

COVID-19 Top 10 Questions and Answers for the Last 48 Hours

1. The CDC recommends the suspension of all routine eye exams, does this mean we should close our office?

a. Optometrists provide essential care to citizens of Florida. Notifying patients of our proper disinfecting protocols, pre-screening patients before they enter your offices, changing your patient scheduling and flow to help with social distancing, as well as offering hand sanitizer, masks, and other safeguards when patients arrive can allow you to provide that essential care.

b. [Click here for more information.](#)

2. What do I do with my employees as more restrictions are put in place by the government?

a. First, make a plan and discuss the plan with your employees. Ensure they understand the situation and your expectations of them fully. Then develop a back-up plan. The information coming out about COVID-19 is ever-changing and contingencies need to be in place.

3. What if my employees require sick leave or time off due to family care?

a. Familiarize yourself with Florida's labor laws and the Family Medical Leave Act. What practices does it affect and what are the differences between a salary and hourly employee?

b. Think outside the box. For example, if there is a childcare problem, pool your resources to find private care for mothers and fathers who work in your office.

4. Can optometrist in Florida provide Telehealth services after the White House announcement yesterday?

a. The short answer is yes. HB23, when passed last year, did include chapter 463 in the law. Telehealth can be used for medical and emergency care.

5. How does it work?

a. Optometrists must provide service and treat the patient as though they were being seen live in office. Meaning, there should be full documentation of all communications during the encounter including an assessment and plan.

6. Is it true Facetime and Skype qualify for telehealth?

a. Due to the pandemic, many of the HIPAA regulations have been relaxed. Yes, at this time, Facetime and Skype are both recognized and a means to perform Telehealth.

7. Are there copays and deductibles?

a. All copays and deductibles have been waived at this time due to the national state of emergency. Private insurers have begun announcing they will cover some Telehealth services but more details are coming later.

8. How can we find out more information on proper coding?

a. [Click here for more information.](#)

9. Is the FOA working with the AOA and federal officials?

a. The FOA is in constant communication as an organization and with the AOA on a national level to bring you the up to date information available. We are also using our key person network at the federal and state level to ensure ODs are included in any relief packages that may be passed.

10. What positive notes can be taken from the information received?

a. All sides in Washington are working together and in conjunction with any other entity, be it government or private, to beat this virus. Some vaccines are

already entering Phase 1 trials.

b. Relief may be on the way. We are following, like many others, the progress of a relief package for not only the individual citizens but also for small businesses that will be affected by this virus. We are hopeful it could happen within the coming weeks.



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