



June 17: COVID-19 Survey, Reactivation Targets, Scheduling and Screening Update, Patient Mask Refusal Guidelines

This week's issue focuses on reactivation target guidelines for achieving baseline operations, outpatient scheduling and screening updates, and guidelines to assist physicians and staff with patients who may not be able to wear masks due to a medical condition or who refuse to wear masks when visiting a Northwestern Medicine facility. We also encourage you to participate in the COVID-19 Response and Reactivation Survey when it goes live next Tuesday.

COVID-19 Response and Reactivation Survey Opens Next Tuesday

Employees and physicians will receive an email link on Tuesday, June 23, from a third-party vendor to ensure the confidentiality of responses. Your feedback will inform efforts to help keep Northwestern Medicine a safe, healthy and supportive place to work and receive care during this time of change and uncertainty.

The email link for the survey will be sent to:

- Employees on staff for at least three months and not on leave of absence
- Employed and independent physicians

The survey will be sent from "Northwestern Memorial HealthCare <northwesternmedicine@express.medallia.com>" with the subject line, "Your COVID-19 Survey."

For more information about the survey, visit the [Your Feedback Makes Us Better](#) page on NM Interactive (login required). If you have additional questions, please email physicianengagement@nm.org.

REACTIVATION TARGET GUIDELINES

As NM continues to implement reactivation protocols and prepare our facilities for the safe return of patients, we are committed to supporting our physician practices, outpatient departments and clinics in their return to baseline operations.

Based on an analysis of trends in reactivation, NM has established [Reactivation Patient Volume Target Guidelines](#) for medical group ambulatory visits, hospital diagnostic exams, hospital interventional procedures, and hospital and ambulatory surgery center (ASC) surgical cases. While most operating areas are well on track to meeting these targets, we will continue to monitor operations and adjust

target recommendations as needed. To view the target guidelines, click the link above. Please note that the targets provided are guidelines only. They are not performance goals.

For more information and to view current reactivation volumes, please visit the [Reactivation Dashboard](#) on NMI (login required).

COVID-19 SCHEDULING AND SYMPTOM SCREENING UPDATE

On June 15, Northwestern Medical Group and Northwestern Medicine Regional Medical Group began to default appointment scheduling to in-person visits. All teams will continue to screen patients for influenza-like illness symptoms and COVID-19 status prior to scheduling. Based on practice protocols, if a patient screens positive, either the patient will be scheduled for a telehealth visit or a message will be sent to the practice for next steps. Telehealth options will continue to be available, and practices may convert in-person visits to virtual visits as needed.

Currently the symptom screening timeframe is within 40 days. Based on updated CDC guidelines, we will be shifting the timeframe to within the past 14 days. At the point of scheduling, patients will be screened for symptoms, and then prior to the appointment at check-in, patient screening will move from point-of-entrance to point-of-care, and clinic staff will again screen patients.

If a patient screens positive at point-of-care, please refer to COVID-19 workflows identified in the [Ambulatory Clinic Playbook](#) on Physician Forum (no login required) and [here](#) on NMI (login required).

PATIENT MASK REFUSAL GUIDELINES

With the exception of inpatients who are in their hospital rooms, everyone is required to wear a mask while in an NM facility. Staff members are required to wear an NM-issued mask. Patients and visitors who arrive wearing their own mask will be asked to replace or cover it with an NM-issued mask.

If a patient is unable to wear a mask due to a self-identified disability or medical condition, or if they refuse to wear a mask for personal reasons, NM staff will work with the patient's physician's office to discuss reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable Accommodations

If patients are unable to wear a mask due to a disability or medical condition, please provide one of the following reasonable accommodations:

- Schedule or convert the appointment to a telehealth visit, if appropriate. Please work with the department or physician's office on scheduling options.
- If an in-person appointment is identified as necessary, please follow the same workflows utilized for symptomatic patients:
 - Minimize duration and proximity of exposure by isolating the patient and maintaining physical distancing
 - Once in the clinic or department, expedite rooming, bypassing check-in
 - Clinical staff must don PPE (mask and goggles or face shield) to assess patient

Personal or Other Refusal Reasons

If the patient refuses to wear a mask for reasons other than a medical condition or disability, make an attempt to explain that NM is requiring universal masking for everyone within our facilities. This is

following the guidelines of the CDC and is for their protection as well as others within our buildings. If the patient still refuses and does not need an accommodation:

- Notify the clinic/place of service. The clinician may wish to discuss the situation with the patient, and may elect to proceed with the appointment or defer.
- Offer a telehealth visit as an alternative.

For more information, please view the [Patient Mask Refusal Guidelines](#) on Physician Forum (no login required) and [here](#) on NMI (login required).

Thank you to all NM providers for your continued partnership throughout the pandemic and as we move toward reactivating our health system. If you have questions about NM reactivation or would like to share the story of an NM hero, please email us at covid-19md@nm.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Howard B. Chrisman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "H" and "C".

Howard B. Chrisman, MD
President
Northwestern Medical Group
Senior Vice President
Northwestern Memorial HealthCare