

S O U T H W E S T F L O R I D A ' S

# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

May 2020

Lee Edition - Monthly

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**FREE**  

## NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES

21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY ONCOLOGY  
THANKS FRONTLINE  
WORKERS

## TELEHEALTH

A NECESSITY NOW,  
AND A GLIMPSE OF  
THE FUTURE

## ARTHRITIS AWARENESS

KNOWLEDGE IS KEY TO  
ADDRESSING OSTEOARTHRITIS

## ARE THE CORONAVIRUS STATISTICS AND FEARS CAUSING YOU ANXIETY?

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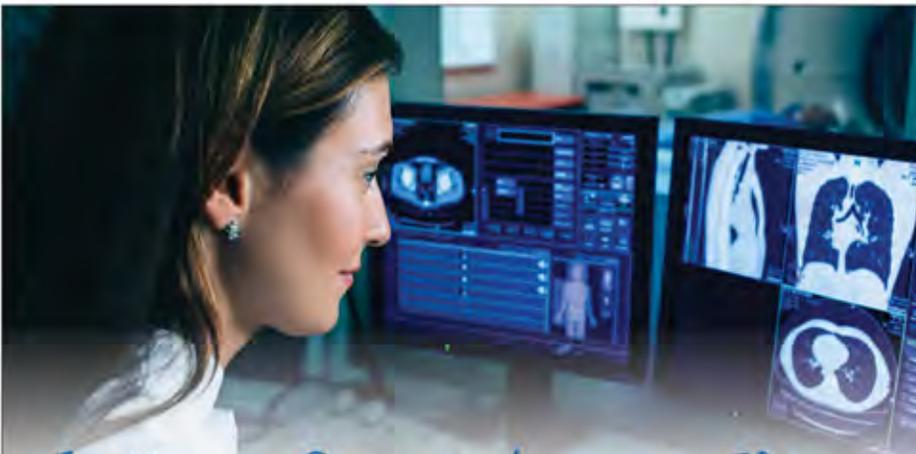
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From left: Nina Burt, O.D.; Kate Wagner, O.D.; E. Trevor Elmquist, D.O.; Sarah Eccles-Brown, M.D.

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# Not All Heroes Wear Capes

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology Thanks Frontline Workers

21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology would like to personally thank everyone on the frontline for their efforts during the COVID-19 crisis. The doctors, first responders, nurses, therapists, custodial workers, medical insurance processors, cashiers, food deliverers, truck drivers, chefs, volunteers, mail deliverers, military, and all other people in our local community and across the borders of our states, you are respected and honored as the real heroes that deserve to be recognized!

Putting oneself in the middle of a high-risk contagion such as the novel coronavirus is admirable, to say to the least. It's brave individuals like you that make our country strong and proud. Caring for others—there is no higher calling.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology Remains Open While Maintaining Safety Protocols at the Highest Level

Ongoing treatment for cancer is critical for patients. Because of this, the physicians and team members at 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology are continuing to keep radiation centers and all of their clinics open to deliver the highest quality of care for their patients. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology is taking extensive precautions to protect their teams and their patients in each office through meticulous cleaning and limited access according to government standards.

As an alternative to in-person office visits, they are offering telemedicine where clinically appropriate to ensure your interaction with your physician for key services is not interrupted during this time.

If you need a telemedicine appointment or would like more information, please contact your local office or visit [www.21co.com](http://www.21co.com).



### Cancer Screenings and Treatment are Essential

Additionally, cancer screening is just as important as it's ever been. If you have any new symptoms or are due for skin, breast, colon, lung, prostate, or any other cancer detection test, do not put it off—waiting is not an option. Although cancers can be treated at almost any stage, certain cancers grow and proliferate rapidly, and with any disease, it's best to get diagnosed in the early stages. This allows the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology team to treat you with optimal results. Again if you have any new symptoms, it's critical to get a proper evaluation and referral for imaging or other tests for screening and diagnosis.

For the past several weeks, we've all been practicing social distancing and rigorous hygiene. On April 3rd, Governor DeSantis issued a "stay at home" order and set standards for essential services, including medical treatment. Oncology is considered essential. If you have cancer, your ongoing care is critical, and you can rest assured that 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology has implemented stringent protocols to keep you and their staff safe. It's of their utmost importance to provide continuity of care without compromising the health and safety of their patients and medical staff.

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology

21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology is the premier provider of cancer care services across multiple modalities, the largest radiation oncology provider and has one of the largest groups of urologists in the U.S. For more than 30 years, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology has been committed to providing state-of-the-art, academic quality radiation therapy and other cancer treatments in a patient-centric setting focused on continuous innovation.

Headquartered in Fort Myers, Florida, the physician-centric company operates 123 radiation oncology treatment centers and 170 clinical offices in 15 states.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology employs or is affiliated with nearly 900 physicians globally, including:**

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- Radiologists
- Surgical Oncologists
- Urologists

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology works together to deliver the most advanced integrated cancer care.**

**Thank you again to the brave frontline workers. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Oncology joins you in support and loyalty to patients with COVID-19, the communities, and those that are treated and served during this pandemic.**

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In addition to our outstanding, world-class Physicians, 21st Century Oncology is fortunate to have an amazing support team of Advanced Practice Providers who serve our patients daily. Two of which have obtained their advanced oncology national certification (Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner: AOCNP).

**Thank you for your patience, professionalism, hard work  
and commitment to excellent medical care!**



Pictured left to right: Nicole Houle, MSN, APRN, AOCNP; Deborah Nosotti, MSN, FNP-BC, AOCNP;  
Daniel Schloegel, PA-C; Beth Patrizi, MSN, APRN-C; Inesa Sviridova, PA-C; Lina Quintana, PA-C

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# CLINICAL TRIALS

No other field of medicine is changing as rapidly as oncology. Over the past decade, literally dozens of new medicines and new approaches for treating cancer have been developed, and this has resulted in many more people surviving cancer than ever before. According to the National Cancer Institute, in 2020, there are over 15 million cancer survivors in the United States, and approximately two million of them have survived for 20 years or longer. Some of the reasons cancer survival rates have dramatically increased can be linked directly to such things as improvements in early detection methods, more advanced therapies, and genetic research and clinical trials, which are responsible for developing more effective drugs.

The future cures for various types of cancer will all come from clinical research, yet not many adult cancer patients participate in clinical trials. Why? In some instances, it is because clinical trials are misunderstood and patients may fear being “a guinea pig.” In clinical trials for a life-threatening disease like cancer, no one who participates in a clinical trial is ever treated like a guinea pig. In fact, such great precautions are taken on behalf of patients who participate in clinical trials that, many times, their cancer treatment goes beyond standard care protocols.

## Debunking the Myths

Aside from the misunderstanding about being a guinea pig, patients who are considering participating in a clinical trial for cancer are often concerned that they might be given a placebo or a drug that will prove to be ineffective. The truth is that in some types of clinical trials (specifically those that are investigating something simple such as a new cold medication) some participants are given only a placebo. However, in clinical trials for cancer, a participant is never given anything less than the current standard of care.

All participants in oncologic clinical trials will be given the best standard treatment available for their particular type of cancer ... then in addition to that standard treatment, they may be given the new drug that is being tested or a placebo. No participant is ever given a placebo alone.



## Increased Participation in Clinical Trials Means Faster Approval for New Treatments

According to the American Cancer Society, there are many hundreds of promising new cancer drugs and therapies currently undergoing research. The average time for a new drug to be approved is seven years, and many times clinical trials cannot be conducted because of a lack of patient participation. If more cancer patients participated in clinical trials, there would be more new drugs available sooner in the future. Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of finding the cures for cancer.

Florida Cancer Specialists (FCS) is a recipient of the national ASCO Clinical Trial Participation Award and a strategic partner of the Sarah Cannon Research Institute, one of the largest clinical trial organizations in the U.S. As such, FCS offers access to more national clinical trials than any other private oncology practice in Florida ... and, if you qualify to participate in a clinical trial, you can do so in the comfort and convenience of your local FCS cancer center.

## WORLD-CLASS CANCER TREATMENT CLOSE TO HOME

Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) has a statewide network of expert, board-certified physicians who bring world-class cancer treatments to local communities, both large and small, throughout Florida. With nearly 100 locations, FCS is the largest independent oncology/hematology group in the United States. That status puts the practice on the leading edge of clinical trial research and gives FCS physicians access to the newest, most innovative treatments.

Florida Cancer Specialists treats patients with all types of cancer, and offers a number of services, such as an in-house specialty pharmacy, an in-house pathology lab and financial counselors at every location, that deliver the most advanced and personalized care in your local community.



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# Viral Defense in Intense Times

**Covid 19 is scary. But it remains a virus. The common cold is a virus. The flu is a virus. They don't seem quite as scary. So let's put a little perspective on Covid 19.**

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, ARNP

**M**ost people who contract Covid 19 virus will have mild or no symptoms. There are several treatment options currently used that appear to be quite promising. Medications, timing of medications, and even patient positioning are proving to be very helpful. Early treatment with antibiotics also seems to decrease symptoms, preventing hospitalization in some cases.

## Prevention is the Best Medicine

As with any health issue, prevention is the best medicine. The people least likely to catch Covid 19 or any other virus, are the healthiest people. Those with current health issues such as respiratory disorders, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic illnesses are at higher risk. If you've read my articles here before, you will recognize what I call "fork related diseases." Those are the ones that you create yourself with your fork: High cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and overweight or obesity.

## Reduce Your Risk

You can start to reduce your risk of contracting any virus by eating fresh, healthy food and exercising outside in the sun. (Please maintain 6 feet between you and others.) Recent research on Covid 19 shows that it is killed rather quickly in hot, humid, sunny, environments. Besides being good for your body, exercising outside is good for your head. With people being stuck at home so much recently, the incidence of depression, suicide, and domestic violence are increasing. Taking care of what I call your "headspace" is very important as well. Try to keep a positive attitude. Be kind to others even when they are not kind to you. It goes a long way.

## Oral Nutrients for Prevention

There are many oral nutrients that you can take to help enhance your immune system and hopefully prevent contracting any virus. Some of them you may be familiar with, and some you may not. Each item that I've chosen is science-based. Meaning there is science to show that each of these nutrients helps to support your immune system. Below are some recommendations. Many high-quality nutrients are difficult to get right now. Demand is high. Remember when ordering online that it's very easy to end up with a counterfeit nutrient. Always buy from a reputable site that you know. Always buy a high quality brand with a minimum of the GMP certification.



These doses are a suggestion. Doses may have to be higher or lower depending on each individual. Please consult your holistic health care practitioner before starting any supplement protocol.

## Short term Nutrient Protocol for Immune System Support

Use for no more than 3 months without a nutrient evaluation. Not for use in pregnant or lactating women. These statements are for educational purposes only, and are not meant to be medical advice, or to treat or cure any disease.

**Vitamin C** 1000mg three times a day with a meal. If you don't take vitamin C regularly, work up to this dose. Taking too much vitamin C at one time will give you loose bowels.

**Zinc** 30mg twice a day with food. Take zinc in the middle of a meal. It can upset some stomachs.

**Vitamin A** as retinoids 25,000 iu twice daily with food.

**Artimisinin Capsule** 200mg daily

**N-Acetyl-L-cysteine** 500mg three times daily

**Vitamin D** 5,000 iu daily depending on your current status.

**Probiotics** 25, 000+ units preferably from Klaire labs.

Root Causes Holistic Health and Medicine offers superior-grade, medically supervised, intravenous nutrient protocols. We developed a new IV that we call **Viral Defense**. It contains many of the items listed above, with the addition of other nutrients. The star ingredient is N-acetylcysteine. It helps with lung health. You may elect additional add-ons like vitamin D injection, glutathione, or other nutrients to help your body be optimally healthy. During your initial consultation we will determine the best protocol for you.

