



Growing Your Patient Base During Covid-19 – What Can Be Done?

COVID-19 has forced a review and adjustment of most practice operations, including existing protocols to develop and grow patient referral base. Although in-person meetings with colleagues are now very limited, there is much that can still be done.

Communicate with Existing Patients:

- Engage underutilized staff to call existing patients to:
 - Inform them the practice is open for in-person visits, and telemedicine visits if appropriate. This would also be a good opportunity to ask about and address their concerns or challenges about the use of telemedicine.
 - Encourage patients with chronic illnesses to schedule appointments, if needed.
 - Inform them of new in-person office visit policies related to COVID-19 safety to ease any concerns and ensure patient comfort.
 - Update their contact information such as email addresses.

Create a script for your staff to ensure a consistent message is being shared with all of your patients.

- Update your website with new COVID-19 safety protocols, telemedicine capabilities, and other changes to practice operations.

Communicate with Physicians & Their Staff:

- Update your HCMS record in the online [Physician Directory](#) on the HCMS website. As a member, your biographical information is listed in the directory, but it does not communicate the many unique practice details that optimize patient referrals including specialized services and your telemedicine capabilities. Update your record by clicking on the 'Manage My Profile' button in your listing. Click to see a [Practice Description sample](#). For a quick tutorial on how to navigate the directory [click here](#).
- Call directly, or engage underutilized staff to call existing sources of referral to:
 - Understand the status of their practice. (i.e. Are they fully operational? How did they adjusted their operations and referral patterns for COVID-19 safety, etc.)
 - Inform them that you are open for in-person visits and/or telemedicine visits.
 - Inform them of the changes in your practice including COVID-19 safety protocols.

Create a script for your staff to ensure a consistent message is being shared with your referral sources.

- Send targeted direct mailings to colleagues via the HCMS DocList Mailing Labels Program. Use these mailers to:
 - Share details about your practice (*i.e., office hours, telemedicine capabilities, special procedures, etc.*);
 - Communicate changes (*i.e., relocating, new staff, new procedures, etc.*);

Labels can be requested to target specific specialties, zip codes, age preferences, practice settings (*independent practice, academic, hospital employed*), and/or newly licensed physicians.

All new HCMS members and physicians in their first and second year of practice are eligible to receive one set of free electronic labels per year. [Click here to get started.](#)

Additional Resources:

1. Participate in the Marketing 101 ethics CME offered on June 23 via Zoom. The CME covers the fundamentals of marketing concepts. To facilitate networking, the RSVP sign-up sheet will be shared among the participants after the CME session. In addition, we will offer half an hour of networking prior to the presentation to enable participants to share best practices and discuss common concerns. Networking will start at 6:30. The presentation will be held from 7 pm – 8 pm. To RSVP visit <https://www.hcms.org/tmimis/AnnualEvents>.
2. TMA offers lots of resources:
 - Resources on Marketing: See [link for details](#). It includes guides on the use of social media, use of patient testimonials and much more.
 - Free CMEs on various aspects of marketing, available to physicians and staff. [Click here](#) for details.
 - Practice Viability Resources and Tools. Include Practice Viability Toolkit, what you need to know to reopen your practice, and much more. See [link to details](#).
 - [Free poster](#) for your office to educate your patients about COVID-19 safety protocols at your office.
3. [Buyer's Guide](#) – The Guide is HCMS' online directory of companies, organized by product categories, that offer products and services to meet the needs of your practice. They include companies that offer legal services, banks that offer SBA loans, marketing companies that can significantly expand your presence on social media, secure communication platforms with patients and much more.

HCMS and TMA welcome your feedback on additional resources we can offer to help physicians grow their patient base. For questions and comments contact Ahuva Terk, VP Member Services at ahuva_terk@hcms.org.