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Based on recommendations from both the Center for Disease Control and the North Dakota Department of Health, patient policies have been updated to identify what patients can expect upon returning to in-clinic therapy. As always, Pediatric Partners maintains their commitment to providing the highest quality of care with your health and safety in mind.

At this time, Pediatric Partners will institute the following policies and protocols applicable to all individuals attending in-person, face-to-face sessions:

Pediatric Partners COVID Policy update effective 11/2/2020

1. Mask Policy (effective 11/1/20)

The ND Dept of Health has updated their quarantine guidelines regarding close contacts to those testing positive to COVID-19.

If the person who tested positive AND the person who had close contact with the person who tested positive were both wearing masks at the time of close contact, no quarantine is needed for the contact (assuming they are asymptomatic). The person with COVID would still quarantine – that has not changed.

We currently require all staff to wear masks **whenever social distancing between other staff members is not possible**. If you are within 6 feet of a coworker anywhere within our clinics, we ask that you wear a mask. This would include but not be limited to break rooms, staff offices, work rooms, etc. Contact within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes TOTAL in a 24 hour period is the definition of close contact so please keep your mask handy at all times and be sure to wear when you are close to coworkers, even for just a short period of time.

We ask that you hold each other accountable for this as it only works if everybody cooperates. As you know, we have had a great many employees have to quarantine due to being deemed close contacts to co-workers that have tested positive. This has caused a great deal of hardship to those employees, their coworkers, and our patients. We welcome this new policy from the ND Dept. of Health and feel that this should prevent the need for increased numbers of staff needing to quarantine in the chance that we have additional employees test positive for COVID in the future.

Mask use policies for treatment sessions (therapist): If parents give consent, you can remove your mask. We ask that you only ask to remove your mask when it is vital to the plan of care that the patient see your face/mouth or if you are having a hard time with breathing or have other medical conditions that would limit your use of a mask.

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Mask use policies for treatment sessions (patient): Any patient 5 years old or older will be asked to wear a mask during the session unless the therapist feels it would interfere with the plan of care or if the patient has a medical condition that would make wearing a mask difficult or dangerous.

2. Updated COVID-19 Home Visit Policy (effective 11/1/20) (Fargo and Bismarck markets only):

1. We will no longer have restrictions on the number of people that can reside in a home to be eligible for home visits.
2. To receive home visits, parents will have to answer NO to the following health questions:
 - A. **Do you, your child, or anybody else in your home have a fever (defined as a forehead temperature of 100.4 or greater per CDC) or are you, your child, or anybody else in your household taking fever reducing medication?**
 - B. **Do you, your child, or anybody in your home have any respiratory symptoms (cough, difficulty breathing) or diarrhea?**
 - C. **Have you, your child, or anybody in your home been diagnosed with COVID-19 and if so, have not since tested negative or have had any symptoms in the last 10 days?**
 - D. **Have you, your child, or anybody in your home been in direct (within 6-ft) prolonged (15 minutes or longer) contact with an individual that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?**
3. Therapists are encouraged to use toys and supplies that are available in the home but may bring in their own supplies. A spray bottle of cleaning solution, paper towels, and a plastic grocery bag for the dirty paper towels will be supplied. Therapists will need to clean their own toys if they want to use them again before their regular toy cleaning is scheduled.
4. All therapists will be provided with personal hand sanitizer to use before and after sessions.
 - a. Therapists are encouraged to ask permission to wash their hands before and after if there is paper towels or napkins available to dry.
5. Therapists will wear masks during sessions unless verbal consent is given from parents to remove. We ask that you only ask to remove your mask when it is vital to the plan of care that the patient see your face/mouth or if you are having a hard time with breathing or have other medical conditions that would limit your use of a mask.
6. Any patient 5 years old or older will be asked to wear a mask during the session unless the therapist feels it would interfere with the plan of care or if the patient has a medical condition that would make wearing a mask difficult or dangerous.
7. We will allow 1 parent or caregiver to participate closely in the session. Other members of the family need to remain 6' away from the session/visit.
 - a. If they cannot, or if they need to be closer, they will need to wear a mask.
8. If you are not able to answer **NO** to the health questions within 24 hours of your session, please contact our office or your therapist/home visitor to make other treatment arrangements.
9. If anybody in your household tests positive for COVID-19, please notify your therapist/home visitor immediately.

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3. Updated COVID-19 Outside Facility Visit Policy (Daycares, schools, etc.) (effective 11/1/20) (Fargo and Bismarck markets only):

1. All facilities, including large daycare centers, are now acceptable treatment locations.
2. To treat at an outside facility, the following must occur:
 - The Facility is on the Pediatric Partners Approved Facility List (will be posted). To be added to the list, the Coordinator needs to confirm the following:
 - o Facility must have a screening process regarding COVID (i.e. health screen).
 - o Facility must provide a treatment space that allows for social distancing away from others – at least 6’.
 - o Please contact your coordinator if you would like to start the process of adding a facility to the approved list
3. The Facility allows us to use their space
 - Parents need to initiate this process.
 - Even if the facility is on the list, the parent needs to confirm.
4. Therapists will wear masks during sessions unless verbal consent is given from parents to remove. We ask that you only ask to remove your mask when it is vital to the plan of care that the patient see your face/mouth or if you are having a hard time with breathing or have other medical conditions that would limit your use of a mask.
5. Any patient 5 years old or older will be asked to wear a mask during the session unless the therapist feels it would interfere with the plan of care or if the patient has a medical condition that would make wearing a mask difficult or dangerous. If mask wearing is not already a requirement of the outside facility, please be sure the parent has supplied a mask for the child to use during your therapy sessions.
6. As always, we are guests in these facilities and our providers will follow whatever policies and procedures that the facility has in place – including those specific to COVID.
7. If the facility allows us to take toys in, we may do so. Therapists are responsible for disinfecting all toys immediately following session. Therapists will be provided with disinfectant supplies.
8. All therapists will be provided with personal hand sanitizer to use before and after sessions.
 - a. Therapists are encouraged to ask permission to wash their hands before and after if there is paper towels or napkins available to dry.

4. Updated Lobby Policy (effective 11/1/20)

1. Signage in vestibules and/or lobby remains regarding not entering our building unless guests can successfully answer the health screening questions related to COVID-19.
2. Front desk staff continue to take temperatures of our guests and do their best to confirm health screen questions.
3. We will be removing the restriction regarding number of people in the lobby, including number of people per family.
4. Masks will remain mandatory in our lobby for anybody 5 years old or older. We will make exceptions for any patient that has a health condition that prevents them from wearing a mask.
5. Families may choose to wait in their vehicles but must sign out at the front desk.
6. If the family chooses to wait in their vehicle, they must return to the lobby at least 5 minutes before end of session. **Therapists will no longer leave the building to go into the parking lot for patient drop-off/pick-up.**

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7. Please be aware of parent reporting in the lobby – it is not an appropriate location for session summaries.
8. With prior approval from therapist, parents may be authorized to leave the premises, but therapist takes full responsibility for them returning.

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