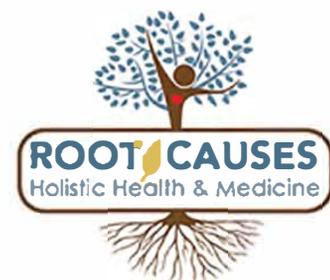
This is a great time to establish a relationship with a holistic health care practitioner. We are science and evidence-based. We are cutting edge! And we are here to help you. Call us today to develop a risk factor reduction protocol just for you and when Covid 19 is all over, we will expand your protocol into lifelong optimal health and wellness!

So get outside and exercise in our beautiful state! When you come home hot and sweaty, enjoy a healthy Quarantini!



## Healthy Quarantini

- Club soda/Plain filtered water, to your taste
- 1 pack of Immune Emergen C
- Rim with lime juice, and a little cyan pepper mixed with a tiny bit of sugar
- Garnish with orange, lemon, and lime slices



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# Malignant Melanoma

**L**iving in the sunshine state, we get to enjoy an infinite number of sunny days. Floridians love the beach, boating and engaging in other outdoors activities. Nonetheless, with this great climate comes continuous sun exposure that can increase one's risk of developing skin cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, the number of new melanoma cases (skin cancer) is on the rise. It is estimated that over 1 million people per year are diagnosed with skin cancer. Approximately 7% of those cancers were melanoma. Melanoma is the deadliest type of skin cancer.

Melanoma is a type of cancer that takes place in the cells that produce the pigment of our skin (melanocytes). Melanoma is also known as malignant melanoma because this type of skin cancer can spread to other areas of the body. It can occur anywhere on the body. Melanoma affects people of all ages, although it is most common in adults. In men, it is found most often on the trunk (shoulder to the hips region) and is the 6th most common cancer. In women, it forms most often on the arms and legs and is the 2nd most common cancer.

Melanoma in the foot or ankle is often overlooked as a majority of people tend to neglect their feet. For these reasons, melanoma in the foot usually goes unnoticed during its earliest stages. When melanoma is diagnosed in the foot or ankle, it typically presents in a more advanced stage. Treatment is easiest during the early stages and becomes more difficult as the melanoma cancer advances. It's also important to know melanoma cancer can develop in the toenail, called subungual melanoma. Melanoma does not always have to be pigmented and can be amelanotic (unpigmented).

So, who is at risk for melanoma? Anyone can have melanoma, including people with darker skin tones. However, there are characteristics that increase one's risk of developing melanoma. Risk factors include but are not limited to: having a fair complexion (people with freckles, light colored eyes or red hair), being exposed to natural sunlight or artificial sunlight, exposure to certain factors in the environment (solvents, vinyl chloride, and PCBs), having a history of repeated sun burns, having several large or many small moles, a family history of skin cancer, and having genetic predisposition.



Early detection is crucial to successfully treating Melanoma cancer. Therefore, it's important for you to know what to look for. Performing routine foot exams will reduce the risk of undiagnosed melanoma on the foot or ankle. There are four signs to look for when examining your feet or other parts of your body for melanoma. These four signs are known as the ABCDs of melanoma (asymmetry, border, color, and diameter). These signs will help you when performing self-inspection of moles and other unusual spots on your feet. When performing self-inspection of the foot make sure you examine your toe nails for discoloration as well as between your toe. You may even want to take pictures to have as a way to compare appearance overtime. If any of these signs are present on the foot, it is important to see a specialist right away.

In addition to performing routine self-inspection, there are other precautionary measures one may utilize to reduce the risk of melanoma which include: wearing water shoes or socks with shoes, using

adequate sunscreen including on the soles and top of your feet, inspect all areas of the feet daily, including the soles, underneath toenails and between the toes, remove nail polish to examine underneath your nail, avoid UV radiation during the sun's peak hours (10:00am to 4:00pm) beginning at birth (sun exposure is especially damaging to children and adolescents), wear sunglasses that block 100 percent of all UV rays (UVA and UVB), and wearing a wide-brimmed hat.



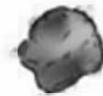
## Asymmetry

Melanoma is usually asymmetric, which means one half is different in shape from the other half.



## Border

Border irregularity often indicates melanoma. The border, or edge, is typically ragged, notched or blurred.



## Color

Melanoma is typically a mix of colors or hues, rather than a single, solid color.



## Diameter

Melanoma grows in diameter, whereas moles remain small. A spot that is larger than 5 millimeters (the size of a pencil eraser) is cause for concern.

Remember, early detection is critical with malignant melanoma. If detected and treated before it spreads, the 5-year survival rate is over 95%. If you see any of the ABCD signs or if you have discoloration beneath a toenail be sure to visit a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible.

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## RADIOLOGY REGIONAL Remains Open For All Of Your Imaging Needs

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unusual adjustments in our daily lives. With these changes, and unforeseen circumstances, you can rest assured that all of Radiology Regional's centers remain open. During this unprecedented time, patients and physicians will continue to have a need to rely upon imaging centers, and Radiology Regional is providing all diagnostic imaging needs, with the exception of routine screening exams.

### Radiology Regional Has Elevated their Infection Control Protocol

The safety and well-being of Radiology Regional's patients and staff is their primary focus, which is why they are utilizing extra precautions to ensure the safest possible environment for their services. Radiology Regional has elevated their infection control procedures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 contamination at all of their centers by sanitizing exam rooms and equipment thoroughly after each patient, utilizing safe distances, washing hands, and sterilizing patient areas routinely. They've installed sneeze guards at the front desk to protect their receptionists, and their team wears gloves and face masks. Hand sanitizer is also readily available to everyone.

As Radiology Regional continues to take precautionary measures to keep their centers accessible to you, please be advised of these new patient guidelines:

- To limit the number of people in waiting areas, nonessential guests who accompany patients must wait outside.
- The waiting areas are arranged, so that you can comfortably sit at a safe distance away from other patients.
- Patients who have traveled outside Lee, Collier, or Charlotte must reschedule their appointment until 14 days after their return.
- Patients who are experiencing symptoms consistent with Covid-19 must cancel their appointment and contact their primary physician for further direction. These symptoms include cough, fever, body aches, and shortness of breath.
- Hand Sanitizer is available for patients being treated.
- Please wear a face covering while entering the facility.



While Radiology Regional is operating a little differently these days, some things will always remain the same. You will feel welcomed by their friendly, compassionate, and professional staff, and you can trust that they're committed to providing the highest quality radiology services in Lee, Collier, and Charlotte counties.

### Patient Testimonials:

*"Staff was super friendly, despite the things that are going and the risk they are taking! Thanks again to you guys! Everyone was super helpful and nice!"*

*"I was nervous going out during this pandemic but everyone there made me feel safe and took all the necessary precautions!"*

*"Despite the unusual COVID-19 circumstances - everyone was welcoming, processing time was quick, and the entire experience was painless. Hats off to all of these professionals."*

*"Due to Covid-19, I got a friendly greeting outside with a squirt of hand sanitizer...nice touch. Doors were opened by staff, coming and going, front desk and tech in masks. All very professional."*

*"Felt comfortable and safe during these scary times. Very professionally handled. Everyone I met on the staff had 1 thing in mind, Everybody's Safety! Job well done; I'm impressed ..."*

*"I was impressed with the caution taken about the corona virus. A pleasant young man greeted me on your patio and asked me a number of questions regarding the possibility I had been exposed to the virus, my current heart status and my recent travels. Afterwards, he poured some disinfectant in my cupped hands and held the door open for me. The people inside were wearing masks and gloves and plenty of hand disinfectant was available for patient's usage. The receptionists were extremely courteous and efficient. After a reasonable waiting period, a lovely knowledgeable and efficient X-ray tech quickly took about 6 images of my neck area. Great professional service all around! It is obvious that Radiological Regional imposes a "can-do", let's get the job done efficiently and with a professional manner and friendly culture on its entire organization. Good luck and thank you very much. A lot of organizations can learn a lot from the way that you do business."*

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# ED is a Systemic Condition: Getting the "Right" Treatment is Essential

By Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, M.D.

**A**lthough it can be an uncomfortable topic for men, erectile dysfunction is extremely common. This is especially true for men ages 35-80 plus years of age. Some causes of the disorder are vascular disease, which leads to narrowing of the arteries and decreased blood flow, diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, physiological effects, and prostate cancer. It's important to see a medical professional if you are experiencing difficulty in getting and maintaining an erection.

Although, Erectile Dysfunction (ED) is deeply related to vascular health, many men that begin to experience ED have little idea that they need to treat the arteriosclerosis in the penis as well as in their body. Most standard medical practitioners will start a man on the "little blue pill," but this only masks the symptoms of ED and it definitely doesn't treat the cause.

Any man that is showing signs of erectile dysfunction should seek alternative and thorough medical assistance from a physician that not only understands the disorder but one that also offers the most advanced treatment to address your overall health.

Urology Experts focuses on your cholesterol, blood pressure, total vascular health, blood sugar, and hormone levels to treat your root cause of ED. In addition to these conditions, Urology Experts employs the most advanced groundbreaking technology, which utilizes of low-intensity shock wave therapy to break up the plaque in the penis. Their method is a scientifically proven, non-invasive procedure that uses focused sound waves to increase blood flow to the penis, optimizing erections, sensitivity, and sexual performance. The improvements are long-term. Multiple studies show at least 75 percent of patients continue to have normal erections three years after treatment. This is due primarily because of neurogenesis and angiogenesis, which are the stem cell regeneration of the nervous system and new blood vessel development.

#### Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

Men who are just beginning to see ED warning indicators should seek the earliest treatment possible.



The reason is that it has been well documented that if early diagnosis and treatment are started when a man is younger (the 30s, 40s, 50s) there is an increased chance that the ED will very likely no longer need medical treatment and their arteriosclerosis can dissipate. There have been multiple peer-reviewed studies that indicate that shock-wave treatment can potentially cure ED in some patients. The sooner you intervene with treatment, the better your outcome will be.

Almost everyone will experience a decline in sexual functioning. But with the advent of Regenerative medicine, Erectile Dysfunction is no longer an inevitable part of aging.

#### Treatment Details & Outcomes

There are no side effects from the treatment. More importantly, it is completely painless, and noninvasive as well. Patients can resume their normal activities, including sexual activity following each treatment session. Urology Experts follows European protocol and guidelines, which based on a series of clinical studies and trials recommends a total of 6 sessions, over the course of 6 weeks. On average, patients will start noticing results after the third or fourth treatment.

Our procedure breaks up plaque formation in blood vessels and stimulates the growth of new blood vessels in the penis. This process, called neurogenesis, increases blood flow to the penis, improves sexual function and enhances sensitivity in the penis. In addition, the procedure activates the growth of new nerve tissue in the penis.

Effects from the treatment have been scientifically proven be maintained in excess of 3 years, although this can vary dependent of individual health and lifestyle habits.

The machine is a multi-purpose device that has been tested and proven to work in several other medical fields, including orthopedic medicine, urology, anti-aging treatments and wound healing.

