



Ambulatory Surgery Centers

COVID-19 Pandemic Healthcare Surge Strategies Framework

Ambulatory surgery centers should follow the [latest regulatory guidance](#) from the Department of Health (DOH). For questions, facilities should reach out to DOH, the Northwest Healthcare Response Network and/or their respective associations. For specific outbreak management and implementation guidance, facilities should reach out and follow the guidance of their local health jurisdiction (LHJ).

NWHRN Engagement

- Contact the NWHRN to sign up for regional situational awareness emails and receive coordination meeting invitations
- Contact the NWHRN Duty Officer when there are questions, concerns, or resource requests - 24/7 Duty Officer line: [425-988-2897](tel:425-988-2897), HECC email: HECC@nwhrn.org
- Participate in healthcare coalition situational awareness and coordination efforts

Interdependencies

- Follow local, state, and federal required and/or recommended COVID-19 infection prevention guidance
- Coordinate with the state ambulatory surgery center association and LHJs as requested
- Participate in information sharing and coordination calls
- Submit resource requests as needed to their LHJ or NWHRN, after exhausting any other channels for essential supplies and equipment Collaborate with regional partners regarding challenges, best practices and information sharing
- Share data with response agencies as requested or required
- Reach out to partners with questions or concerns
- Work with local hospitals to potentially provide staffing and other support such as sharing scarce resources during patient surge incidents

Response Partners

- [Northwest Healthcare Response Network](#) – *Western Washington Healthcare Coalition*
- [Local Health Jurisdiction](#) – *Local public health authority*
- [Washington Ambulatory Surgery Center Association](#) – *State association*
- [Washington Department of Health](#) – *State public health authority*

Interpandemic Phase (Preparedness)

- Staff training for PPE use, screening protocols, infectious control measures, and regular refresher trainings, especially as guidance and protocols often change
- Identify opportunities to support staff mental health, housing, childcare, etc.
- Reduce patient fear by notifying patients about additional safety protocols
- Establish a PEE inventory baseline and track usage

- Provide signage in multiple languages on COVID-19 related safety protocols
- Identify opportunities to establish collaborative relationships with local hospitals and other health systems

Alert & Pandemic Phase (Response)

- Follow the latest regulatory guidance and requirements
- Implement infection control, health screening, staff testing, and visitor/vendor restrictions, as necessary. Educate, encourage, and enforce safety protocols
 - Consider working with vendors to schedule their arrival before or after operational hours
 - Consider extending hours and staggering appointments
 - Work with building maintenance to maximize indoor ventilation
 - Test patients for COVID-19 prior to surgery
- Preempt fear of seeking necessary healthcare by notifying patients about changes in safety protocols. Coordinate messaging with public health agencies and other healthcare organizations
 - Eliminate patient penalties for cancellations and missed appointments
 - Reach out to patients at high risk from COVID to confirm they have sufficient medication refills and to notify provider if they become ill
- Utilize telehealth, telephone visits, patient portals, or online self-assessment tools to reduce the number of in-person appointments
- Consider ways to reduce barriers to patient access, including transportation restrictions, childcare needs, fear around COVID-19, etc.
- If applicable, identify a dedicated care team to only work with COVID-19 patients
- Implement PPE conservation strategies when required
- Strongly encourage all staff to receive full dose(s) of COVID-19 vaccine. Consider vaccine status when assigning staff to high-risk duties
- Consider a phased approach to postponing elective procedures based on low-to-high transmission risk procedures and patient health criteria selection
- If elective procedures are postponed, consider sharing staff, space, and supplies to support regional hospitals

Transitional Phase (Recovery)

- Document response actions and operational decisions made
- Document what went well, areas for improvement, and lessons learned
- Identify what is needed to return to normal operations. Create a time-based plan for achieving this
- Conduct debriefs with admin and staff
- Provide mental and behavioral health support for staff
- Develop an after-action report, identify corrective/improvement actions to implement, ideally before the next surge in cases