



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

**MESSAGE ID:** MSHAN-20210726-00526-ALT (Health Alert)  
**RECIPIENTS:** All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and  
Healthcare Providers – Statewide  
Monday, July 26, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Updated COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for  
Outpatient Healthcare Settings

Dear Colleagues,

- The number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19 are surging in Mississippi, leading to significant impact on the healthcare systems in the state.
- The surge is in large part due to the emergence of the highly infectious Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 (which now is estimated to account for >80% of the circulating virus in the state), low vaccination rates among individuals 12 years and older in Mississippi, and reduced mask use and physical distancing.
- A significant increase in outbreaks among long-term care settings has also been identified, primarily introduced through unvaccinated healthcare workers and staff in these settings.
- To prevent the potential transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in healthcare settings, the MSDH is issuing the following Public Health Guidance for outpatient settings.

**Outpatient Medical Services:**

1. Mississippi physicians should resume using 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 wear masks when engaged in clinical duties with patients.
  - f. All unvaccinated employees must wear a mask at all times when not eating or drinking.
  - g. Employees should maintain a minimum of 6 feet distance from one another when eating or drinking.
  - h. Eye protection is recommended for all high-risk clinical encounters consistent with CDC guidance.

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### **Additional Recommendations for Hospital Visitors**

1. All hospital visitors should always wear a mask when not eating or drinking.
2. All efforts should be made to limit hospital visitors to the minimum necessary to support the needs of the patients.
3. Visitors should be assessed for illness prior to entry.

### **Monoclonal Antibody Therapy:**

1. Every effort should be made to administer monoclonal antibody therapy as soon as possible for those who are high risk and eligible for treatment.
2. This medication should be used as soon after diagnosis as possible to achieve maximal benefit. Ideally this should be available 7 days /week.
3. Current RGEN-COV and Sotrovimab are approved for use and reduce hospitalizations by 75%-89%.
4. To see if your patient qualifies for treatment and for referral information, please visit: <https://apps.msdh.ms.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=RHK3C3HEJ8897TPL>.

### **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. Please continue to advise vaccination for all eligible individuals and provide access to vaccine in individual clinic settings if possible.

Regards,

Paul Byers, MD  
State Epidemiologist