### SEEK EARLY TREATMENT & DON'T JUST MASK YOUR SYMPTOMS— TREAT THE ROOT CAUSE!

It's important to seek treatment. No one has to accept ED as a natural part of aging. Let our technology get you back to enjoying your life and your loved one!

*For more information, please visit our website [www.UrologyExperts.com](http://www.UrologyExperts.com) or call Urology Experts today at (239) 226-2727 or email [info@UrologyExperts.com](mailto:info@UrologyExperts.com) to schedule your consultation!*

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# Protect Your Eyes During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**I**n the midst of uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19), many people are taking a closer look at their health and wellness. Your vision is an important part of your body's overall health that should not be overlooked.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies fever, cough and shortness of breath as the primary symptoms of COVID-19, conjunctivitis, often referred to as pink eye, may also be a less common symptom related to this viral illness.

Conjunctivitis is an infection of the conjunctiva, the thin transparent layer of tissue on the inner eyelid. When the conjunctiva becomes inflamed, the eye may begin to feel sunburned with painful symptoms such as sensitivity to light, red eyes, excessive tearing and a gritty feeling in the eyes.

While no drops or ointments can treat viral conjunctivitis, cold compresses and over-the-counter artificial tears may help relieve symptoms. In some cases, topical steroid eye drops may be prescribed to reduce discomfort until inflammation subsides.

Following the latest recommendations of credible health sources, like the CDC, is important to help reduce exposure and limit the spread of the coronavirus. Additionally, best eye care practices can protect the health of your eyes during this COVID-19 pandemic.

## Here are a few steps you can take to protect your eye health:

- **Practice social distancing.** The CDC recommends staying at least 6 feet away from others.
- **Wash your hands.** Practice overall good hygiene and follow the proper handwashing techniques.
- **Don't rub your eyes.** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed fingers, or use a clean tissue instead of your hands.



- **Clean contact lenses properly.** To avoid infection, always wash hands thoroughly before handling your contact lenses. Make sure to disinfect and replace contacts when appropriate.
- **Consider glasses instead of contacts.** While contacts are safe to wear with proper hygienic practices, wearing glasses may help limit touching your eyes.
- **Ensure your prescription eye medications are filled.** While it is not necessary to stockpile medications, patients should have adequate supply on-hand in order to limit additional trips to the pharmacy.

To further support the health of its patients during this time, Elmquist Eye Group is now offering telehealth services for patients with conditions that do not require an in-office exam.

Offered via a HIPAA-compliant platform, Elmquist Eye Group's telehealth consultations are intended for ocular conditions that can be diagnosed and managed virtually, including styes, cysts, eyelid swelling and red eyes. Virtual visits can also help determine if a patient's symptoms require urgent treatment or further evaluation.

"Elmquist Eye Group is dedicated to the overall health of our patients, staff and community, and telehealth allows us to keep serving patients while reducing the number of in-office visits during this unprecedented time for our community," said Dr. Trevor Elmquist, founder of Elmquist Eye Group. "While a virtual visit cannot replace a comprehensive dilated in-office eye exam, our ophthalmologists and optometrists stand ready to provide consultation and answer any questions."

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends you call your ophthalmologist for guidance in the following situations:

- You have macular degeneration or diabetic retinopathy and get regular eye injections;
- You notice changes in your vision (like blurry, wavy or blank spots in your field of vision);
- You notice a lot of new floaters or flashes in your vision;
- You suddenly lose some vision;
- You have eye pain, headache, red eye, nausea and vomiting.

If you have concerns about your vision, an eye care professional can help determine if further evaluation is needed. Please contact Elmquist Eye Group at 239-936-2020 to learn more about telehealth services or to set up an emergency appointment.

*With more than 25 years of service to the Southwest Florida community, Elmquist Eye Group offers experienced doctors who are dedicated to patient care. Dr. E. Trevor Elmquist, Dr. Kate Wagner, Dr. Sarah Eccles-Brown and Dr. Nina Burt of Elmquist Eye Group are available to answer your questions. With three U.S. military veterans leading the practice, rest assured knowing that Elmquist Eye Group's team stands ready to serve you with knowledge and experience right here in Southwest Florida. For more information, visit [www.Elmquist.com](http://www.Elmquist.com), call 239-936-2020.*



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Psychiatric Associates of Southwest Florida

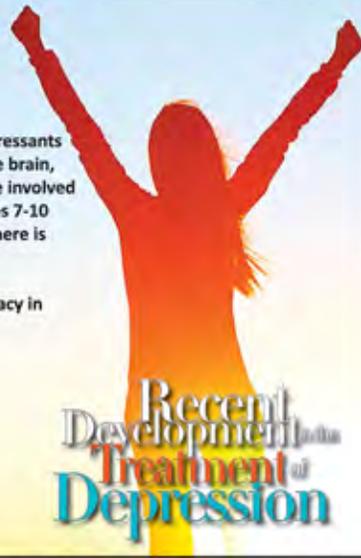
**What is it?**

**Ketamine Infusion Therapy** is a safe, reliable, and rapid treatment tailored to a person's unique medical profile. Antidepressants typically work on the serotonin and noradrenergic systems of the brain, whereas Ketamine acts on the Brain's NMDA receptors which are involved in functions of memory and cognition. Initially, a single dose gives 7-10 days of relief; however, by infusing 3 days/week over 2 weeks, there is extended relief lasting months or years.

**Ketamine Infusion Therapy** has also demonstrated clinical efficacy in patients suffering from:

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COVID-19

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# Telehealth: A Necessity Now, And A Glimpse Of The Future

By Robert Pollack, M.D., Board Certified Psychiatrist

**A**lthough it may seem futuristic, telehealth, virtual office visits have been around for years for urgent care needs, and now with the recent guidelines to stay safer home and social distance, the majority of medical specialists have implemented virtual appointments and examinations to better help their patients through this unprecedented time. Certain specialties are essential to patient's needs, even if they are not recognized as 'essential' in direct relation to COVID-19. For example, post-surgery, patients need physical therapy, which can be done virtually, and ENT doctors are helping patients decipher colds from allergies or COVID-19 online to keep patients out of the emergency rooms and urgent care facilities if they don't need to be there.

There are many specialties that need to be available to patients, and this might be a glimpse at the beginning of our near-future in medicine. Here at my clinic, Psychiatric Associates of Southwest Florida (PASWFL), we are available for our patients and anyone facing stress, anxiety, or difficulty navigating through this pandemic or in general due to mental health issues.

## The Pandemic Environment is taking a Toll on People's Mental Health

The outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause feelings of uncertainty and anxiety for many people. Unfortunately, for those suffering from mental illnesses, these feelings might become intensified, and in some cases, crippling. This is why our PASWFL team remains committed to offering essential psychiatric care during this challenging time which includes in-office visits for Ketamine and TMS Therapy as well as safe and convenient telehealth appointments for those who aren't able to leave home.

## Our Patients in Florida are appreciating the Benefits of Telehealth Appointments

During a pandemic like COVID-19, telehealth allows us to better respond to the needs of patients in our community who aren't able to leave home to receive the care they need. It helps bridge the gap between our physicians and patients by allowing patients to meet with providers from the comfort of their homes.

Please know that your safety and health are a top priority for our team. PASWFL's telehealth program is designed to provide the highest caliber of care for our patients via virtual appointments. And, as with our in-office services, PASWFL accepts most commercial insurance including Medicare and Tricare.



### Telehealth Services Offered:

- Telepsychiatry
- Telepsychotherapy
- Online Counselling
- Online Med Management

If you or someone you love is struggling during this time of high stress and increased anxiety, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our dedicated and experienced team is here for you. Contact us today to learn more about your customized options for care during COVID-19.

### Telehealth FAQ's

#### **How do I make an appointment?**

*Simply leave us a voice message or fill out the form below and we'll respond within 24 hours.*

#### **Is my Virtual Healthcare appointment covered by insurance?**

*Yes. Telehealth services are covered by most major medical insurance providers.*

#### **What happens after I make an appointment?**

*You will be contacted by our team with instructions on how to access your appointment.*

#### **Is my appointment confidential?**

*Absolutely. We do not use Zoom or other comparable, insecure platforms. Our virtual health software is secure, and the appointment is protected by our usual doctor-patient confidentiality promise.*

### In-Office Visits: Your Physical and Mental Safety is Our Top Priority at PASWFL

Depression is a potentially life threatening illness and we are here to continue offering access to care. That being said, we believe it is important to care for our patients in the safest way possible, so we have implemented precautions to make sure our practice is as safe as possible for our patients.

- Our office is still offering the TMS and Ketamine treatments by appointment.
- Therapy and medication assessment visits are still taking place either in the office or by telepsychiatry.
- We have expanded our waiting room so there is a minimum of 6 feet between each chair. If patients would rather wait in their cars for their visits that is fine, and we will notify them by text.
- As a medical practice, we generally have high standards for cleanliness and sanitization. Still, during this pandemic we have implemented extra precautions to ensure surfaces, treatment rooms and implements are pristine.

We feel that mental health is a vital need that requires treatment and we are doing the best we can to serve our patients. We don't want you to struggle or suffer alone. We are here for all of your mental health needs. If you need help, it's important that you schedule your telehealth appointment today!

*Leave a Voice Message at: 239-332-4700 or Fill out the Form online- We'll get back to you in 24 hours!*



Robert W. Pollack, M.D.

### About PASWFL Psychiatry

Psychiatric Associates of Southwest Florida (PASWFL) is a privately owned psychiatric medical practice located in Fort Myers, Florida. The practice was founded on the principle of providing the highest caliber of care for patients in an atmosphere of compassion, professionalism, and humanity. While we embrace the most up-to-date science, we never lose sight that we have been entrusted by our patients with their lives and their futures.

PASWFL's current practice is representative of contemporary medicine. In appreciation of the working public, PASWFL accepts most commercial insurances including Medicare and Tricare. Patients receive the necessary care provided by multiple types of professionals. All records and accounting are done electronically, and there are no longer any paper files. As a result, all information is readily available and legible.

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# Too Young to Have **VEIN DISEASE?** **THINK AGAIN...**

By Joseph Magnant, MD, FACS, RPVI

**V**enous disease, also known as venous insufficiency, is often thought of as being an issue that only affects the “older” population. Surprisingly, there are many teens and young adults that may have venous insufficiency without even knowing it. Venous insufficiency occurs when there is a failure of the valves in the leg veins to close tightly resulting in the backing up of venous blood down towards the feet. This causes blood to pool and pressure to build in the lower legs, which leads to signs & symptoms of venous disease. Venous insufficiency can manifest as a variety of signs and symptoms, many which may not immediately come to mind when thinking about venous disease as a potential cause of leg issues, especially in the younger population.

Most people are aware of the most common sign of venous insufficiency which is varicose veins, but many people without varicose veins can also have venous insufficiency. It is important to understand that varicose veins do not need to be present for a diagnosis of vein disease to exist. The most reported non-visible symptoms of venous insufficiency are achy, heavy or tired legs, especially at the end of the day. Here are two examples of young adults who would never have thought of seeing a Vein Specialist but since they were related to Dr. Magnant, (his son and his niece) they underwent an evaluation at Vein Specialists and were found to have significant venous insufficiency on their ultrasound.



