**Temporary Practice Closure Protocol**

In the event that you have a positive Covid-19 employee, your practice may need to close temporarily. This can happen suddenly, without much warning. We’ve created the following outline to help you plan for this scenario.

**Advanced Planning**

Set roles and responsibilities for temporary closure scenarios

1. Phone Calls / Voicemail
   1. Will phone calls be forwarded? To whom? (Can set up a schedule for coverage and HM or designated person can manage the call forwarding changes daily.)
   2. Voicemail
      1. Confirm voicemail can be accessed remotely and gather necessary instructions to do what’s necessary from home
      2. Update message as needed
      3. Checking for messages
      4. Responding to messages - Who will handle different types of messages?
   3. Set up callback schedule / rotation with DVMs
      1. Ensure remote access to practice software for doctors in rotation
   4. Rescheduling / Redirecting appointments
      1. Immediate 1-2 days, then for the duration of the closure.
2. Telemedicine
   1. Which doctors are comfortable with doing telemedicine consults?
   2. Test out and prepare for use (including remote access to practice software)
3. Other items to plan for
   1. Boarding or hospitalized pets - transfer or can we have someone come in to provide care throughout closure?
   2. Where will you direct clients for care while you are closed? Discuss your plan with your sister practice in advance so they are prepared if it becomes necessary. Plan to do the same for them.
   3. Have a plan for how to handle any meds waiting to be picked up. If you are not closing for a few hours, you may wish to call clients to give them an opportunity to pick up their meds.
   4. Have a plan in place to ensure email and social media messages are checked multiple times each day.
   5. Make sure you have a current list of employee cell phone numbers and emails for communication while the practice is closed.
   6. Consider setting up accounts ahead of time so that clients can receive food orders while you’re closed.
   7. Make sure that you identify any documents or files that you will need to take with you in the event of a closure.

**First steps if closure becomes necessary**

Evaluate risk level and determine if closure is needed or if you have a group of employees who have had minimal / no exposure who can continue to work. Determine timing for closure. See Risk Assessment chart at the end of this document for guidance.

1. Inform staff that Practice Closure Protocol is being activated
2. Determine date for deep cleaning and schedule employees
   1. No employees should be present for a minimum of 24 hours before cleaning can occur. Follow the [CDC cleaning guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)
3. Determine whether a skeleton crew is advisable / possible
   1. If there are staff members who have not been exposed to a positive, you may wish to run with a skeleton crew once the practice has been deep cleaned. This small team can answer phones and handle product pickups.

**Client Communications**

1. Reschedule / Redirect appointments for day of (if closing same day) and next day
2. Hang signs on doors informing clients of closure
3. Communicate with clients via Facebook, website, and email messaging, so no need for you to write your own.

**Additional Tasks to be completed**

1. Reach out to local practices and ER to inform of closure and reopen date. If arranged and sensible based on location, direct clients to sister practice for essential services, food and prescription needs during closure.
2. Confirm time off use with each employee and document hours to be used.
3. Deposit all cash and scan all checks.
4. Make sure controlled substances are locked and doctors take keys with them.
   1. If they have a small safe move all controls to big safe along with logs
5. If possible, lock all portable ultrasound and other expensive equipment in a room.
6. Let local law enforcement know the practice will be closed so they can be aware and check on it.
7. Inform landlord of closure
8. Contact lab pick up to cease service
9. Determine who is next in line if HM becomes sick to partner with.
10. Ensure doctors have their DEA numbers and prescription pads available at home should the need arise to call in prescriptions from home to pharmacy.
    1. Some doctors are writing prescriptions during telehealth consults and then scanning the prescriptions using a scanning app on their phone.
11. If expecting any deliveries, try to cancel if possible. Otherwise, designate someone to put items in the building.
12. Restart computers prior to leaving to make sure that updates are installed and computers are ready to go

