

THE DOCTORS OFFICE

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Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance - For Immediate Release

To practice patients and their families:

As you have all heard and read, cases of the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) are in full force in the tri-state area. The nation's largest cluster of cases in one jurisdiction lies just ten miles south of us in New Rochelle, New York. As expected, this past week, Connecticut saw its first few confirmed cases of COVID-19, as announced by the Department of Health. The first locally-diagnosed case of COVID-19 infection in a Greenwich resident was also diagnosed late last week; the resident was believed to have contracted it while passing through Westchester Airport. Local and state health officials were notified, the patient has entered quarantine at home and that patient's health status is being monitored on a daily basis. Fortunately, that individual is recovering well.

If you have any symptoms at all suggestive of infectious disease (fever, chills, cough, and shortness of breath) and have had any contact with Westchester County or New York City OR have come within six feet of someone who was a confirmed case, you are at risk and you should stay quarantined in your home for a minimum of 14 days. Other symptoms including sore throat, ear ache, sinus pressure, chest pain require medical evaluation and should not be automatically concluded to be related to COVID-19 infection. With all viral infections, symptoms can present similarly. For patients who believe they may have been exposed to a contagion or have symptoms, we are offering drive-through testing from the safety of your vehicle for COVID-19 as well as for the numerous other viral infections possible. You may book these appointments by calling us or by making an appointment online.

Last week, for the safety of our patients and staff, we began offering telephone visits for any complaint, including physical exams, as an alternative to coming into the practice. You can continue to receive care from the physicians you already entrust with your health from the convenience of your home. Call our office at (203) 661-9433 or visit us online to book an appointment and indicate that you would like to do a telephone visit.

The CDC has recommended that all individuals who have not yet been immunized this season (within the last 4 months) against influenza (the "flu") receive the flu vaccine to further strengthen their immune system against all viral infections. We have these readily available for our community.

The virus can be transmitted as far away as 10 feet from a source through respiratory droplets and can live on surfaces for an extended period of time before dying. Vigorous hand hygiene is crucial to reducing transmission. Most alarmingly, the CT Department of Health has confirmed the virus can be active and transmittable for up to 14 days before manifesting symptoms. Younger patients are less likely to show symptoms while carrying the virus. Those who are over 65 years of age are at greatest risk, with increasing age, in general, closely linked to increased morbidity and mortality. The Governor of California has just mandated home isolation for all in-state individuals 65 years or older until further notice--we are in full support of this policy in affected areas.

Unnecessary travel should be avoided at all costs, even to neighboring towns and within the community. Accordingly, passing through the airports for any travel, domestic or international, is highly discouraged during this time. You must avoid public areas to further reduce the risk of transmission. Connecticut, New York City, and Los Angeles have closed all bars, theaters, night clubs, casinos and restaurants, effective immediately.

If you are an employee and have the ability to work from home for the next 4 weeks, it is highly advised you do so. If you are an employer, or are in a position of leadership overseeing other employees, the practice strongly recommends limiting transmission and the risk of your employees and their family's health by enabling all employees to work from home for the next 4 weeks.

We must all take great precautions for the benefit of all members of our community. None of us are able to predict how the virus will transmit and we must all take responsibility to protect the health of all members of the community in the roles we occupy. The physicians in this practice have seen first hand how advanced COVID-19 infection can render individuals critically-ill and, in certain unfortunate circumstances, result in the mortality of the patient despite the area's access to the country's best medical care.

The practice, its physicians, and its staff remain at your availability to answer your concerns and to meet your healthcare needs. Our staff are doing our best to triage your concerns as we are inundated with concerned patients. We hope this letter provides the necessary guidance and direction you are seeking. We wish you and your loved ones health and safety throughout these weeks as we unite toward the common goal of our community's welfare.

Sincerely yours,

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