**PATIENT #2**

*Alexandra is a 29-year-old female who over the past few years had been experiencing intermittent achiness in both of her calves after sitting or standing. Over time, the achiness had become more frequent and more severe, often causing her to have to massage her calves or take an over-the-counter pain relief medication to help alleviate her symptoms. She had no visible signs of venous disease and just like patient #1 is a healthy individual, and further ultrasound investigation revealed evidence of severe venous disease. Thus far she has been successfully managed with compression hose, although she may decide in favor of a more definitive treatment called endovenous ablation at some point in the future if the compression stockings lose their effect.*

Based on these findings and their youth, conservative treatment was recommended consisting of a compression hose trial, exercise and elevation of the legs when possible. Both patients reported significant improvement in their symptoms when they wore their hose on a regular basis during the day. Although, compression hose will not cure the underlying venous disease, they can assist in alleviating the many of the symptoms associated with venous disease.

In other cases, conservative treatment may not yield adequate relief and a minimally invasive outpatient procedure called endovenous ablation may be appropriate. This may be considered when conservative treatment has failed, or signs and symptoms have worsened. Endovenous ablation is performed in the office in a sterile environment under local anesthesia. This can be accomplished by

using either a laser or a radiofrequency catheter that allows us to seal the poorly functioning veins(s) with heat or with a special medical adhesive called VenaSeal. These procedures improve the venous symptoms by decreasing the venous pressure in the lower legs. These procedures are minimally invasive and allow patients to return to normal activity in a short period of time, which is especially important in younger, active patients.

Venous insufficiency is a common and often undiagnosed condition affecting millions of adult Americans. Although it is true that the risk of developing venous disease is more prevalent in older adults, younger adults can also be affected. The number one risk factor for developing venous disease is heredity. When family members such as one’s parents or grandparents have venous disease, one is at an increased risk for developing signs and symptoms regardless of their age or gender. Other contributing factors that are common among the younger population are contact sports such as football, baseball or soccer. Injuries related to contact sports can lead to a greater risk of developing venous disease due to direct trauma to the veins in the legs. Obesity is also an important risk factor which can affect both genders and individuals in any age group. Weight gain commonly occurs in the abdominal area which can cause increased pressure on the pelvic veins which impedes proper venous flow out of the legs.

Both patients presented to our office looking for answers to their bothersome leg symptoms. Again, both patients had no visible signs of venous disease; however, after taking a detailed history and discussing their concerns it was evident that further evaluation with venous ultrasound was warranted. Duplex ultrasound evaluation is the gold standard in diagnosing venous disease and allows Vein Specialists to formulate a specific plan tailored to each patient’s findings. In both cases, their ultrasounds revealed treatable venous disease.

**PATIENT #1**

*Patrick is a 22-year-old male who at the age of 19 began experiencing leg symptoms but had no visible signs of venous disease. While attending Florida State University, Patrick began noticing that his legs would become achy, especially after walking to and from multiple classes throughout the day. He also noticed that his legs had become increasingly fatigued after exercising. As an overall healthy individual, venous disease may not have been thought of as a contributing factor, especially since he had no obvious signs vein disease such as varicose veins, swelling or skin discoloration. Ultrasound examination confirmed severe superficial venous insufficiency and he has since been successfully managed with compression stockings.*



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Whether you are recently retired or heading off to college, if you are concerned about your lower extremity symptoms of fatigue and achiness, or if you have obvious signs of venous disease such as varicose veins, swelling or skin discoloration, please consider a venous evaluation by one of our extensively trained providers. Remember, you do not have to have visible signs to have venous disease. For more information please visit our website at [Weknowveins.com](http://Weknowveins.com) our contact our office at 239-694-VEIN (8346).

# Are The Coronavirus Statistics and Fears Causing You Anxiety?

**Lehigh Regional Medical Center is actively monitoring COVID-19 with state and local health departments and the CDC. They have implemented stringent protocols to keep their patients and staff safe and healthy.**

**W**ith the community, state, and globe in a merciless time of unprecedented uncertainty, many people are fearful of catching COVID-19, and they are also worried about their future and the outlook of the world. Young children, individuals with weakened immune systems, and adults 65 and over are more susceptible to the dangers of COVID-19, as their symptoms can quickly exacerbate into pneumonia or other disease states. As the immune system becomes weaker, the ability to fight off viruses and bacteria becomes more difficult and problematic. It's critical to stay healthy and boost the immune system; that's why, along with good hygiene and avoiding large crowds, it's crucial to get quality sleep, eat nutritious foods, exercise, stay hydrated and practice some type of calming initiatives like meditation or prayer. It's not uncommon to feel anxious during this time, but if you are experiencing depression and need help, please reach out and get the assistance you need.

Anyone 55 and older that is depressed and feels as though they need help in dealing with all of the concerns and uncertainty, Lehigh Regional Medical Center has a state-of-the-art, 55 and older, 35-bed Behavioral Health Unit. Please call 1-239-491-8420.

## Depression over COVID-19

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

Someone who is depressed has feelings of sadness or anxiety that last for weeks at a time. He or she may also experience the following:

- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable



- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not get better, even with treatment

## It's critical to seek treatment.

At Lehigh Regional Medical Center, quality care is our number one priority. Our inpatient behavioral health unit will reside within the hospital and will be designed specifically for adults ages 55 and older who are experiencing a wide range of emotional, social and behavioral issues that affect the healthy function of their daily lives. We believe that a supportive, family-oriented environment is one of the first steps to recovery, and we encourage family involvement in our patients' care.

Our team will offer a wide range of medical and behavioral health services, including:

- Psychiatric assessment and treatment
- Management of medical conditions
- Medication management
- Dietary consultation
- Recreational therapy assessment and treatment
- Psychotherapy: individual, family and group
- Education for patients and families on diagnosis, treatment options and medications
- Assistance with discharge planning and financial issues
- Also, the hospital will resume its Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) program. For those who can't use or don't respond to medication or psychotherapy, ECT is a treatment option. It can also help patients in life-threatening situations; for example, someone at risk of suicide

*\*The behavioral therapy unit also offers a 7 day program, 35 hours a week of activities, which include group therapy, art therapy, drug and alcohol therapy, sit down dinners, and much more.*

Lehigh Regional Medical Center, a member of Prime Healthcare, is accredited by The Joint Commission with the Gold Seal of Approval as an 88-bed acute-care facility. Committed to compassionate care, Lehigh Regional Medical Center has uniquely served its five-county community in Lehigh Acres, Florida, since 1965.

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- Certified Behavioral Health Medical Professionals

# After Childbirth Many Women Have a Weakened Pelvic Floor & Urinary Incontinence:

## How EMSELLA™ Can Help You

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

**A**fter childbirth, the pelvic floor, which protects and supports the internal pelvic organs may become weakened, stretched, less elastic, and less resilient. The weakened pelvic floor muscles can also cause overactive bladder and incontinence issues.

35% of women experience a weakened pelvic floor after childbirth, and this also occurs in women that have had C-sections because the unborn baby's weight is stabilized on the pelvic floor muscles.

The problem of incontinence is so common among women because, until now, there has not been an effective way to treat a weakened pelvic floor. If you're noticing that you leak when you laugh, jump, cough, or sneeze due to postpartum incontinence from a weakened pelvic floor, it only gets worse without treatment. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACCEPT THIS AS YOUR FATE OR AS "NORMAL."**

While there are multiple ways to treat urinary incontinence, a revolutionary in-office "chair" is the most advanced, non-invasive, simplest treatment to date. Women are declaring it's impressive results in droves. EMSELLA™ treatment can help get your pelvic floor back in shape and help prevent further pelvic floor problems later in life.



The EMSELLA Chair is a non-surgical, non-invasive treatment that can greatly improve incontinence. Each 28-minute session is the equivalent of 11,200 pelvic floor exercises. The EMSELLA™ chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder sometimes as quickly as the first treatment

Urinary incontinence pads cost women upwards of \$900 per year! You no longer have to miss out on life or suffer embarrassment due to incontinence issues. **EMSELLA is the answer.**



**All You Need to do is Sit Back and Relax, and the Results are Marked by Significant Improvement.**

EMSELLA™ is an excellent option for postpartum pelvic floor weakening as a solution for urinary incontinence and improvement in your quality of life.

**No Surgery | No Drugs  
No Pain | No Downtime**

*Just The Answer You've Been Looking For*

*To schedule an appointment at the Florida Bladder Institute please call 239-449-7979.*

*References:*

*1. Body by BTL. A Breakthrough Treatment For Incontinence And Confidence 2019 Btl Industries Inc.*



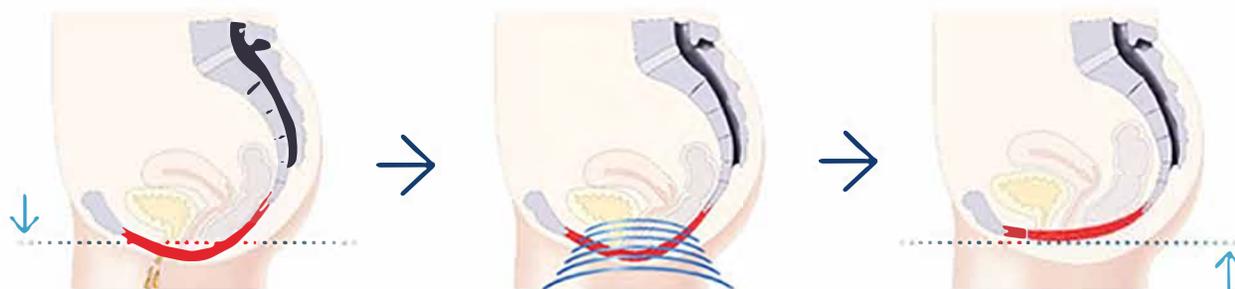
Nicole Houser, PA



Joseph Gauta, MD



Amber Thompson, PA-C



**BEFORE**

Pelvic floor muscles insufficiently support pelvic organs and affect bladder control.

**TREATMENT**

BTL EMSELLA™ effectively stimulates pelvic floor muscles.

**AFTER**

Stimulation leads to regained control over pelvic floor muscles and bladder.



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# SENIOR LIVING AND CARE: SO MANY CHOICES!

**F**or many seniors, the abundant choices available for senior housing can be overwhelming. Making an informed and confident decision can take some time and quite a bit of research, so we've broken down the most common options and the features and benefits that differentiate them.

## Senior Living Communities

Independent senior living communities are often the first to be considered for those who require no assistance or hands-on care. These communities are often amenity-rich, offering a wide variety of social, educational and physical activities, as well as fully equipped apartments. Independent living caters to an all-inclusive lifestyle, offering an abundance of amenities that eliminate the burden of responsibility including housekeeping, transportation, maintenance, and meal preparation. At Campo Felice in downtown Fort Myers, amenities also include an on-site beauty salon, scheduled and private transportation options, chef-prepared dining options, fitness center and group exercise programs, housekeeping and linen services, and an abundant activities calendar.

Independent senior living communities are ideal for seniors who are mostly self-sufficient, appreciate a vibrant, active and healthy lifestyle, and wish to enjoy the benefits of independent apartment living. Often the least expensive of senior housing solutions, senior living communities provide affordable or upscale luxury living for the 55 plus individual.

## Assisted Living Communities

If you are seeking some assistance with daily tasks but do not require skilled nursing or home health care assistance, you may consider an assisted living community as an option. These communities vary in their offering with staffing provided 24 hours a day for their residents.

Due to the level of care provided to residents, assisted living communities are licensed and regulated by the State, which may have an impact on the services and level of care they provide. Typically, these communities provide varying levels of care to assist residents with medication assistance, hygiene, bathing, dressing, and toileting. Because of the increased care, the cost associated with assisted living will be more than that of independent living. Campo Felice is planning to break ground on their second phase later this year, which will include assisted living options within their community.

