

# Galloway Therapy Procedures for COVID-19

We are currently in a crisis unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. We, like most other people, have been struggling to make choices and the best decisions possible based on the information we are provided. The US Department of Homeland Security has issued a memorandum listing what it considers essential infrastructure workers.

The guidance from the memorandum states that:

*"If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule."*

If your clinic is able to practice within the recommended CDC guidelines and follow your local government mandates, consider that community-based physical therapists assist in keeping people healthy. According to Dr. Matos, an expert in biologic surety and the management of select agent programs at federal facilities:

*"Physical therapists are essential in flattening the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic. They play a key role in keeping people they can help out of the doctor offices and ER's. This will not only free up the medical teams to treat those impacted by COVID-19, but also limit the exposure of those seeking the care of the physical therapist".*

Given this information and based on guidance given by our professional organization, the American Physical Therapy Association, we have made the decision to remain open. So, having made this decision, we feel the need to reach out to both patients and healthcare providers to inform you of our practices and procedures involving patient care.

First, we are neither encouraging nor discouraging patients from coming to therapy. If a patient does not want to attend therapy in the clinic, we are offering other options. We are ignoring our cancellation/no show policy now, as well.

The clinic is limiting access to patients only, unless an essential caregiver is needed. The waiting room is closed. Patients/caregivers that are attending therapy in clinic are being screened before they enter each visit. This includes CDC recommended questions, having the bottom of their shoes sprayed with disinfectant, and having their temperature taken by an infrared thermometer. Anyone not passing the screen is given the number to the UAMS Hotline for further screening and told not to return to the clinic before being fever free for 15 days or receiving a negative test result for COVID-19. Having answered no to all the screen questions and not presenting with a fever, patients are then taken to an individual treatment room, being segregated from other patients. The rooms and equipment used are cleaned with bleach after each use. In addition to separating patients while in the clinic, we are also scheduling to spread out patients to further social distance.

Our office will be providing eVisits and telehealth to those patients requesting the service. Medicare and commercial insurances have eased their restrictions regarding telehealth for physical therapists. However, telehealth provisions still vary greatly between Medicare and individual commercial policies. Even so, we will remain in contact with patients and provide communication as needed.

We will continue to review all the updated information we receive daily to follow government and professional recommendations. We are maintaining our normal business hours, Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm. Our prayers and thoughts are with everyone in our community, as well as the world.