

Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the clinical activities of our Center (Version 3 - Friday March 20 2020)

**This version is an amendment
of the 2nd Version,
dated Wednesday March 18 2020**

GENERAL POINTS

The situation has worsened.

The number of patients infected by COVID-19 has doubled and then doubled again, over the course of the last 48 hours.

It is reasonable to expect that the same trend will continue during the next days.

At this pace, several hospitals in and around NYC will be overrun by COVID-19 patients.

The need for strict measures could be considered in the near future, such as:

- **a shutdown of domestic flights**
- **the total lockdown of the NY Metropolitan area, and the involvement of the National Guard to enforce it**

SURGICAL ACTIVITY

Given the current overnight deterioration and the elevated the risk of contagion, and given the remote logistics of our patient community, the rules of engagement for our Center have been changed accordingly:

Amending the last communication, we will proceed with Neurosurgical procedures in only two instances:

- **LEVEL 1 - Life and death cases**
- **LEVEL 2 - Procedures that if not done (or delayed) would result in CATASTROPHIC neurological deficits.**

Since at this time, none of the cases booked in our upcoming surgical schedule satisfies any of those two requirements, and taking in account the currently known dynamics of the infection, I have taken the following decision:

- **Effective immediately, all the surgical cases at our Center (including the Invasive Radiological Procedures) booked between now and Monday April 20th are CANCELLED**
- For the time being, no additional cases will be added to the surgical schedule until the situation starts normalizing.
- Once the situation aims back to normal, our next job is going to be to re-arrange the schedule, as a function of a number of different variables.

OUTPATIENT ACTIVITY

All our outpatient activity will continue without interruption, in the form of Telemedicine encounters.

Whoever already has a scheduled office visit will be contacted by our staff, to convert the encounter to Telemedicine.

Office encounters will be kept (if already booked) or booked (if new) in very rare instances, which will be decided by me, on the grounds of strict clinical requirements.

The Office will remain open for the time being, but it could be closed at any moment.

In case of closure of the office, the outpatient activity will continue by Telemedicine, as stated above.

In case of closure of the office, you can still reach the staff by email.

We cannot stress enough to avoid crashing into our ER for non-emergency reasons, for a number of reasons:

- The ER's in NY State will be saturated very soon (as well as in other States), and further non-emergent traffic will divert space and resources from the people who are critically sick
- The ER is not the place for complex diagnostic routines (and all of you have complicated clinical conditions)
- The ER is going to be the place with the highest concentration of very sick patients with COVID-19

RECOMMENDATIONS

Two simple words: STAY HOME.

This virus is extremely contagious and insidious.

It can be spread by being close to infected people, as well by touching objects or surfaces which have been touched by infected people many hours prior.

Your local Politicians are issuing ever changing recommendations, which in some locations have been gradually becoming restrictive over time.

Be smart and follow the recommendations which are coming from the leading Doctors and the Scientists. They have recommended to STAY HOME and AVOID EXTERNAL CONTACTS from the very beginning, after learning from the many mistakes made in Europe.

Look at the news. Read what is happening in Northern Italy.

Unfortunately, they did not listen about STAYING HOME and now they are having the largest death toll worldwide.

Unlike you, they have the excuse that they did not imagine it was going to be so bad.

Our statistics and graphs in NYC are mirroring what has happened there in Northern Italy 12 days ago.

BE SMART and STAY HOME.

This storm will pass.

TECHNICAL TIPS

If you have to go outside for exceptional situations (like buying food), do the following:

- use mask and gloves
- go out late at night or very early in the morning
- stay far away from other people
- do not touch your eyes or face
- get in and get out fast from the store
- get the most out of your outside trip
- when you go back home, leave shoes, coat outside of the door
- discard mask and gloves outside of the door
- get in the house and go straight to the laundry room, then throw everything in the wash at high temperature
- go straight to a hot shower after that
- then say hi to your family

- wash your hands multiple times
- develop a healthy dose of OCD and paranoia
- assume that everybody is infected and that everything is contaminated outside your home (you go at lengths not to bring mud from the outside when it rains, this is much worse)
- check on your older relatives with daily phone calls.

GENERAL POINTS

At the moment, we cannot exactly predict:

- How the course and the timeline of the current pandemic will be in NY State, and in the rest of the Country
- What the further effects of this pandemic are going to be on the daily function of our hospital

On the grounds of the available data from other parts of the globe, we can safely assume that:

- NY State is bearing the heaviest brunt in this pandemic, within the U.S.
- The mortality rate in the U.S. is going to be in the low single digits (2-6%) and is mainly going to hit elderly people with pre-existing multiple and serious medical conditions, as well as immuno-compromised patients of any age
- The recent measures taken by the Federal Government, aimed at decreasing interpersonal interactions as much as possible, as well as eliminating mass gathering, are probably going to mitigate the steep of the pandemic curve and the severity of its impact

USEFUL INFORMATION

<https://www.cdc.gov>

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

We will post further updates, when applicable.

Check the home page of our website at: <http://www.chiarinsc.com>

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

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