## Memory Care

Often present within an assisted living or nursing home community is a memory care neighborhood.



The separation of the memory care community is for the security and safety of its residents in need of specialized care for Alzheimer's and dementia. Memory care is often equipped with security safeguards including alarmed exit doors and specialty trained staff to care for dementia related conditions. In addition, supervised care is provided for activities, meals, and overall well-being.

Memory care communities are designed with the resident in mind and provide personalized care plans. They include safeguards to prevent residents from wandering or getting lost. The residences are limited in size and appliances to prevent accidents from occurring. Due to an increased level of 24-hour dedicated staffing, memory care communities are higher than that of assisted living. Campo Felice's second phase will include a dedicated memory care neighborhood.

## Nursing Homes

Seniors who require 24-hour monitoring due to debilitating physical or mental conditions or are unable to take care of themselves, often consider a nursing home as a viable option. These homes provide skilled nursing services for those who require an acute level of daily assistance and intensive or long-term medical support.

In addition to licensed nurses, these homes may also be staffed by a licensed physician, as well as physical, occupational and speech therapists to assist with resident need. They may also be equipped with specialty medical equipment, diagnostic services and onsite pharmacies.



## Other Options

If you are looking for other options, you may consider a residential care home, adult day care, respite care or home care services. Each are distinctively different, with a varying number of services offered.

## Residential Care Homes

These are private homes that accommodate a limited number of residents with 24-hour supervision and live-in caregivers. Often called group homes, they offer similar services as larger assisted living communities in a more intimate home-like setting. The cost for these smaller care homes is sometimes less than the cost of assisted living, given the limited services offered.

## Adult Day Care Services

These are adult day service providers that care for seniors in the comfort of their own home or with transportation to an adult center. These servicing organizations provide social activities and health care services for seniors with physical or cognitive impairments. The cost for this service is on a private pay basis.

## Respite Care

If a short-term stay or care is needed, respite care should be a consideration. These services are offered on an in-home basis or within a senior community. Often respite care is considered when a family caregiver needs to get away and recharge. In some instances, the family may wish to use respite care to gradually ease their loved one into a senior living environment. Either way, respite care is typically limited to one month or less.

No matter what the situation may be, having the knowledge of senior housing and care options will better serve you and your family members when the time arises. The continuum of care is important to understand as one enters their senior years, which usually begins with active, independent living. For most, it starts with eliminating the burden of home ownership and the maintenance that comes with it, making independent living an ideal option.

If you are interested in learning more about affordable housing options or wish to experience all that independent living has to offer, contact Campo Felice at (239) 935-5029. Mention this article and receive discounted summer value pricing on many of our affordable luxury residences.

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**(239) 935-5029**

[www.LiveatCampoFelice.com](http://www.LiveatCampoFelice.com)

# The Hearing Healthcare Field Has Made Major Adjustments Due To COVID-19!

By Høglund Family Hearing and Audiology Services

## I would like to share FIVE INSIGHTS that Clinicians and Patients have experienced while dealing with this Pandemic Crisis:

### Hearing Loss is much more challenging when people are wearing masks on their faces!

Visual clues make communication much easier for people with hearing loss. When everyone's face is covered in a mask... *communication suffers*. This is especially true with hospital grade masks that also cut the volume by **10 to 12 Decibels** in many cases. This requires loved ones and Medical Professionals to speak much louder in an attempt to communicate... and *raising your voice makes it appear that you are angry* with the person you were speaking to, and often leads to hurt feelings and increased stress!

People who have been procrastinating or fighting the use of hearing aids, therefore, create even more stress in the household. People whose hearing aids needed to be repaired often found that some of their Hearing Care Providers needed to temporarily close their Practices due to Pandemic concerns. *Høglund Family Hearing and Audiology Centers* will gladly help repair any broken hearing aids throughout this Pandemic in our attempt to make communication with loved ones easier.



John and Patricia Høglund  
LHAS, BC-HIS, ACA

We established a **Pandemic Hotline** to help people during this crisis through Telemedicine approaches, and curbside drop-off of broken Hearing Aids to maintain social distancing, if someone was quarantined or at high risk! We will continue to offer this assistance at **NO CHARGE** until the world returns to normal! Pandemic Hotline: **239-360-3753**

### Technical Advances in Hearing Aids have been a Godsend throughout this Pandemic!

Many of today's modern hearing aids can be programmed without a Patient needing to physically visit their clinician! **Starkey Hearing Technology's** new *Livio* line of hearing aids can all be programmed from a distance, so if you happen to have any Starkey

product... call our offices and we will explain how to make these programming changes quickly and easily. Our Practice happens to be blessed with extremely talented and caring "millennials" who understand this new technology like the back of their hands, and will patiently walk you through the steps required to make these changes. **Do not be concerned about your technical skills...** they will make this easy for you! Again there is **NO CHARGE** for this service!

### Doctors and Hospital Employees are Absolute ANGELS!

I'm sure we speak on behalf of all Southwest Florida residents, in expressing our *admiration and appreciation* to these **Healthcare WARRIORS!** In appreciation, many of the manufacturers have agreed to provide **Special**

**Pricing (UP TO 50% OFF)** for anyone involved in medical care. We will also provide special evening and weekend appointments for anyone involved in healthcare, and assure you that you will not be exposed to any other Patients to ensure your safety! **Thank You, and Bless You for your service!**



### The Stress of this Crisis has made Tinnitus UNBEARABLE!

*Stress fuels Tinnitus... and Tinnitus fuels stress.* It has long been known that the stress hormone cortisol acts like kerosene on a fire to Tinnitus distress. The emotional trauma of this economic crisis and health pandemic coupled with a lot more time alone in a quiet environment... have dramatically impacted the lives of Tinnitus sufferers! The **American Tinnitus Association ATA.org** has

PROUD SUPPORTER OF:



many resources including a Tinnitus hotline at 1-800-634-8978. Locally, you can call today to arrange a **FREE Emergency Tinnitus Consultation** with John Høglund by calling our **Southwest Florida Pandemic Hot-line: (239) 360-3753** if you need additional information to help you get through this crisis!



### SILENCE IS ... LONELY!

We have all heard the phrase "Silence is Golden" for as long as we can remember, but when it is challenging to communicate with those around you, and you have difficulty hearing people over the phone, it makes the world a lot lonelier! **Loneliness can contribute to depression** and Social Isolation can dramatically increase these feelings of loneliness! You owe it to yourself to hear your best! Please call our offices now and we will arrange an appointment in the future when the pandemic risk has been reduced, and let us give your hearing the attention and care it requires! **Quality-of-life often depends on quality of communication with others!** All of our Clinics offer **FREE HEARING TESTS** for your convenience, and you will receive a dated copy for your medical files!

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**Bonita Springs, FL 31434**  
**239-494-8651**

**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA TINNITUS AND HEARING CENTER**  
10020 Coconut Rd. Ste.120 (Next to LabCorp)  
**Estero, FL 34135**  
**239-494-8652**

**AUDIOLOGY CENTERS OF HØGLUND FAMILY HEARING**  
13710 Metropolis Ave. Suite 101  
(One block west of Gulf Coast Hospital)  
**Fort Myers, FL 33912**  
**239-208-6827**

**HØGLUND FAMILY HEARING AND AUDIOLOGY CENTER**  
1003 Del Prado Blvd South, Unit 204  
(Towers Professional Building, Next to Downtowner Car Wash)  
**Cape Coral, FL 33990**  
**239-558-3095**



# Arthritis Awareness: Knowledge is Key to Addressing Osteoarthritis

**A**rthritis Awareness Month is an opportune time to begin a quest for knowledge in regards to being aware of your body, and remaining watchful for symptoms of serious conditions, such as osteoarthritis. Knowledge is power when it comes to your health, and awareness of osteoarthritis, its symptoms and treatment options is essential to living life to its fullest potential, while taking necessary precautions to ensure that you are both happy and healthy.

### What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is known as “wear-and-tear” arthritis. The ends of our bones that meet at the joint are cushioned by a protective layer of cartilage that prevents damage and provides shock absorption, and as we age, the cushioning cartilage between bones will break down. As cartilage deteriorates, the bones begin to rub against one another, causing inflamed joints and eventually leading to osteoarthritis.

While osteoarthritis can affect any joint, this disease occurs most often in weight-bearing joints of the hips, knees and lower back. According to the Arthritis Foundation, osteoarthritis is a common condition, affecting approximately 27 million individuals in the United States.

### Symptoms of osteoarthritis

A joint affected by osteoarthritis may become painful and inflamed, and common symptoms of osteoarthritis include soreness, stiffness or limited range of motion in the joints. These indicators can range from



mild to severe, and can make everyday tasks difficult to manage, such as climbing stairs, walking and grasping objects. The most common warning signs of osteoarthritis include tenderness in the joint after overuse or inactivity, stiffness that is relieved when activity resumes, pain that worsens at the end of the day, cracking when bending joints and swelling around the joints.

### When to see a doctor

If pain or stiffness lasts longer than a few weeks, it is important to see a specialist to ensure that you are caring for your joints and overall health. Older age, obesity and injury are all factors that contribute to the development of osteoarthritis, and as we age, it is essential to stay in tune with our bodies so that we can see a doctor to address symptoms as soon as they arise. Early diagnosis is essential so that you can take necessary precautions to protect your joints and prevent further or permanent damage to your body. While osteoarthritis cannot be cured, treatment and rehabilitation can relieve pain and allow you to regain full motion and strength. In the early stages of osteoarthritis, exercise on a regular basis is essential to control ones pain, stiffness and swelling.

If pain is severe, surgery may be needed to replace affected joints. Before taking this step, Dr. Dupay will consider lifestyle modifications, such as weight loss, implementing a healthy diet and avoiding high-impact activities. Additional options include physical therapy to increase flexibility and range of motion, assistive devices, such as canes or walkers, or pain medications. Dr. Dupay exhausts proven conservative treatment modalities. He does not advocate experimental treatment options. However, if the symptoms of osteoarthritis are debilitating and not relieved with non-surgical treatments, replacement may be necessary to treat osteoarthritis, which today, is resurfacing the worn-out surface with a total knee replacement.

If you are experiencing joint, it is important to speak with an orthopedic specialist to discuss your options for pain relief. Dr. Edward R. Dupay, Jr. and his staff are ready to answer all of your questions.



**Edward R. Dupay, Jr, DO**  
Board Certified

*Dr. Dupay graduated from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He received his Doctor of Osteopathy at the University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kansas City, Missouri.*

*Dr. Dupay completed his Internship and Orthopedic Surgery Residency at Flint Osteopathic Hospital in Flint, Michigan. Dr. Dupay has been in the Fort Myers / Cape Coral area since 1987. Dr. Dupay enjoys seeing the "Weekend Warrior" athlete, as well as all patients suffering from crippling osteoarthritis.*

**To schedule your appointment, please call Orthopedic Associates of Southwest Florida at 239-768-2272, visit our website at [www.ifixbones.com](http://www.ifixbones.com), or ask your physician for a referral.**

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# Porto Fino Dental CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Dr. Ricardo S. Bocanegra, DDS

**A**s this coronavirus situation has unfolded, all of us have been faced with questions about how to lead our daily lives while being told, we must stay at home. We've all felt how uncomfortable and frustrating the uncertainty and restrictions can be. My staff and I have seen that those feelings are magnified when your health, or that of a family member, is the cause of that uncertainty.

