cleaning.
 3. Business Operations Processes
 - Consider new procedures for registration – e.g., paperless/online prior to arrival
 - Install controls to reduce or eliminate exposures by shielding staff and other patients from infected individuals. Examples, plexiglass on registration desk, exam room accommodations for sick patients, marks on floor where patients should stand, one-way lines to promote social distancing, etc.
 - Consider extended hours/days to catch up on patient visits or to accommodate patient needs or preferences.
 - Incorporate pre-visit instructions that incorporate new processes.
 4. Communication
 - Via telephone, email, newsletter and/or text messages, ask patients to call the office before arrival if they have any respiratory symptoms or fever.
 - Communicate resumption of services and new procedures/practices to patients.
 - Below are examples of Trinity Health communication tools that may be adopted to fit the needs of your practice.

[Trinity Health - Letter to the Patient](#)

[Trinity Health - Direct Mailer](#)

[Call Center Script - Trinity Recovery Plan](#)

[Script for Providers to Talk with Patients - Trinity Recovery Plan](#)

[Front Desk and Registration Script - Trinity Recovery Plan](#)

[Trinity Health Recovery Intranet Message](#)

[On Hold Message Script - Trinity Recovery Plan](#)

[Robocall Script - Trinity Recovery Plan](#)

[Trinity Health - Handout to Patients Copy](#)

- Signage:
 - All colleagues, patients, and persons accompanying patients will be screened for respiratory symptoms and fever prior to entry into the clinic.
 - Educational materials will be displayed regarding correct respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
 - Educational materials will be displayed regarding handwashing (e.g., in restrooms; staff areas).
 - Links to signs for doors, point of entry, etc.: [COVID-19 Resources](#). (See *Restrictions and Signage section*.)

Entry to Point of Service

Clinic Arrival & Entry

To ensure we are not introducing known COVID-19 into the waiting room and to enforce social distancing, it is recommended to have a colleague whose function is to greet patients at entry, take patient temperature and ask screening questions, and then to direct patient to ensure they are at the appropriate location.

- Mask all patients upon arrival.
- Colleagues must also wear masks.
- Patient drop-off and escort must meet colleague at the designated entry area.
 - This is specific to each office and the office staff is responsible for communicating this location/area with patients while scheduling the appointment.
- Patients arriving via public transportation are escorted immediately to the exam room after COVID-19 screening and masking.
- Patient is instructed to wait in vehicle until called/texted* to be roomed; if parking lot waiting is not applicable, the patient is escorted to clinic waiting area where social distancing is enforced. *If patient does not have a mobile device, a staff member will notify them.
- After visit, patient escorted to exit.
- Considerations also need to be in place for pick-up of patients.

Screening

- All patients, staff and vendors are to be screened prior to entering the clinic
 - Please contact your health care provider if you live with or have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 or if you have recently visited an area with known COVID-19 cases.

- People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills & Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache Sore throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
- When to Seek Medical Attention
 - If you have any of these emergency warning signs* for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately:
 - Trouble breathing
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or inability to arouse
 - Bluish lips or face
 - *This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.
- Call 911 if you have a medical emergency: Notify the operator that you have, or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.
- If screening is positive for the patient or person accompanying patient, provider must be notified immediately to direct patient to the most appropriate site of care.

Circulation (Ambulatory or Medical Office Buildings (MOB))

As a means to continue to promote social distancing, Trinity Health has designated "circulation routes" to minimize and manage the flow of people traversing the building. Please work with your building manager to implement appropriate protocols. The following are provided for your consideration:

- Single point of entry for all buildings for screening.
- Colleague screens and directs patient flow to all clinical services.
- Directional signage.
- Wayfinding guides, including stanchions with ropes and taped routes on floors.
- Social distancing markers on the floors.
- Ideally, banks of elevators will be dedicated for patient use.

Reception, Waiting & Restrooms

- We recommend a hand sanitizer/dispenser in the waiting room.
- Every effort should be made to eliminate or minimize waiting. The quantity of furniture is to be reduced and spaced at least 6 feet apart in alignment with social distancing requirements.
- Discontinue the use of toys, magazines and other shared items in waiting room areas.

