



What you need to know

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, there have been several changes implemented which affect your practice.

Screening, Testing and Treatment

- 1) Screen every patient over the phone, PRIOR to an in-person visit:
 - Do you have fever, cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing?
 - Have you had contact with someone with known or suspected COVID-19?
 - Do you live in a community with confirmed ongoing transmission of COVID-19?
- 2) [Harris County Public Health \(HCPH\)](http://www.readyharris.org) encourages residents to get tested. For screening information, patients can go to www.readyharris.org, or call 832-927-7575. HCPH has provided the following guidance on who should be tested.
 - Those who have had close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - Those who have other health conditions (diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, pregnancy).
 - Those who are age 60 and older.
 - Those who are residents of nursing homes.
 - Those who are part of an investigation of a cluster or an outbreak.
 - Those who are Healthcare workers/First responders.
 - Those who are asymptomatic who believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- 3) Additionally, select Walgreen's pharmacies have started testing for COVID-19. To be screened, patients can go to https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/covid19/testing?ban=covid_testing.
- 4) [Houston Health Department](http://www.houstonhealth.org) is testing anyone wanting a test. People can call the department's COVID-19 call center at 832-393-4220, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Additionally, HHD is offering free [mobile testing](#).
- 5) Texas Division of Emergency Management is offering free drive-thru testing. To obtain a test, visit <https://txcovidtest.org/> or call 512-883-2400.
- 6) Additional testing site information is available in the [Harris County Testing Information](#) document.
- 7) 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](#).
- 8) There are no known specific treatments for COVID-19. The treatment is supportive care to relieve symptoms. However, there are [FDA approved drugs](#) which are being tested for treating the virus. These are currently considered experimental and to be used only in a hospital setting.
- 9) DSHS has [developed guidance](#) for releasing a patient from in-home isolation.
- 10) For additional 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](#).

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 non-essential surgeries, telemedicine, license renewal extensions and more.
- 3) Texas Medical Board (TMB) published [new emergency rules](#) that supersede past TMB emergency rules to comply with Governor Abbott's newest Executive Order GA-19. The rule adds required minimum standards for safe practice related to COVID-19, and the requirement to [post the notice](#) of those minimum standards. TMB has developed [FAQs](#) related to the new rules. TMA has developed a [white paper](#) to clarify the rules.

PPE

- 1) Healthcare workers and patients need to practice routine infection control (*i.e., handwashing, covering coughs, staying home when ill, and using PPE*). If you have limited PPE, then see the [CDC's strategies for optimizing PPE](#).
- 2) TMA has created a [portal](#) for physicians which contains a PPE needs assessment form for your practice. TMA members, and nonmembers with TMA website accounts, can log in using their TMA credentials. Others can create a new account.

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 very critical to stay updated through the sites above. Thank you.

If you have questions, concerns or feedback, contact us at webadmin@hcms.org.