We're now getting numerous questions every day from our dental patients about handling their dental appointments, and needs, since the stay-at-home measures went into place. We hope that by sharing the answers to the most common questions that you'll feel more confident in dealing with your dental health during this time.

### Are we open?

The short answer is "yes," but only for dental emergencies. On March 16, the American Dental Association issued guidelines advising dentists nationwide to postpone elective procedures for three weeks (until April 6). Our state is asking that we continue this until at least May 8th. Not only will this help limit exposure to and transmission of the virus for patients and staff, but it also helps preserve and extend the supply of personal protective equipment that is needed in both hospitals and dental offices.

Dental offices are allowed to see patients who are having an emergency. Right now, we are staffing the phones while we are all sheltering in place. So, don't worry if you should run into a problem – we can and will provide emergency care. You may be asked to video conference with us first - a technology called teledentistry, which allows the patient and dentist to have a consultation to assess your problem without you needing to come into the office. After the meeting, we can determine what the appropriate next steps may be.

We expect these guidelines to change... and then change again. So, please call us, and we can update on the current protocol.

### What is a dental emergency?

Dental emergencies, according to the American Dental Association, "are potentially life-threatening and require immediate treatment to stop ongoing tissue bleeding, or to alleviate severe pain or infection."

What constitutes an emergency is pretty simple – it's about pain or trauma. Some common dental emergencies include:

- Severe dental pain (most people think of this as a "toothache")
- Pain from a wisdom tooth
- Post-operative pain from dental surgery or procedure
- An abscess or localized pain and swelling
- A broken tooth resulting in pain or cutting your tongue or cheek
- A knocked-out tooth
- Dental treatment if a temporary crown or bridge is lost, broken, or causing gum irritation

Other allowed emergency dental care includes extensive decay or defective fillings that cause pain. Removal of stitches, denture adjustments for radiation/oncology patients, denture adjustments, or repairs to address difficulty chewing, replacing a temporary filling on a tooth with a root canal also are allowed.

Loose and traumatic orthodontic wires or appliances that are causing pain also qualify. The ADA has a terrific website for patients called [mouthhealthy.org](http://mouthhealthy.org), where you can download their guide to help decide if you have a dental emergency.

### What if I have already scheduled a checkup?

This will be one of the few times where you'll hear a dentist advise you to avoid your six-month checkup. However, routine hygiene and cleaning appointments are considered elective procedures. This is a basic list of elective or non-emergency dental procedures:

- Initial examinations (including x-rays)
- Periodic (six-month) checkups (also including x-rays)
- Routine dental cleanings and other preventive therapies
- Orthodontic procedures other than those to address a problem (e.g., pain, infection, trauma)
- Extraction of teeth that do not hurt (like having your wisdom teeth pulled)
- Fillings on cavities that aren't causing pain
- Aesthetic dental procedures (such as whitening)

Make no mistake — six-month exams are still essential. As soon as the crisis passes, let's get that hygiene appointment rescheduled for you.

### What happens when I get to the dental office with an emergency?

When you call for your appointment, we will ask a few questions to make sure that it is safe to care for you. We will also let you know the changes to our regular visit. We may request, for instance, that you stay in the car, and we will text or call you when it is appropriate to enter the office. We may have you sign a Patient Request for Treatment, Representations, and Consent document. Everything that we are currently doing is with your safety in mind.

The questions that we will ask might include:

- Have you had symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19? (For example: fever, shortness of breath, dry cough, runny nose, or sore throat)
- Within the past 14 days, have you traveled by airplane?
- Within the past 14 days, have you been at a gathering of 10 or more persons?
- Within the past 14 days, have you had close contact with a person who has been confirmed positive or suspected to be positive for COVID-19?

If we are comfortable with the answers to the screening questions and your condition does need emergency attention, then we will do our best to render the appropriate treatment. That means that even if you have what might qualify as an emergency, the dentist will evaluate if a procedure can be delayed for 30 days. This judgment would be based on assuring that waiting won't cause you undue harm or pain. An example is a lost or broken filling where a temporary filling can be quickly and easily placed, allowing you to return in the future for the more involved final filling.

### What safety measures will the office take if I have to come in for emergency treatment?

As health-care providers, we are trained on the CDC guidelines for infection control and using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves. We continue to update our education and training to ensure your safety. We will do everything, including a referral to a different dental center, if indicated, to ensure your safety and our safety.

If I'm missing my checkup, should I do anything differently? Make sure you are brushing and flossing. Do everything that we advise you to do regularly. It's never been more important to do the best job possible to maintain your oral health. Since many of us will have extra time on our hands, make sure you brush at least twice a day for two minutes. If you feel like you want to take additional steps to protect your hygiene during this time, here are a few ideas:

- 1) Use a powered toothbrush.
- 2) Use an irrigation device like a water flosser.
- 3) Use interdental "pics" or the like to compliment your flossing.
- 4) FLOSS! If you don't currently floss, it's an excellent opportunity to start. You have the extra time, and once you're in the habit, you'll like the extra clean feeling while also strengthening your gums!

### If my child or I am in orthodontic treatment, will missing appointments cause harm?

The simple answer is "No." Your teeth will just stop moving at some point. Once elective procedures are allowed again, treatment can easily be restarted, and your teeth will start moving from right where they left off. If you have aligners, you may be able to have a teledentistry consultation with us, and we may, if appropriate, send you your next set of aligners. Otherwise, continue to use your current aligner. Even though your teeth will generally stop moving after a week or two in the same aligner, it will act as a retainer holding the teeth in place until you can get in for your next aligner. The most important thing is to keep your teeth clean with brushing, flossing, and avoid sweets, especially between meals.

Stay home, stay safe, and know that we're here for you. During this time, when we are all asked to stay home unless there is a dental emergency, which means pain or trauma, most of you will be just fine. Concentrate on excellent basic home hygiene. You can be secure that your dental health will likely be fine. If you're still confused or unclear as to whether you need to be seen in the office, email us or call us. (Contact details are on our website at [www.portofinodental.org](http://www.portofinodental.org) or call us at 239-482-8806. We are here for you, as are our dental colleagues all over the country, and, for that matter, the entire world right now.

Stay safe and healthy!

**Porto Fino Dental**  
6805 Porto Fino Cir., Fort Myers, FL 33912  
**239-482-8806**  
[www.portofinodental.org](http://www.portofinodental.org)

# CORE STABILITY

By Michael E. Kriz, PT, DPT, OCS, CFMT

The phrase "Core Stability" is used a lot by all disciplines involved in health and wellness. In our twenty years of experience as physical therapists we have seen that the definition of "the core" is highly variable but most often includes the abdominals. The core muscles attach to, and stabilize, the spine, the rib cage and the pelvis. The muscles combined are thought to construct a cylinder that allows for pressure to be built in the abdominal region that provides stability.

*The definition of the core from our perspective is as follows:*

1. Comprised of the following muscles:
  - i. Transverse Abdominus - the deepest abdominal muscle - the outside wall of the cylinder
  - ii. Diaphragm - the top of the core's cylinder
  - iii. Pelvic floor muscles - the bottom of the cylinder
  - iv. Iliopsoas (often referred to as the psoas)
  - v. Multifidii - small muscles along the back of the spine
2. Provides a solid foundation (when efficient) on which the arms, legs and trunk move
3. Requires that the framework (skeleton) is efficiently aligned, that is to say: "posture is KING!"

Injury, pain and habitual posture all affect the speed, strength and endurance of core muscles so it is important to take care of and be aware of anything that may affect them.



The theory of instability of the lumbar spine and pelvis rests, in some part, on the inefficient contraction of core muscles that allow the vertebrae to move excessively and in a relatively uncontrolled fashion causing shearing, compression or tearing forces on the tissues of the spine including the ligaments, muscles, fascia, nerves and blood vessels that provide support and nourishment to the spine. If spinal instabilities are left unaddressed for even short periods of time, degeneration of the spine may occur. Pain and weakness often follows but it takes weeks, months or years to manifest. Nagging, persistent little aches and pains in the back, hips and legs are often associated with these dysfunction.

The theories of stabilizing the spine focus on strengthening the core muscles so that they can prevent the excessive movements of the spine and the "wear and tear" associated with it. Across the spectrum of physical therapy and personal training one can find a wide variety of exercises directed at strengthening the core. The difficulty is choosing the appropriate exercises to be done at any given time in a training program.

Research is now demonstrating that the core is effectively contracted when our parts (head, neck, rib cage and pelvis) are stacked on top of each other...again, posture is King! When muscles are either stretched or shortened from posture habits such as standing with the back hyperextended and, most commonly seen, sitting like "a boiled shrimp", they are unable to contract at the correct time, with enough force or long enough to stabilize the spine when we sit, stand or perform daily tasks, much less when we play a sport.

Standing straight, as many of us were told to do by our parents, may actually place the rib cage in a slight backward tilt rendering the core less responsive. Learning to stack the rib cage appropriately over the pelvis is one small step to improving the core response. Remember that habits are often deeply ingrained and require frequent corrections. Depending on the severity of the habit, those corrections may have to be performed every few minutes, hour, day and weeks to implement. Even when we think that the old habits are broken, we may find ourselves lapsing into the old habitual postures, especially when tired or under stress.

A well trained Functional Manual Physical Therapist can help guide you through the morass of posture changes and exercises that you will need to make your core muscles responsive and strong so that you are able to do what you want with better strength and endurance and reduce the potential for injury.

**Contact Kriz Physical Therapy Today!**

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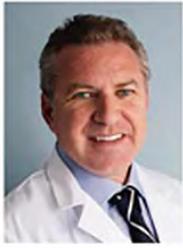
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# Are You at Risk?

## What You Need to Know About Heart Disease

Dr. Joseph Freedman MD, MBA

Did you know that after the age of twenty our vascular systems begin to accumulate plaque? Tiny plaque deposits can embed themselves into our delicate vascular structure throughout our entire bodies. Over time the sticky plaque can mount up and cause hardening of the arteries, block oxygen-rich blood from reaching our hearts, or cause clots to form and break off.

If we fail to put our health in the forefront, we will very likely be in danger of issues such as a stroke, heart disease, or sudden cardiac arrest. If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, or a family history of vascular disorders, you are at an even higher risk level. If you smoke, drink too much alcohol, are sedentary, or regularly eat “junk food,” then your risk factors are ultimately elevated.

**It's critical to ask yourself these two important questions: do you have the risk factors associated with heart disease, and are you at risk for a heart attack?**

The American Heart Association describes a heart attack in this way, “Your heart muscle needs oxygen to survive. A heart attack occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely (View an animation of blood flow). This happens because coronary arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood flow can slowly become narrow from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances that together are called plaque. This slow process is known as atherosclerosis. When a plaque in a heart artery breaks, a blood clot forms around the plaque. This blood clot can block the blood flow through the heart muscle. When the heart muscle is starved of oxygen and nutrients, it is called ischemia. When damage or death of part of the heart muscle occurs as a result of ischemia, it is called a heart attack or myocardial infarction (MI). About every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a myocardial infarction (heart attack).”



### Heart Attack Symptoms

- Abnormal heart palpitations
- Anxiety
- Arm/Shoulder Pain
- Chest Pain and tightness
- Dizzy
- Gray color to skin
- Lightheaded
- Rapid heart rate
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Tired/Fatigue

If you have any of the symptoms above, please call 911. The sooner you get treated, the better your chances of survival.