- Every effort should be made for verbal or virtual check-in and check-out. When this is not possible, shared items such as pens, clipboards, phones, etc. must be wiped down with approved disinfectant between each use.

II (d) 3. Ambulatory Clinics – COVID-Free Zone and Non-COVID Free Zone

To reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19, CMS recommends the creation of separate areas for non-COVID-related care. Trinity Health has adopted the CMS recommendation. **COVID-Free Zones are areas where we provide care only for people not known to have COVID-19 or COVID symptoms.** Implementation of these zones will depend on the ability to create a separate physical zone, availability of testing and PPE, and regulatory guidance from the local regional and state policy.

II (d) 4. Ambulatory Clinics – Regulatory Guidance

We recommend everyone stays up-to-date with local, state, and federal regulations.

Planning Considerations

- Adherence to regulatory and other guidance for non-COVID-19 health care.
- Review and revision of policies and procedures to include COVID-19 considerations (e.g., pre-op checklist documentation, time-out scripts, etc.).
- Continued review of regulatory guidance and recommendations from professional societies and organizations to ensure policies, plans and care delivery is meeting current requirements.

II (d) 5. Ambulatory Clinics – Regulations for Persons Accompanying Patients

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and updated guidance from the CDC and CMS, it is required and Trinity Health policy that Trinity Health facilities restrict persons accompanying patients. You may adopt this guidance for your practice.

One Person may be considered to accompany a patient in the ambulatory medical setting under at least one of these special circumstances:

- Person is required for supporting patient, including with activities of daily living such as assisting with ambulation;
- Person has power of attorney or is court-appointed for care of the patient;
- Patient is in serious or critical condition, receiving hospice care, palliative care, or end of life care (compassionate care);
- Person is conducting official government business; and/or

- Person must be a parent, foster parent or appointed guardian of a minor.

No Person under 14 years of age will be allowed to accompany a patient, unless under special circumstances listed above.

- Patients should be advised NOT to bring children with them to an office visit.

Sick or At-Risk Persons Accompanying Patients Are Not Permitted

No person is allowed to accompany the patient if they have symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, coughing) or other risk factors (travel to endemic area, exposure to confirmed COVID-19 person(s) in past 14 days, pregnant, etc.).

- Anyone with [symptoms](#) at the front desk check-in WILL NOT be allowed in patient care areas and WILL be asked to return to their vehicle.
- Patients may be asked to reschedule non-urgent or well care if they or their accompanying person is does not pass the screening test.

Social Distancing in Waiting Rooms and Lobby

It is recommended that patients be directly roomed. However, in instances where this is not possible, social distancing in the waiting room must be adopted and enforced. To prevent waiting room occupancy, offices should implement a "parking lot" waiting room in which patients are registered via a telephone call and called/texted once their exam room is ready.

In the ambulatory space, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Hand sanitizer will be available upon entry of each practice.
- Designated waiting areas should remain empty unless the patient is unable to wait in a vehicle and an exam room is not ready.
- Technology should be utilized to alert patients when it is time to enter the ambulatory area. If the patient does not have a mobile device, a colleague will notify the patient when it's time to enter the office.
- Unless requiring an accompanying person, patients should enter the ambulatory space alone and be taken immediately to an examination room.

II (d) 6. Ambulatory Clinics – Building Infrastructure Systems

Water Safety management

Prior to resumption of services:

- Water fountain and/or water bottle fill station can remain in use – maintain routine cleaning but no special cleaning or disinfection needed.

For more guidance on the following, please refer to the COVID-19 Recovery Guidebook for Resuming Services:

- Water Safety Management
- Heating, Ventilation and Air-conditioning System
- Facility System Reactivation and Regulatory Compliance
- Clinical Support Services:
 - Portable medical equipment
 - Technology

- Environmental Services

MAINTENANCE & SERVICE VENDORS

Communicate with all vendors, deliveries should only be accepted outside the office. Consider restriction of vendor access.

Any maintenance and/or service vendors should follow the same masking and screening protocols as patients and persons accompanying patients policies.