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Guidance document to Physicians: Re-Open Saskatchewan Phase 3

We wish to thank all physicians who are involved in pandemic planning and still managing to provide the necessary care the patients in the province deserve. The expected date for the third phase of Re-Open Saskatchewan is June 8, 2020.

Details of the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan can be found on the [Saskatchewan Ministry Website](#).

Phase 3 of the plan in Saskatchewan involves the re-opening of the remaining personal services, restaurants and licensed establishments, gyms and fitness centers, childcare facilities and places of worship as detailed on the [Saskatchewan Ministry website](#). There will also be an increase to the size of permitted public and private gatherings (Indoor - 15 People; Outdoor - 30 People).

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan's guidance follows the advice and orders of the Saskatchewan [Chief Medical Health Officer](#), Dr. [Saqib Shahab](#).

Updated [information for physicians](#) is available on the Saskatchewan Ministry Website. It is also important that physicians refer to the [Saskatchewan Health Authority Service Resumption Plan](#), together with updates to that plan.

The College will rely on physicians to use their judgement in re-opening clinics and services. Even though expanded services are permitted in Phase 3, we ask physicians to remain vigilant and rely on sound principles to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Virtual care should still be considered in circumstances where a physical examination is not indicated, and we refer to the [CPSS guidance documents](#) for virtual care delivery.

Since Phase 3 may involve a variety of workplaces where physicians deliver services, please refer to the Saskatchewan Ministry document titled: [COVID-19 Workplace Information](#).

The College again refers to the [Code of Conduct](#), [Code of Ethics](#) and its guideline on [Physicians and Health Care Emergencies](#).

As in the College guidance document related to [Re-Open Saskatchewan Phase 1](#), and [Phase 2](#), when considering re-opening previously restricted medical services the [Ministry guidelines](#) should be followed. In addition, physicians should be aware of the following, which should remain in place through all five phases of the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan:

- Maintain protective measures for vulnerable populations.
- Individuals should continue working from home if they can do so effectively.
- Physical distancing must be maintained, wherever possible.

***To serve the public by regulating the practice of medicine
and guiding the profession to achieve the highest standards of care***

- People must stay at home when they are sick.
- Vulnerable individuals, such as seniors and those with underlying health conditions, should continue to exercise caution and minimize high-risk exposures, such as public outings.
- Personal hygiene will continue to be a key prevention measure.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection should take place in workplaces, public spaces and recreational facilities.
- Although the public health order regarding the size of gatherings does not apply to businesses and workplaces, they are expected to follow the recommended public health measures, including:
 - physical distancing for staff and clients;
 - regular cleaning and disinfection;
 - frequent handwashing and sanitizing;
 - use of PPE where available and appropriate; and
 - keeping staff who demonstrate or report COVID-19 symptoms out of the workplace.
- Long-term care and personal care homes must ensure that each staff member works in only one facility.

When Physicians deem it necessary to see patients in person, the CMA has a good guidance document titled [“Managing your practice during COVID-19”](#), which includes the following advice:

Scheduling visits

- Consider providing some care virtually, and some in-person, to reduce the in-person time required. For example, an essential prenatal visit could be divided into a virtual discussion of testing/screening options with a brief in-person physical assessment.
- Minimize the time patients spend in the waiting room. For example, request patients to wait in their vehicle until the examination room is ready, and then text/phone them when it is time to enter.
- Ask that, whenever possible, the patient come alone into the clinic.
- Limit the number of patients in the waiting room. For example, in a one-hour period, alternate between virtual visits and in-person visits to spread out the time between in-person appointments.

Office procedures

- Build in extra time for cleaning/sanitizing examination rooms between patients.
- Limit the number of examination rooms being used.
- Minimize staff in the office/clinic. Ask what tasks can be done from home or outside of regular hours to minimize staff interactions with each other and patients.
- Require staff to screen themselves for symptoms before entering the clinic/office; develop a notification protocol for staff to follow if they develop symptoms.
- Ask patients to show their health card, so clinic staff do not have to handle/swipe the card.
- Request patients to wear a mask (homemade) when visiting the office/clinic, or if necessary, provide non-medical masks at the entrance.

Office design

- Increase cleaning and disinfection of the whole office, particularly of high touch areas such as light switches and door knobs.
- Have visible signage at the entrance reminding patients about COVID-19 symptoms and hygiene practices to reduce the spread of the virus.
- Equip your waiting room and office with ample tissues, alcohol-based hand rub and a waste basket.
- Re-configure waiting room seating to adhere to public health physical distance guidelines (two metres). Ex: distance between chairs, designated spaces if there is a line-up.
- Use visual cues (directional arrows, waiting spots, tape on the floor) to maximize physical distancing.
- Remove toys, magazines, brochures and other shared items from waiting room.
- Consider providing a protective barrier for reception area, such as glass or Plexiglas, so that administrative staff won't require PPEs.

The CMA has produced [Stop the spread](#) posters and videos that can be displayed in clinics/offices to remind patients about the symptoms of COVID-19, and how to protect yourself from transmission.

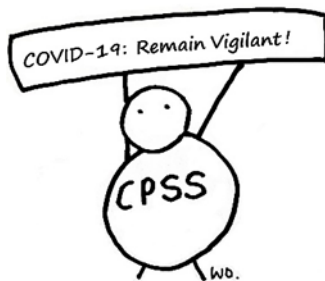
The Government of Canada website provides excellent guidance to physicians under [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Guidance documents](#).

The CFPC website has many physician resources to review on the page titled [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)

The [CPSS website](#) also contains resources and guidance documents for your review.

Thank you again – the College and public owe a profound debt of gratitude to all our health professionals managing this pandemic.

Sincerely,



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