



## What you need to know

This fact sheet provides key updates on practice staffing, testing and treatment, and information to keep your practice viable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### What to do if a staff member or patient tests positive for COVID-19

1. The TMA COVID-19 Task Force has created the [COVID-19 Guide for When Someone Tests Positive](#) for basic steps physicians can follow should a staff member or a patient test positive for COVID-19 in their outpatient clinic.
2. Should you have a staffing shortage, refer to the CDC's [Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages](#).
3. The CDC has provided a [Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel](#) to assist staff members in returning to work.

### What patients should know

1. TMA created a [chart](#) patients can use to identify activities which could increase their exposure to COVID-19.

### Testing and Treatment

1. [Harris County Public Health \(HCPH\)](#) encourages its residents to get tested. For screening information, patients can go to <https://bit.ly/2Yp5p8K>, or call 832-927-7575.
2. Houston residents also can call the Houston Health Department's (HHD) COVID-19 Call Center at 832-393-4220, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., or go to <https://houstonemergency.org/covid-19-testing> for more testing options.
3. Texas Division of Emergency Management is offering free drive-thru testing. To obtain a test, visit <https://txcovidtest.org> or call 512-883-2400.
4. For information on the types of COVID-19 tests, review TMA's [quick testing guide](#). Additional information on testing is available through TMA's [Testing Information FAQs](#).
5. For information on symptoms, asymptomatic infection and clinical management, treatment of COVID-19 patients, and how insurers are paying for treatment, see the [COVID-19 Treatment FAQs](#).
6. TMA has created a 14-day [tracking chart](#) to help patients record symptoms and to advise patients to call their physician should the symptoms worsen.
7. CDC has released [new guidance](#) on releasing COVID-19 patients from in-home isolation.
8. The CDC has [ten clinical tips](#) on COVID-19 for healthcare providers involved in patient care.

### Contact Tracing

As physicians, you play a role in stopping the spread of COVID-19. One essential tool is contact tracing. This begins with a positive test.

- Physicians are encouraged to advise their COVID-19 positive patients to contact the local health departments to start the contact tracing process. Patients will be much more likely to respond positively to a request from their physician than an unknown individual calling from the health department.
- Patients can call HCPH at 832-927-7575 or the HHD at 832-393-4220.
- If a patient does not call, the local health departments will reach out to the individual after the health department receives a report of their positive test.
- Patients should make a list of those individuals with whom they have had close contact starting from 48 hours before illness onset or 48 hours prior to positive test for asymptomatic patients.
  - Close contact is defined as contact within six feet for 10-15 minutes of a COVID-19 positive individual.
  - The CDC does not recommend differential determination of close contact for fabric face coverings.
  - However, considerations should be taken if one or more of the individuals wore a N95 respirator.
- Those who have had close contact with a COVID-19 positive person should stay at home, maintain social distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from last date of exposure.

For additional resources on contact tracing, go to [www.hcms.org/tmimis/Covid-19#Tracing](http://www.hcms.org/tmimis/Covid-19#Tracing).

### Office Safety Poster

1. Texas Medical Association has [created a poster](#) to help your staff to remember to stay safe.

### Practice Viability

1. The [practice viability section](#) of the HCMS COVID-19 web page provides information on the new rules and laws designed to keep your practice viable.
2. The [Texas Medical Board](#) has issued waivers and guidance on issues surrounding minimum standards of safe practice, telemedicine, license renewal extensions and more.

For additional COVID-19 information, click on the links below:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- [TMA COVID-19 Resources Page](#)
- [Harris County Medical Society](#)

As this information changes frequently, it is critical to stay updated through the sites above. Thank you.

**If you have questions, concerns or feedback, contact us at [webadmin@hcms.org](mailto:webadmin@hcms.org).**