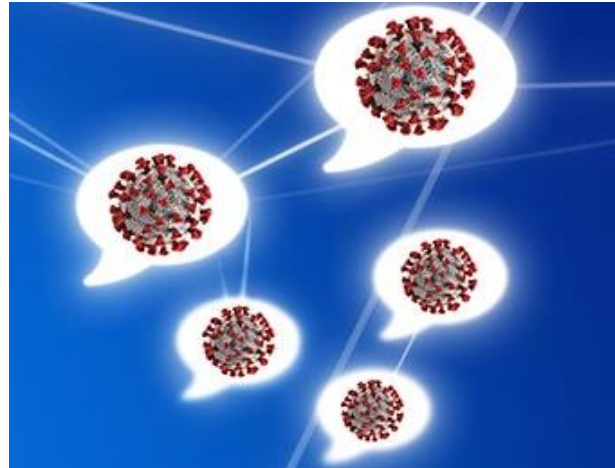


YOU MUST Keep Up Communications With Your Patients!

During this time of growing fear and contagion, it is imperative that you keep lines of communication open with your patients. We understand the growing strains under which you operate, but you must take time to tell your patients that you are still open and will take care of them to the best of your abilities. You must also instruct them how they can most efficiently and safely get their scripts filled under changed circumstances and operating procedures.

We recommend that you take these steps to support effective patient communications:



Status of Operations | Hours | Script Fill Guidance

- **Make sure your patients know that you're open and about any changes in your operating hours.** Post procedures for getting scripts filled by each applicable method - delivery, drive-through or curbside - on your website and social media. **Make sure they know about your mobile/online refill app. Post basic info in a sign on your front door ([download our editable sign](#)).**
- Encourage patients with multiple scripts to refill them at one time. (Many health plans and PBMs are allowing overrides of early-refill prohibitions). **It's a great time to push med synch.**
- Let patients know as soon as they have prescriptions to pick up. Ask about their COVID-19/illness status and advise them on the best delivery or pickup option.

Status of Services | Consultations | Payment

- Let your patients that you have suspended services like immunizations, in-store testing, MTM, CRM, educational classes, etc.
- If you offer tele-consultations through a dedicated app, Skype, Facetime, etc., let patients know, provide a link to the app and give them the hours of availability.
- Make sure patients know that you no longer accept cash payments. (strongly advised)

Be a Calming Influence | Be a Reliable Source of Accurate, Vital Information

- **Remember that many patients are afraid and some don't handle isolation well. Reassure them on your social channels that you are doing everything you can to stay open and meet their medication needs. Use social media posts & photos to keep them calm - a little humor or human interest will go a long way. This is also a great time to show the world with your posts that independent pharmacists are HANGING TOUGH in the midst of this crisis!**
- Make sure patients understand that drug shortages will affect your ability to fill some scripts, or to refill in higher quantities on some others.
- **Keep information on hand about drug assistance programs for those who need financial help. This will become more vital with the soaring job losses we're seeing:**
 - [RxAssist](#): the most extensive internet directory of patient assistance programs
 - [Medicineassisttool.org](#)
 - [NeedyMeds.org](#)

- Be a reliable source of accurate information. There are many unfounded rumors and half facts circulating about COVID-19's symptoms and treatments. Caution your patients about anti-malarial drugs such as chloroquine purportedly being an effective treatment for the disease - there has so far been no large-scale, reputable trial showing any effectiveness.
- If patients are exhibiting known COVID-19 symptoms, know where to refer them to report the case. (See next article)

Get Creative

California Pharmacists Association is encouraging its member pharmacists & technicians to take selfies holding signs like those shown here, then post the photos on social media. **We think it's a great idea, but we want to take it a bit further. We've created some colorful signs of our own you can print out to use in your selfies, and we ask that you notify us if you've done this so we can view and share your posted photos. This is a warm and effective way to reach out to your patients to tell them you are still there for them!**

You can find out signs online at: www.aprx.org/templates/aprx/Assets/covid-19-social-media-signs.pdf. If you'd rather make your own sign that's more hand-written and authentic-looking, that's great, too. Just get a sheet of white copy paper and write a short phrase like **"WE'RE HANGING TOUGH!"** or **"STILL HERE TO SERVE YOU!"** or whatever you come up with. Take the selfie and post it, but be sure to share it with us on our FB page at American Pharmacies.

Social Media Resources

- [American Pharmacies Facebook Page](#): There's lots of stuff here you can use.
- [COVID-19 Social Media Toolkit](#) | Texas Dept. of State Health Services
- [California Pharmacists Assn.](#) | COVID-19 Social Media Toolkit
- [Arkansas Pharmacy Assn.](#) | COVID-19 Social Media Toolkit