



The Maryland State Medical Society

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MEDCHI URGES MARYLANDERS TO MAINTAIN MEDICAL CARE DURING PANDEMIC

BALTIMORE, June 4, 2020 – MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is urging Marylanders not to delay medical care because of the current pandemic. We understand this is a scary and confusing time for many, but it is important to not let that fear keep you from visiting hospitals and doctor offices when needed. As of May 7, all licensed healthcare facilities and healthcare providers were able to resume elective and non-urgent medical procedures and appointments provided all required measures were in place, as outlined by the Directive and Order from the Maryland Department of Health, released May 6.

As previously reported in an op-ed piece in the Baltimore Sun ([Message from UM and Hopkins hospital executive](#)) “emergency departments and intensive care units at Johns Hopkins Medicine and the University of Maryland Medicine are reporting high numbers of patients in real danger because they’ve delayed urgent treatment when they normally would have sought care”. One of the most alarming happenings since the coronavirus hit Maryland communities is the decline in the number of patients showing up with symptoms of heart attacks and strokes.

MedChi is urging people to seek immediate medical care for potential stroke, heart issues, appendicitis, and other potential emergencies and warns that people are not only jeopardizing their health, they could end up with a much worse issue due to waiting to go in. “The number of people suffering from such symptoms likely hasn’t gone down that much, health care providers fear. Instead, they believe patients have chosen to avoid emergency room visits to their own detriment. Some patients may worry they could contract the virus by visiting the hospital. Others may be confused by the stay-at-home orders meant to slow the spread of the COVID-19 illness” ([Maryland doctors sound the alarm after seeing drop in heart attacks and strokes amid coronavirus pandemic](#)).

MedChi also wants to stress the importance of keeping up with routine vaccinations for children. In the midst of the current pandemic, when staying home is still suggested in many states, keeping up with recommended vaccines can be challenging for both parents and healthcare professionals. Immunizations should be as close to on schedule as possible—otherwise, we risk seeing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases in the US and around the world. This, on top of another wave of COVID-19, could be devastating for families and the healthcare system at-large.

As medical facilities are opening up in greater capacity, it is important to note that there are many steps that hospitals and doctors offices are taking to ensure sanitary conditions are met for both their patients and medical staff. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has many recommendations for re-opening facilities which help keep medical professionals and patients safe ([click here for a full list of recommendations](#)). CMS recommends:

- Healthcare providers and staff wear surgical facemasks at all times.
- Patients should wear a cloth face covering
- Offices/hospitals should facilitate social distancing, such as minimizing time in waiting areas, spacing chairs at least 6 feet apart, and maintaining low patient volumes

- Ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection prior to using spaces or facilities for patients with non-COVID-19 care needs
- Ensure that equipment is thoroughly decontaminated, following CDC guidelines
- All patients must be screened for potential symptoms of COVID-19
- Facility and staff must be routinely screened for potential symptoms of COVID-19

If your medical issue isn't critical and you do not require vaccines, in most cases telehealth is available. MedChi has been a huge supporter of telemedicine for both the patients and medical providers. Since the start of the pandemic many medical facilities started offering these services even if they never did before. Call your medical provider to discuss this option and it will be discussed if this is a viable option for you.

Gene Ransom, MedChi CEO, states "it is important to remember to practice social distancing whenever possible and as always wash your hands or use hand sanitizer when hand washing isn't immediately available. The MedChi Coronavirus Resource Center website offers a lot of resources and information for both health care providers and patients during this pandemic, visit www.medchi.org to access this information".

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.