

COVID-19: Contact Tracing, New Reopening Resources, Residency Match Changes

The AAFP Is Here to Support You as You Serve Your Patients and Community

June 4, 2020

Dear colleagues,

As I reflect on the last several months, I continue to be amazed at the strength and resilience of the family medicine community in the face of the biggest public health crisis any of us have experienced. During this time, the AAFP continues to advocate on your behalf and provide resources to help you care for your patients, community and practice.

Clinical Resources

- **Contact tracing:** As we all work to limit the spread of COVID-19, contact tracing is an important disease control measure. With this in mind, the AAFP recently released [contact tracing guidance](#) to outline the basics and the role family medicine practices play in the process.
- **Practice reopening:** Many of you are considering reopening or expanding your practice for in-person visits, and we know there are a lot of factors to consider. Yesterday, we released updated [practice reopening guidance](#), including a checklist of things to consider and prepare for when you begin seeing patients in person or increase the frequency of in-person visits. We will update our guidance and offer new resources as we continue to learn more about this virus.



- **Immunizations:** Between patients being hesitant to visit a physician's office and many of us taking precautions to limit in-person exposure, some people have put their preventive care on hold. Of particular concern are routine childhood immunizations. A recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed a substantial decrease in the number of childhood vaccines ordered and administered since March.

As family physicians, it is important that we work with our patients to get them back on track for routine immunizations to avoid a resurgence of preventable communicable diseases. A recent *AAFP News* story highlights the CDC report, as well as resources you can use to help patients catch up on important routine immunizations.

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** The WHO plays a vital role in bringing countries together to address a variety of health and well-being areas, including communicable disease elimination and eradication. Earlier this week, the AAFP released a [statement](#) urging the administration to continue participation in the WHO to further this important work, including COVID-19 treatment and vaccine research.

Paycheck Protection Program Update

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Flexibility Act has passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting signature by President Trump. Once signed, this legislation will give small businesses up to 24 weeks (instead of eight weeks as originally provided) to use the emergency PPP loans and still qualify for forgiveness. The legislation also reduces the threshold for required spending on payroll costs to 60% (down from 75%). Another provision is that borrowers now have five years to repay the loan instead of two, and two new exceptions were given that allow borrowers to achieve full PPP loan forgiveness if they cannot find qualified employees to rehire or are unable to restore business operations.

Changes to the 2021 Family Medicine Residency Program Match

This pandemic is having dramatic effects on many educational systems, and medical schools and residency programs are especially impacted. There are significant changes to the 2021 family medicine residency program match process. The AAFP and the rest of the “family” of family medicine are working together to help students and residency programs navigate the unique challenges these changes present. Last week, we issued a [letter](#) that highlights recommendations that we hope students and programs will find helpful. We will continue to develop resources to help make the 2021 Match process a successful and exciting one. We also encourage medical students to join the [AAFP Student Community](#) to connect with each other and get the latest updates on the Match.

I also want to share a few important reminders with you:

- **COVID-19 site:** Don't forget to visit [the AAFP's COVID-19 site](#) regularly as we continue to add new resources, tools and advocacy information.
- **Make your voice heard through the “Week of Action”:** This week is the AAFP's first remote “Week of Action.” This is in lieu of the Family Medicine Advocacy Summit that we had to cancel. In the [Family Medicine Action Network online community](#), we have posted information so that you can share with your members of Congress about the immediate need to stabilize, strengthen and sustain primary care. Be sure to check it out, if you haven't already.
- **Town Hall replay:** At last night's virtual Town Hall, we were joined by two members of Congress who are also physicians. They provided information about actions Congress has taken so far during the pandemic and shared their unique perspectives of being both physicians and elected officials. It was an insightful session, so if you missed it, check out the replay on our [COVID-19 communications page](#). As a reminder, the weekly virtual Town Hall is available for one [live](#) or [enduring](#) CME credit, so be sure to evaluate the session and claim your credit.
- **COVID-19 live events:** Beginning this week, we are transitioning to offer one live event opportunity per week during our regular Wednesday evening time slot. We will alternate between the Town Hall format and the webinar format. So, next week will be a webinar

focused on preventive care during the COVID-19 crisis. Visit the [COVID-19 CME page](#) for more details.

As we close, I want to recognize the recent events that have exposed the systemic racism that still exists in our country. As family physicians, we are the cornerstones of our communities and are hurting alongside one another and our country. Over the weekend, the AAFP issued a [statement condemning racism](#) and indicating that we consider racism to be a public health crisis. In our statement, we also committed to using our platform to advance the conversation and take action against racial injustice. That is a role we take very seriously, and we will keep you updated on our next steps.

Thank you again for everything you are doing to support your patients and your community during these emotional and challenging times in our history.

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President
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