

Dear patients and fellow community members,

We hope you are feeling well and are comfortable at home with everything you need (food, medication, a phone connection to friends, family or support people) to be safe.

We at the Coastal Health Alliance are continuing to work to support your health, wellbeing and safety. We are writing to review essential health information during the pandemic, review ways we can help keep you safe, and ways for you to reach out for help if you need it.

As you know, the most essential thing you can do for yourself and your community right now is **stay home as much as possible**, and **keep your distance** (at least 6 feet) from people at all times.

Handwashing with soap and water, as often as you can and certainly after you touch doorknobs, counters, and surfaces, is very effective in killing this virus. **Avoid touching your face** as this is often the way the virus enters our body.

Many people want to know if masks are necessary. We are learning that when people wear masks, even cotton ones like handsewn masks (like the ones being sewn locally; see [West Marin, Covered](#)) or bandannas, not only does droplet transmission decrease, it also helps us not touch our mouth and nose. Until recently the CDC was not recommending people wear masks when out in public. However, new information is leading health officials to **recommend people wear masks when out in public**. You can reuse them by putting them in a paper bag for a day or out in the sunshine. N95 masks should be saved for medical professionals taking care of sick people or caregivers taking care of someone at home. There is a national shortage of these masks and unfortunately we cannot give these out.

We are reaching out to our patients with **chronic health conditions** to make sure they have medications and that their conditions are in good control. **Please make a phone appointment with your primary care provider** to adjust treatment if necessary, and to arrange for refills of medications. We also want to ensure people with **chronic health conditions have had flu shots and pneumonia immunizations**, in an effort to keep people out of the hospital. We will be reaching out to our highest risk patients to offer these immunizations starting next Monday.

During this challenging time, we are continuing to encourage all patients to think about what kind of care they would like to receive in case they become seriously ill. While this is always important, it is even more important during a pandemic for us to know your wishes, and for you to have an **Advanced Medical Directive** on file with us. It is also very helpful to have this information posted on your refrigerator (**on a pink POLST form**) so emergency responders also know how you'd like to be cared for. **Please talk with your family and your primary care provider about your wishes**, particularly if you know you would rather not receive care in a hospital.

We are also working with other local organizations to **identify and support** our most **vulnerable and isolated patients and community members**, particularly those who may not receive email,

those who need help with picking up medications from the pharmacy, or who may live alone and are in need of more support. Our local fire departments are also interested in ensuring isolated people have someone checking in on them; if you or someone you know is isolated and needing this sort of help, please call the clinic at 415 663-8666 or your local fire department.

Now is the time for us to practice community resilience by reaching out to our neighbors in need, supporting each other, being kind, and staying separated physically but not emotionally. **Each Wednesday evening from 6:30 to 7:30 pm Dr. Anna O'Malley will offer up-to-date informative sessions and answer questions**, both from a public health and integrative medicine perspective. These will be on Zoom and limited to 100 participants each time; please RSVP to sophie@naturainstitute.org if you'd like to join and you'll receive the call information. These calls are free and are open to all members of our community.

As we stay home, taking good care of ourselves and supporting our immune system is another way we can show care for our community. Now is the time to get a good night's sleep, every night. Avoid sugar and processed foods whenever you can. Go for walks in this beautiful weather in this glorious spring. Breathe. Connect with loved ones by phone. Reach out to those who may be alone or in need.

We are here for you in this challenging time. Please reach out to us at 415-663-8666 if you need support in your medical care, in refilling medications, in accessing food, or in ensuring people are checking in on you. We will connect you to people who can help.

With care,
Anna O'Malley, MD
Frances Grau Brull, RN
Steve Siegel, CEO
And the team at the Coastal Health Alliance