

VMG COVID-19 UPDATE

Thursday, April 30, 2020

Issue # 33

Good Afternoon. It's the last day of April. Hard to keep track of time in this era.

We are still here and working. That's good. We're still innovating and finding new ways to do essential work. That's good too. And I think we are learning that we can depend on our colleagues and that's very good. So while we have a long way to go to get through COVID-19, we can rely on our strengths and each other.

We talk about "social distancing" a lot because it's the main tool we have now. But Robin McKeon reminded me that term is not really what we mean. What we really mean is **physical distancing – staying at least 6 feet apart and avoiding direct contact** so as to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. In fact what we need is more **social closening (a term I wrote about in a previous edition)**. We need to continue to rely on each other, avoid getting and being isolated, and use our social supports to care for ourselves and others.

John Novo found this. Here's a link to a WHO illustrated guide on *Doing What Matters in Times of Stress*. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/9789240003927>

National, State, and Regional

Testing is still the major issue at the national level. There is no one coordinated policy and set of resources in a time that we need just that. We have CEOs of major corporations beginning to speak up and that is good.

The Massachusetts trends don't seem to be decreasing yet. That's not good though there are some hot spots that are driving those numbers. The Governor has already announced that stay at home advisories continue until May 18.

Testing continues to be available at the local hospital systems by referral.

At VMG

Here's Gina's update for today:

Highlights from Governor's Office

Closure of non-essential businesses, stay at home advisory and no gatherings over ten people extended by the Governor 4/18

State updates available by text. Text "COVIDMA" to 888777. (charges may apply based on your cell phone carrier.

Operations Update: Highlights

<i>Safety</i>	▪ Document sent out with key steps for all to take to support safety in the work place. Please review with your supervisors and teams. Safety starts with each of us.
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Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMG Intranet Covid page continues to be populated with key resources including new policies as developed in response to COVID 19.
Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Esrick met with primary care and specialist practitioners to provide updates and review current approach to care in the centers and utilization of video/telephone visits. ▪ Work continues to prepare for processes to care for 0-2 years of age for wellness visits with vaccines; Work to follow on next age group to follow 3-6 years, 7-18 years for vaccines. ▪ Continued work to plan for outside of the centers and needed equipment and protection to do so. ▪ Policies completed for emergency response outside the center, sent out 4/29
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cross coverage for phones at all centers continues due to reduced staffing
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information sent out 4/29 regarding expanded testing at Baystate Health to include age 2 and over, additional hours.
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research regarding platform for telehealth long term being explored.

On this last item, we met today and decided to continue to allow multiple telehealth platforms (Zoom, Doxy, Skype, Facetime, etc.) for the time being. And we are going to participate in a test of an athena version of telehealth very soon. That's potentially very good news.

That's it for today. Thanks for reading and thanks, as usual, for all you do.

Oh, and hey, hey, hey, remember: wash your hands (a lot), don't touch your face, maintain social-physical distancing (it works), and wear a mask, stay home if you're sick/leave work if you're feeling sick.

Be well,

Joel

Be patient; be mindful