Over 325,000 people will experience a sudden cardiac arrest per year. It is the number one cause of death in the United States, leaving 90 percent of its victims deceased. Unlike Cardiac Arrest (a heart attack), where a portion of the heart stops due to a blockage, in the case of Sudden Cardiac Arrest, it's not a blockage problem; it's an electrical stimulation problem. If defibrillation is not administered immediately, the likelihood of survival is bleak. A defibrillator sends an electric shock to the heart that stops the heart's ventricle fibrillation (an irregular arrhythmia) so that it can start beating and pumping normally again.

If a person experiences a sudden cardiac arrest and an AED (automated external defibrillator) is not available, CPR (Cardio pulmonary resuscitation) should be administered until defibrillation can be applied. This is the reason that many public places, like airports, sports venues, shopping centers, hotels, and more have automated external defibrillators available. The AED's can detect whether or not the person is truly suffering from a serious arrhythmia, and only sends the shock to the heart if this has occurred. This prevents the average person from making the error of seeing a person fainting and mistakenly thinking that they are in a life-threatening case of a sudden cardiac arrest. AED's are straightforward and easy for anyone to use, but because we are dealing with the perilous seconds of someone's life, sometimes AED's are not used quickly enough.

### Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms

- Chest Pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shortness of Breath
- Light Headed

At Cardiac Care Group, they take your symptoms seriously and are prepared to see you and to discuss your conditions. They specialize in providing a wide range of services that focus on the prevention, prompt diagnosis and state-of-the-art treatment of cardiovascular disease.

### Joseph Freedman, M.D.

Dr. Freedman brings many years of experience as a cutting edge cardiologist specializing in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all cardiac disease. He trained at the prestigious Cleveland Clinic, continually ranked #1 in Cardiovascular Care, where he focused on cardiac imaging. He achieved five board certifications in Internal Medicine, Cardiology, Comprehensive Adult ECHO, Nuclear Cardiology and Cardiac CT. During his tenure as the lead noninvasive cardiologist at Florida Medical Center in Ft. Lauderdale, he helped lead the hospital to achieve Level 5 chest pain certification, the highest designation of cardiac excellence.



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*This information is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or health care provider. We encourage you to discuss with your doctor any questions or concerns you may have.*

# What Telemedicine Means for Florida

**T**elemedicine (also referred to as telehealth) has become the main medium for health-care workers that are able to do so. Telemedicine refers to the practice of caring for patients remotely when the provider and patient are not physically present with each other. Modern technology has let doctors to consult patients by using HIPAA compliant video-conferencing tools such as Zoom, TheraNest, and VSee. Allowing patients to continue on with their scheduled appointments remotely has also been a positive for those that do not find the experience comfortable. Telemedicine also allows patients, as well as doctors, to save themselves the commute to the office. This also allows doctors, specifically specialists, to potentially see new patients from across the state (or country for other fields) where they otherwise would have to travel long distances to do so. Patients who are homebound also now have many more options to choose from as they were previously limited to doctors who do home visitations.

Policies vary widely state by state but Florida has been lenient in allowing telemedicine to continue on until May 8th. With that in mind, many wonder if the state can take advantage of this new medium in the medical marijuana world especially given the unknown of when we will see normal everyday life start to return. Hopefully telemedicine will be implemented across the country, even in non-medical marijuana fields, as it has its clear advantages to both the doctor and patient.



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ALTHOUGH MEDICAL MARIJUANA IS LEGAL IN FLORIDA, IT REMAINS ILLEGAL UNDER FEDERAL LAW

# Coronavirus, Also Known as COVID-19: How Are Insurance Companies Handling It?

By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dee) National Producer Number (NPN) 8853366

**M**ost of the major insurance companies that sell a Major Medical Plan, Employers Group Plans, Medicare and Medicaid have your back. Most are waving all members cost sharing, including copays, coinsurance and deductibles for COVID-19 diagnostic testing provided at approved locations in accordance with CDC guidelines. You can login to your providers website to find information on how your plan will handle the virus. You can also call the customer service number on the back of your card, but we highly recommend going online and logging in so urgent needs can be handled faster. Our clients are always welcome to call us, and we will help with questions. That's why having a local agent that is dedicated to their clients is important. CDC is the Center of Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/>, this is the site that is most important. Many news media put a spin on things, the CDC is your best resource for up to date information.

If you think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, call your primary care provider right away. Your health care provider will determine if you should be tested, they will work with local and state health department to coordinate testing. The most common places are providers offices and clinics. The care or treatment for COVID-19 will be covered in accordance with your health benefits plan. The initial test is free but if you have the virus your deductibles, copays and coinsurance will apply. If drive-up testing options become available in your area you need to check if it is an FDA approved facility/location.

Things have been changing daily, so check on the CDC website for updates also [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov) for state specific information. DO YOUR PART! Social Distancing, stay home as much as possible, enjoy our outdoor, bike, walk, boat etc.. Always wash your hands, do not touch your face unless you have carefully cleaned your hands first.

This was a internal message from Stanford Hospital, please share with family and friends.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - CORONAVIRUS

1. If you have a runny nose and sputum, you have a common cold
2. Coronavirus pneumonia is a dry cough with no runny nose.

3. This new virus is not heat-resistant and will be killed by a temperature of just 26/27 degrees. It hates the Sun.
4. If someone sneezes with it, it takes about 10 feet before it drops to the ground and is no longer airborne.
5. If it drops on a metal surface it will live for at least 12 hours - so if you come into contact with any metal surface - wash your hands as soon as you can with a bacterial soap.
6. On fabric it can survive for 6-12 hours. normal laundry detergent will kill it.
7. Drinking warm water is effective for all viruses. Try not to drink liquids with ice.
8. Wash your hands frequently as the virus can only live on your hands for 5-10 minutes, but - a lot can happen during that time - you can rub your eyes, pick your nose unwittingly and so on.
9. You should also gargle as a prevention. A simple solution of salt in warm water will suffice.
10. Can't emphasize enough - drink plenty of water!

## THE SYMPTOMS

1. It will first infect the throat, so you'll have a sore throat lasting 3/4 days
2. The virus then blends into a nasal fluid that enters the trachea and then the lungs, causing pneumonia. This takes about 5/6 days further.
3. With the pneumonia comes high fever and difficulty in breathing.
4. The nasal congestion is not like the normal kind. You feel like you're drowning. It's imperative you then seek immediate attention

For many of us we have never had to choose our own insurance, our parents or our employers have done it for us most of our lives. It is important to understand how your plan works and the terminology associated with it.

- **Contracted Price** – This is the price the insurance company has contracted with the provider.
  - Most deductibles and coinsurance are based on the contracted price which most of the time much less.
- **Deductible** - A specific amount of money that you must pay before an insurance company will pay a claim.



- **Copays** – A fixed dollar amount for a covered service
- **Coinsurance** – Percentage of the cost you pay normally after the deductible
- **Maximum out of Pocket** – This is the maximum you can pay for your services in a policy or calendar year based on how your plan was set-up. Many of the newer plans include prescription drug costs in the out of pocket maximum. Medicare Advantage Plans do not include them in the health portions deductible or out of pocket maximum.

If you are considering retiring, or maybe choosing Medicare vs. Employer Group there is a lot to know and it could hurt you not understanding the facts. Work with a Local Insurance Agent that has an office that you can verify their location, you want to be able to the future and you should not have strangers in your home unless it is medically necessary. Our office specializes in Medicare, we offer free workshops that you can attend and virtual sessions.



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# MILLENNIUM PHYSICIAN GROUP'S TELEHEALTH SERVICE ALLOWS QUARANTINED DOCTORS TO TREAT THEIR PATIENT IN WHAT IT'S CALLING "REVERSE VIDEO VISITS"

**F**ort Myers-based Millennium Physician Group introduced its telehealth service **MPG Connect** to its 450,000 Florida patients. What's exceptional about Millennium's Telehealth Service is that it connects Millennium's patients with *their* physicians, which is a departure from most telehealth services that use third-party healthcare providers who don't know the patients nor have their medical records on hand.

"Our technology not only connects patients who should or want to stay home with the doctors who know them best but also allows our doctors to practice medicine while observing quarantining and social distancing recommendations," says Marketing and Communication Director Liza Fernandez.

Since launching the service five weeks ago, Millennium is conducting 1,000 virtual visits a day across the state using its proprietary platform – one that it owns and built from the cloud down, right here in Southwest Florida. "This is one of the many innovations we'd already been working on and just pushed to the forefront once it became imperative healthcare providers come up with solutions to manage the COVID-19 Pandemic," says Millennium Chief Innovation Officer Jeffrey Nelson.



"But what's most important," says Millennium Chief Medical Officer Alejandro Perez-Trepichio is, "telehealth is the tool that allows us to strengthen the patient-doctor relationship during this understandably concerning time for patients while preserving our patients' continuity of care. It is this connection that is crucial in keeping patients healthy and getting them engaged in their own healthcare." Millennium's Telehealth Service is available to patients who aren't feeling well, are quarantining or self-isolating, and to patients who are well, in need of well-visits or follow-ups.

Interested patients should contact their doctor's office to request a telehealth visit, which is available on their computer, smartphone or tablet. Those interested in establishing with a Millennium physician can call (844) CALL-MPG.

## About Millennium Physician Group

Millennium Physician Group is the largest comprehensive, independent physician group in Florida with more than 130 locations in 17 Florida counties. With more than 500 healthcare providers, Millennium offers primary care, specialty care, walk-in centers, imaging centers, labs and more. We maintain a strong commitment to high quality care with state-of-the-art technology combined with a friendly family atmosphere. Learn more at [www.MillenniumPhysician.com](http://www.MillenniumPhysician.com).



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# ESTATE PLANNING FOR DIGITAL ASSETS UPDATED 2020

By Steven J. Gibbs, Esq.  GIBBS LAW OFFICE, PLLC

**I**t is often the case that science and technology gets ahead of the law and this trend has impacted the world of estate planning in a big way. Digital assets and electronic communication medium have been evolving since the emergence of the web and this has presented numerous legal challenges. So, this article is an overview of estate planning for digital assets in Florida and will address the various types of digital assets and the key steps needed to properly plan for their succession to heirs and beneficiaries.

As a bit of background, remember that a good Florida estate plan is comprehensive. It covers all important assets and leaves no uncertainty as to how the decedent's affairs will be handled. A well-thought-out plan not only cuts down on the expense and complexity of administration, it also relieves much of the burden that would otherwise fall upon loved ones and significantly cuts down the risk of conflict among heirs.

To achieve these laudable objectives, you need a plan that addresses more than just the obvious, typical subjects. Distributing real estate, financial accounts, and valuable personal property is essential, but you also need to consider non-traditional assets. And, in the 21st Century world, digital assets have become an increasingly significant part of many estates.

While not everyone is familiar with the term "digital assets," nearly everyone has them in one form or another. Sometimes, digital assets have serious financial value. Sometimes, their value is more sentimental or utilitarian. Either way, if you want a comprehensive estate plan that eases the administration process, you'll need to account for digital assets.

## What are Digital Assets?

Digital assets are property rights or interests that primarily exist virtually, especially on the internet. Social media, email, and website accounts are digital assets, as is a website itself if you own the domain. An estate's digital property might include assets with obvious intrinsic value (such as online savings or investment accounts) and assets with value on a more theoretical level (like rewards points linked to an online account with an airline or rental car company). Cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum are potentially valuable digital assets that raise unique estate planning concerns all their own.

Some intellectual property is digital. If you own a website with a valuable trademark or a YouTube channel with revenue-generating videos, you have digital assets that should be addressed within an estate plan. Or, a license to use someone else's intellectual property (like a downloaded copy of a movie or music album) is a digital asset.

