

HIGH LEVEL: QUICK SUMMARY OF KEY STEPS TO TAKE PRIOR TO RE-ESTABLISHING YOUR PRACTICE

Consult the Local Public Health Department

- Local stay-at-home orders vary widely from county to county.
- When and to what extent a practice can reopen for patient visits will depend on local orders and conditions.
- FMA recommends that physicians consult their local public health departments for guidance on the rules in their area.

Construct a Financial and Staffing Plan for Re-establishing Your Practice

- Practices that have shut down completely will need to plan for a gradual reopening.
- It is likely that patient volume will return slowly, and the office may not need to be fully staffed at all times.
- Practices should plan both their finances and staffing to account for this reality.
- See Financial and Staffing sections for more detailed suggestions.

Develop Safety Protocols

- Patients may be fearful about interacting with the health care system.
- Staff may also be fearful about interacting with patients in the office.
- With proper safety precautions in place, a physician's office is one of the safest places to be.
- See Safety Precautions, Office Preparedness and Triage/Patient Flow sections for best practices.

Assess the Supply of Personal Protective Equipment

- Both the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health have published guidelines for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Physicians should assess their supply of PPE based on these guidelines, with some margin for error in case of a further disease outbreak.

Consider the Role Telehealth Will Play in Reopening

- During the pandemic, many physicians have either implemented or expanded the use of telehealth to continue seeing patients.
- Practices who have not yet implemented telehealth may wish to consider how it can support safe patient care during reopening.
- Practices that have implemented telehealth can work on moving to a hybrid model, with patients seen both in office and virtually.

Clearly Communicate with Patients about Practice Changes

- As practices reopen, they should communicate with their patients clearly about their safety protocols.
- As described below, many of the changes a practice might make will require patients changing their usual routines.
- Informing them upfront will serve to allay their concerns and ensure that they are properly prepared.

Be Watchful of Medication Shortages

- Patients coming back to their doctors, combined with potentially compromised supply chains, may make it difficult for patients to get their usual medication.
- Physicians should consider alternatives and set expectations with patients if medications become unavailable.

The next section contains more specific information for your review and consideration in re-establishing your practice.