

Team –

We have spent the last several weeks preparing for our eventual reopening of practices. We've examined our procedures, workflow, patient experience and personal protective equipment (PPE) to create a healthy and safe environment for our employees and our patients. While there are several states preparing to reopen next month and some as quickly as this week, our preparations are deliberate and cautious, which is why we only plan to reopen six practices on Monday, May 4.

We are excited to partner with our practices in Augusta, Derby and Wichita in Kansas, plus Evansville Downtown, LaGrange and Portage in Indiana. With all the preparation and planning in place, there is still much to learn with the opening of these practices. We will roll these learnings into our plans for reopening the rest of the practices in the coming weeks.

Many of us are anxious to get back to work but, understandably, there are others with reservations. We have already started receiving several questions about our reopening plans and the following are updates to some of the most common themes.

PPE

We will not open up any practice without the necessary PPE for each employee. Our guidance on PPE is aligned with the CDC, ADA and state dental boards. Each office will receive a box of PPE prior to opening. This will include face shields, N95/KN95 masks, head coverings and thermometers. We are also reviewing gowns to ensure we have a supply that allows providers to change gowns as necessary. This will vary by practice as some locations have washers and dryers while others use a laundry service. We are working closely with our vendor partners to ensure a reliable stream of PPE so that every office has the necessary equipment.

Procedures

We will provide guidance on modifying or reducing aerosol-producing procedures. As of now, use of cavitron and/or piezo instrumentation should be considered only when critical to treatment outcomes. While the benefit of this treatment modality is recognized, clinical judgement must be used to weigh the risk/benefit when performing procedures that generate aerosols during this time when COVID-19 testing is not available. Use of a high speed handpiece should be weighed in the same way in consideration of alternate treatment options.

Workflow

Social distancing will continue for some time. We will have guidance on workflow and schedules to limit the number of patients in the waiting area. We also recognize that additional PPE and infection control protocols may take more time and result in longer visits. We know the first few weeks may be a bit of an adjustment as we look to deliver care safely. This also includes the need for employees to self-screen prior to leaving their homes for work. This will include taking a temperature and a self-review for COVID-19 symptoms. An additional screening will take place upon arrival at the practice.

Patient Experience

Patients will also be screened upon entering the practice. This includes having their temperature taken and checking for any signs of respiratory illness. Entry into the dental practice will be limited to patients and parents or legal guardians of a minor patient, and each

person will be required to wear a facemask. We will update our patient communications to reflect these changes.

Additional details will be coming to your practice that will include new standard operating procedures, an operational checklist, and clinical guidance. Once it's determined that a practice can safely reopen, information will be sent approximately two weeks prior to your reopening date.

It may feel different in the offices given some of these changes, but it's important to deliver care in a safe and healthy environment. We are excited to be partnering with these six practices and are looking forward to the weeks ahead when we can get our teams back in the office and delivering the necessary care to our patients.

Take care,

Steve Spellman | Dr. Elizabeth Rydell