As with ordinary personal property, some digital assets don't necessarily have readily apparent economic value but have enough sentimental value or utility to justify separate treatment within an estate plan. Email archives or family records, documents, or photographs maintained in cloud-based storage, for instance, might not have any market value but can still be tremendously important or useful to loved ones.

One of the chief difficulties digital assets raise in probate is that heirs are often not as familiar with an estate's digital property as they are with more traditional assets like real estate or bank accounts. If a decedent had a highly valuable digital asset (say, a Bitcoin wallet), but nobody else knows about it, heirs won't receive any benefit. To make sure all assets are recognized and the administration process runs as smoothly as possible, a well-crafted estate plan needs to provide a means of identifying digital assets.

## Broad Types of Digital Assets

When, doing digital estate planning in Florida (like other states), it is important to recognize various kinds of digital assets which in general include:

1. Websites, Blogs or Vlogs (Video Blogs)
2. E-mail Accounts and Other Electronic Communications
3. Social Media Accounts
4. Digital Currencies such as Bitcoin
5. Photos and Documents Stored in the Cloud

The above list of assets certainly isn't exclusive because as technology evolves, so do the various categories and types of digital assets continually change and invite new types and variations. If you're a Personal Representative in Florida or a Florida Successor Trustee doing a Trust Administration, the thing to remember is that part of your initial investigation needs to be focused on obtaining passwords and identifying on line assets and accounts.

However, undertaking something like doing a probate in Florida is no easy task because in many ways opening a probate is like running a business AND doing the due diligence is difficult enough when it comes to conventional assets that are fairly easy to locate. Things get much more difficult for fiduciaries when it comes to digital assets for a few reasons, the chief of which involves privacy laws.

## Privacy Concerns [Digital Assets and Electronic Communications]

If you've ever tried to access another person's e-mail account, even with their permission and password, you may have encountered a series of hurdles to verify identity. These barriers continue to become more sophisticated and represent stringent privacy laws. Privacy concerns, the risk of a custodian of digital assets being sued for violating them have made it very difficult for 3rd parties to obtain necessary account information even with proper motives and documentation.



## Why Include Digital Assets in an Estate Plan?

Given privacy concerns and other issues, digital assets have caused no small number of headaches for executors of estates. One of an executor's first and most important duties is to track down all of a decedent's assets. Digital assets, though, often don't have a paper trail and might be unknown to anyone but the decedent. Even if friends and relatives know about digital assets, they might have no means of accessing them. Locating unknown passwords—or convincing website administrators to replace them—can be an exceptionally frustrating process.

As a general rule, websites are prohibited from disclosing personal information to third parties absent the express consent of the person to whom the information relates. Understandably wanting to avoid potential liability, most sites have strict policies against disclosure, often requiring a court order before they will provide a password or allow access to an account. Even if a decedent's passwords can be located, family members may not be able to use them without written consent due to laws against unauthorized access of online information.

If an account owner's consent is clearly documented, though, websites are in a much better position to comply with a request received from an heir or executor. By arranging all the necessary consents in advance, a digital estate plan facilitates access to online property.

And, of course, if digital assets have genuine financial value, including them in your estate plan lets you pass on that value (and any future revenue-generating potential) to the heir of your choosing—just like with traditional assets.

### Simple Estate Planning Steps For Digital Assets

The goal of digital estate planning in Florida (and other states) is then to make the process of making it easier for the above referenced fiduciaries to access these accounts. Effective digital estate planning can be done in a few simple ways as follows:

1. Providing a clear statement to authority and appointing someone to manage digital assets; AND
2. Clearly identifying all digital assets on a personal property memorandum that is integrated by reference into the estate planning documents.
3. Making sure that ancillary documents such as durable powers of attorney in Florida include the appropriate authority needed to access digital records and electronic communication.

### Preparing a Digital Estate Plan in Florida

Though digital assets are distinct from tangible personal property, the overall planning process isn't all that different. You first take an inventory—identifying all digital assets, estimating their value (if any), and organizing any associated usernames and passwords. Then you decide how each digital asset will be treated in your estate plan. This could mean, for example, bequeathing a revenue-generating website directly to an heir or instructing your executor to sell the domain and distribute the proceeds. If a site is particularly valuable, you might want to transfer it to a trust to be managed by a trustee familiar with the site's operations.

The value of digital assets is often overlooked when planning for federal estate taxes in Florida and elsewhere. But, if a digital asset has market value at the time of a decedent's death, it's part of the taxable estate. An estate large enough to qualify for estate taxes will be taxed on that value, and, therefore, an estate tax strategy needs to consider potential tax liability arising from digital assets.

Whether or not a digital asset has market value, an estate plan should clearly identify who is permitted to access it. Access typically requires usernames and passwords, along with the owner's consent. It might make sense to restrict access to the executor only. Or, you might prefer to allow access to a trusted family member. Username and password records should be kept secure during life but in a place where they can be retrieved after death—such as a safe deposit box. With cryptocurrency estate planning in particular, it is vital to arrange for eventual access by an heir. If the key to a cryptocurrency "wallet" cannot be located, the wealth it holds is effectively lost.

Once you decide what you want to do with digital assets and who will be able to access them, you will need to memorialize the plan within a written document. A digital estate plan can be incorporated within a trust or will, created as a codicil (i.e., amendment) to a will, or laid out in a personal property memorandum incorporated into a will or comparable estate-planning documents. In either case, the plan needs to comply with state-law requirements for end of life documents. It should identify all relevant digital property, provide clear distribution instructions, and be accompanied by a written statement granting a chosen delegee authority to access and manage digital assets. The delegation of authority may also need to be incorporated within ancillary estate planning documents, such as a durable power-of-attorney.

In states with statutes specifically addressing digital assets (like Florida), you'll want to make sure the document complies with those laws. An experienced estate-planning attorney can provide advice on drafting a plan that does everything you need it to do and meets all legal requirements.

### Legal Requirements for a Digital Estate Plan

A digital estate plan needs to take into account any relevant terms of service agreements ("TOS"), along with applicable state and federal law. A tech company's TOS might prohibit or place limitations on transfer of property rights derived from or created using the company's product or service.

### Florida Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets Act

To address the privacy barriers and related legal concerns, legislatures across the country have been enacting laws to make it easier for fiduciaries to access on line accounts, Florida is among the large majority of states that have enacted legislation intended to facilitate fiduciary access to digital assets.



Florida's statute, called the Florida Fiduciaries Access to Digital Assets Act ("FFADAA"), extends to estate administrators the same authority to manage digital assets that they have to manage traditional assets—but only if that authority has been expressly granted via a will, trust, or power of attorney. The law can supersede a tech company's TOS—allowing the company to deal directly with a decedent's appointed fiduciary without any risk of liability under federal anti-hacking statutes that protect privacy and guard against identity theft.

Importantly, the FFADAA's precise requirements must be met to enjoy the law's full benefits. A generally stated delegation of authority won't satisfy the statute. An experienced Florida estate planning attorney familiar with the law's framework can guide you in forming an estate plan that accounts for digital assets in a way that maximizes the ultimate benefits to your heirs and minimizes the procedural hurdles and expense of administration.

*This kind of legislation is based upon a uniform act that is now being adopted by many states and accomplishes 2 purposes in general as follows:*

1. Provides estate fiduciaries the legal authority to manage digital assets and electronic communication in the same way that they manage other tangible assets; AND
2. Provides the custodians of digital assets the authority to deal directly with the estate fiduciaries appointed by the deceased owners while honoring the user's privacy expectations.

The practical effect of this new Florida law and similar legislation across the country is that it generally provides a forum to for individuals to plan out the authority of estate users to access digital assets. It does this by defining what kind of authority is needed and also provides immunity for the custodians of those assets if they are interacting with fiduciaries in good faith.

### So, the takeaway from this article is twofold.

First, even with the above steps covered, hurdles remain concerning privacy and digital assets and legislatures across the country are responding. Thus it is critical to understand the importance of including your digital assets and electronic communications as an important part of your overall estate planning in Florida or wherever you are.

Second, if you're considering an estate planning update checkup in Florida or elsewhere, be sure to include questions and planning concerning these assets and take the steps discussed above.

As a side note, this is so important that if your estate planning attorney in Florida or elsewhere has no knowledge of this area, consider locating another legal adviser.

Remember that as in most other estate planning matters, it is critical to stay proactive and be thorough when doing your planning and digital planning is now a major part of this process.

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# Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**R**emember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

*In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.*  
Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*"  
Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things.

**Contentment means this:** I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

**Contentment will come easier when you realize two things:** life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, *"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"* Luke 12:15

**If you find yourself making statements like this:**



- My life is a rat race.
- I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.
- I am just so exhausted.
- I don't know how much more of this I can take.
- I just want to escape.

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.



*Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church in Naples, Florida. Venture Church meets on the campus of FSW State College on Lely Cultural Blvd. in East Naples. For times and directions, visit [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com).*



# COVID-19

## Protection, Planning & Care for Older Adults

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**According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults may have a greater chance for serious illness from COVID-19—especially people with weak immune systems or underlying chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, diabetes or kidney disease.**

- **Symptoms include:** fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. If you develop symptoms, stay home and call your health care provider. You may be able to recover at home.
- **You need emergency help** if symptoms become more severe, there is chronic chest pain, breathing is difficult or your lips turn bluish.



### Protection

**Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Wash after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Wash after spending time in a public place. Wash before and after touching people you're caring for. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Use a tissue or your sleeve when coughing.

#### Practice Social Distancing:

- Avoid crowds and large gatherings, especially in venues with poor ventilation.
- Don't shake hands with people.
- Keep at least 6 feet between you and other people.
- Stay away from people who may be sick.
- Try shopping during off-hours—later on weeknights or earlier on weekends—when crowds at stores are lower.
- Avoid touching “high-touch” surfaces: elevator buttons, door handles, handrails, etc.
- Find out if family or friends have been sick in the past two weeks **BEFORE** they visit. If they have been sick, reschedule at least two weeks out.

### Planning

**Get a flu shot** if you are showing no symptoms of illness.

**If you depend on regular medical treatment** like dialysis, wound care, etc., talk to your health care provider about special arrangements.

**Create a contact list** of family, friends, neighbors, health care providers, community assistance programs and drivers. Make sure phone numbers are up-to-date.

**Stay in touch** with the people on your list and let them know you may need them for help if you become sick.



#### Have a two–three week supply of the following:

- Non-perishable food
- Medical and health care supplies
- Prescriptions: make sure they are up-to-date



### Care

#### Caregivers, help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

##### If the person you're caring for lives in a facility:

- Know the facility's outbreak protocol.
- Ask daily about the health of the other residents.
- Monitor visitors. Ask if they've been ill over the past two weeks or if they currently have a fever. A “yes” answer means the visit needs to be postponed for at least two weeks.

**If you're caring for someone at home,** you'll need to prepare a separate bedroom and bathroom for them. Learn more about this type of at-home care: [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html)

**HYGIENE IS IMPORTANT. FOLLOW PROTECTION GUIDANCE ABOVE.**

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs is holding multiple weekly calls with the Area Agencies on Aging and the Aging Network lead and local service providers. The Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long-Term Care Services is providing evaluations, 24-hour notices of appointments and remote medical files for individuals in homes, nursing facilities and assisted-living facilities.

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The safety of our staff and our patients is of utmost importance. We will adhere to all CDC guidelines including social distancing, checking temperatures, wearing masks & office sterilization.

(Subject to the Governor's executive order)

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