



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert**

MESSAGE ID: MSHAN-20210304-00503-ALT (Health Alert)
RECIPIENTS: All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and
Healthcare Providers – Statewide
Thursday, March 4, 2021
SUBJECT: Mississippi State Department of Health Updated
COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Healthcare
Settings

The risk of COVID-19 transmission and the emergence of new variants continue to threaten the public health of Mississippi.

To prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in health care settings, the following prevention actions should be maintained:

Outpatient Medical Services:

- 1) Mississippi physicians should continue to use telemedicine services as appropriate to reduce the volume of patients in the clinical environment.
- 2) All patients with suspected COVID-19 should be evaluated in a private location, with the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 3) All outpatient services should be conducted to accommodate social distancing and COVID-19 prevention measures, to include:
 - a. Minimum separation of six feet between patients.
 - b. Modified patient flow should continue in a manner that supports social distancing.
 - c. Hand hygiene resources should be readily available to patients and caregivers.
 - d. All patients and caregivers in waiting rooms should wear a surgical or cloth mask.
 - e. All employees should always wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
 - f. Employees should maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from one another when eating or drinking.
 - g. Eye protection is recommended for all clinical encounters consistent with CDC guidance.

Surgeries and Procedures:

- 1) **Patient care before surgery:**
 - a. All patients should be assessed for COVID-19 symptoms immediately prior to any surgery.
 - b. Patients with COVID-19 symptoms should be tested for and shown to not have COVID-19 prior to proceeding to surgery or procedure.
 - c. A negative COVID-19 PCR or antigen test in the previous 48 hours is the recommended screening approach for surgeries or procedures requiring general anesthesia and especially those involving the mouth, nose, oropharynx,

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nasopharynx, respiratory tract, GI tract or requiring general anesthesia. When preoperative testing for COVID-19 is not practicable, full protective PPE for COVID-19 is necessary during any potentially aerosolizing procedure (including but not limited to airway access, endoscopy, or bronchoscopy).

- 2) **Social Distancing** - All services should be provided in a manner designed to accommodate social distancing and prevention measures including:
 - a. A minimum separation of six feet between patients.
 - b. Modified patient flow should continue in a manner that accommodates social distancing.
 - c. Hand hygiene resources should be readily available to patients and caregivers.
 - d. All patients and family in waiting rooms should wear a surgical or cloth mask.
 - e. All employees should always wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
 - f. Employees should maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from one another when eating or drinking.
 - g. Eye protection is recommended for all clinical encounters consistent with CDC guidance.

- 3) **Preventing COVID-19 Transmission:**
 - a. Every effort should be made to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by following current CDC guidelines and reducing the number of healthcare workers in the surgical suite or office to the minimum necessary to complete the surgery or procedure.
 - b. Healthcare workers should be provided with appropriate PPE to perform the surgery or procedure.

Inpatient Settings:

- 1) All healthcare employees should always wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
- 2) Employees should maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from one another when eating or drinking.
- 3) All visitors should always wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
- 4) All efforts should minimize hospital visitors to the minimum necessary to meet the support needs of patients.
- 5) Visitors should be assessed for illness prior to entry.

Home Health and Hospice:

It is recommended that during all in home encounters, both staff and residents in the home wear a face covering for the duration of the visit.



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COVID-19 Vaccination:

MSDH recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all healthcare workers and anyone working in a healthcare environment. Vaccination is a critical and necessary strategy for protecting our healthcare workforce, patients, and visitors.



Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program: MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier: MSHAN-20210304-00503-ALT
Program (HAN) Type: Health Alert
Status (Type): Actual ()
Message Type: Alert
Reference: MSHAN-00503
Severity: Unknown
Acknowledgement: No
Sensitive: Not Sensitive
Message Expiration: Undetermined
Urgency: Undetermined
Delivery Time: 600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**)).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages.

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

Actual: Communication or alert refers to a live event

Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert

Test: Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded



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Message Type:

Alert: Indicates an original Alert
Update: Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
Cancel: Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
Error: Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of “Update” or “Cancel”, this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. “n/a” = Not Applicable.

Severity:

Extreme: Extraordinary threat to life or property
Severe: Significant threat to life or property
Moderate: Possible threat to life or property
Minor: Minimal threat to life or property
Unknown: Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

Sensitive: Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
Not Sensitive: Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).