



March 24, 2020

**Bureau of Addiction Treatment Centers (BATC) COVID-19
Administration of Medication / Food Service**

Background

The New York State Department of Health (Department) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to closely monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In response to the outbreak, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Executive Order 202 declared a State of Emergency on March 7, 2020.

Purpose

This guidance was developed for addiction treatment centers (ATC) to mitigate potential exposure of patients and personnel to COVID-19.

Medication and Vital Signs (for all patients during COVID-19 crisis)

In cases where the patient is having their vital signs taken:

- Practice social distancing by maintaining a 6 foot separation, where possible.
- Have the patient take their own temperature. The ATC may consider laying down the thermometer in the patient's mouth, then stepping back until the results come in.
 - If the temperature is 100.0 or greater – STOP – and immediately direct the patient to isolation and then remove yourself from the area. Once removed from the area, don surgical mask, gown, gloves. When you return to the area where the patient is isolated with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on, give the patient a surgical mask for source droplet control, if available.
 - Thoroughly disinfect the thermometers.

What is symptomatic for COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit and above, respiratory symptoms including a sore throat, cough, and/or shortness of breath.

Patients in Isolation

A person in isolation may either be either symptomatic (i.e. showing symptoms of COVID-19) or received a positive COVID-19 test. The procedures for those individuals in isolation should be as follows:

- Patients should be brought their medication, and should not come into to common areas.
- Nurses should don PPE, where available, including a gown, surgical mask, gloves, and goggles or face shield, before interacting with the patient
- If possible, one nurse on shift should have a N95 fit tested masks. This should be the only nurse on that shift to have sustained, direct contact, including physical contact, with symptomatic patients.
- If possible, 12-hour shifts should be scheduled, to conserve PPE. Staff should use one mask throughout their shift.
- Addiction Treatment Centers (ATC) must prioritize mask use for their populations in the following order: (1) isolated; (2) quarantined; and (3) general.

- Food may be left outside the door for the patient. Food left outside the patient's door should be left in a clean area.
- Disposable trays, utensils, plates etc. are recommended.
- Non-disposable trays are considered "dirty" after use. These trays should be left outside the door by the patient and handled with gloves by staff.
- All staff must be continually reminded about frequent hand hygiene, including washing hands with water and soap for twenty seconds or, where soap is unavailable, using sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- [Environmental cleaning](#) staff should not enter the patient room. Guidance allows the ATC to provide patients with EPA and DEC household disinfectants to use, as needed. Patient access to disinfectants requires careful assessment to prevent patients from ingesting or huffing cleaning products. Supervision by staff may be required.

After isolating the patient, a general guidance for monitoring and elevation of symptoms includes:

- A. Fever Only: If the individual has a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, isolate and manage within ATC.
- B. Fever plus Cough: If the individual has a fever plus cough, isolate and manage within ATC.
- C. Fever plus Shortness of Breath: If the individual has a fever and shortness of breath, refer to emergency services. When contacting emergency services, relay the symptoms or positive status to ensure emergency responders are properly equipped upon arrival.
- D. Fever plus Cough plus Shortness of Breath: If the individual has a fever, cough, and shortness of breath, refer to emergency services ASAP. When contacting emergency services, relay the symptoms to ensure emergency responders are properly equipped upon arrival.

Anyone with a fever, even without respiratory symptoms, should be considered potentially positive for COVID-19 and should remain in isolation while in ATC, until asymptomatic and cleared per DOH criteria/direction.

COVID-19 has been shown to have a more severe impact on the vulnerable population, including those 50 years or older, the immunocompromised, and those with chronic medical conditions. Decisions to contact emergency services must consider the individual's medical history.

Patients in Quarantine

A person in quarantine may be asymptomatic but had direct exposure to COVID-19 or possible COVID-19, or had been in close contact with a confirmed positive COVID-19 individual. The procedures for those individuals in quarantine should be as follows:

- No mask is required IF the individual is able to socially distance at least 6 feet during interactions. The ATC should attempt to limit interactions, without mask, to less than 15 minutes. Otherwise, surgical mask may be used per clinical judgment, based on mask availability. Masks should be prioritized for sick patients, as well as for staff for use with isolated patients.
- Food may be handed to the patient.
- Disposable trays, utensils, plates etc. are recommended.
- Non-disposable trays are considered "dirty" after use. These trays should be left outside the door by the patient and handled with gloves by staff.
- All staff must be continually reminded about frequent hand hygiene, including washing hands with water and soap for twenty seconds or, where soap is unavailable, using hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.

Sublingual Buprenorphine

When administering sublingual buprenorphine:

501 7th Avenue | New York, New York 10018-5903 | oasas.ny.gov | 646-728-4760

1450 Western Avenue | Albany, New York 12203-3526 | oasas.ny.gov | 518-473-3460

- Observe patient placement under the tongue.
- Patient hands should be visible during administration.
- Social distancing of 6 feet should be maintained, even if the dissolving takes 15 minutes.
- Patients must take responsibility for taking their medications appropriately.

General Medication Administration

When administering medication:

- No mask is required when administering general medication.
- Avoid direct physical contact with the patients, to the extent possible.
- Minimize patient contact with space. Pour water before administering medication and refrain from using community water pitchers. (i.e., patient pouring own water.)

If only one nurse is on duty, contact the BATC regarding quarantine and NYS DOH guidance.

Please be Aware

Special care should be taken to ensure that N95 masks are reserved for situations where respiratory protection is most important, such as performance of aerosol-generating procedures on suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients or provision of care to patients with other infections for which respiratory protection is strongly indicated (e.g., tuberculosis, measles, varicella).