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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MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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.

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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)).

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