

Dialysis

COVID-19 Pandemic Healthcare Surge Strategies Framework

Dialysis centers should follow the [latest regulatory guidance](#) from the Washington Department of Health (DOH). For questions, facilities should reach out to DOH or the Northwest Healthcare Response Network (NWHRN). 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 infection prevention recommendation and related guidance
- Participate in information sharing and coordination calls held by local/state/federal partners, your organization, or the NWHRN
- Submit resource requests as needed to the LHJ or NWHRN, after exhausting any other channels for essential supplies and equipment
- Collaborate with regional partners
- Share data with response agencies as requested or required, including barriers preventing patients from accessing care
- Reach out to partners with questions or concerns regarding resources, COVID guidance, or surge challenges
- Work with regional hospitals to reduce patient surge volumes and share scarce resources

Response Partners

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

Interpandemic Phase (Preparedness)

- Staff training for personal protective equipment (PPE) use, screening protocols, infection control measures, and regular refresher trainings, especially as guidance and protocols often change Identify opportunities to support staff with mental health, housing, and childcare needs

- Reduce patient fear or hesitancy seeking care by notifying patients beforehand about additional safety protocols
- Establish a PPE inventory baseline and [track usage / burn rates](#)
- Provide signage in multiple languages on COVID-related safety protocols
- Develop, update, and/or review Continuity of Operations plans to ensure the continuity of essential services
- Identify opportunities to establish collaborative relationships with nearby hospital systems

Alert & Pandemic Phase (Response)

- Follow the latest regulatory guidance and requirements as established by your LHJ and DOH
- 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 either before or after work hours
 - Extending hours and staggering appointments to reduce the number of patients in your facility
 - Asking patients not arrive early to their appointment and to remain outside until they are called into the facility for their appointment
 - Working with building maintenance to maximize indoor ventilation
- Preempt fear of seeking necessary healthcare by notifying patients about changes in safety protocols. Coordinate messaging with health agencies and organizations
 - Reaching out to patients at higher risk of COVID-19-related complications confirm they have sufficient medication refills and will notify their provider by phone if they become ill
- Consider ways to reduce barriers to patient access, including transportation restrictions, childcare needs, fear around COVID, etc.
- If applicable, identify a dedicated team to only work with patients that are COVID positive (or suspected)
- 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

Transition Phase (Recovery)

- Document decisions made, and response actions and operations
- 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 administration 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