Implementing Infection Control Procedures

Updated 4/1/2020

Ohio Department of Health - Director’s Order to Stay at Home

On March 22, 2020, Ohio Department of Health Director, Dr. Amy Acton, issued a Director’s Order to Stay at Home. This order permits individuals to leave their residence to work for or obtain services through a healthcare and public health operation. A copy of the order may be reviewed here.

This order does implement additional requirements that pharmacies are required to comply with in order to remain open. This document has been updated to reflect those requirements.

Per the requirements of section 4729.55 of the Revised Code that requires a terminal distributor to implement adequate safeguards that allow pharmacy professionals to practice in a safe and effective manner and the Director of Health’s Stay at Home Order, Ohio pharmacies must implement the following safeguards:

Required Per Ohio Department of Health’s Order - NEW

- Designated six-foot distances. Designating with signage tape, or by other means six-foot spacing for employees and customers in line to maintain appropriate distance, including appropriate spacing from point of sale terminals.
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing products. Having hand sanitizer (if available) and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers.
- Online and remote access. Posting online whether a facility is open and how best to reach the facility and continue services by phone or remotely.
- Business and employers are also required to take the following actions:
  - Allow as many people as possible to work from home by implementing policies in areas such as teleworking and video conferencing.
  - Actively encourage sick employees to stay home until they are free of fever (without the use of medication) for at least 72 hours (three full days) AND symptoms have improved for at least 72 hours AND at least seven days have passed since symptoms first began. Do not require a healthcare provider’s note to validate the illness or return to work of employees sick with acute respiratory illness; healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
  - Ensure that your sick leave policies are up to date, flexible, and non-punitive to allow sick employees to stay home to care for themselves, children, or other family
members. Consider encouraging employees to do a self-assessment each day to check if they have any COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

- Separate employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees and send them home immediately. Restrict their access to the business until they have recovered.
- Reinforce key messages – stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice hand hygiene – to all employees, and place posters in areas where they are most likely to be seen. Provide protection supplies such as soap and water, hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
- Be prepared to change business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g. identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations).

**Additional Infection Control Procedures Required by ORC 4729.55**

- For pharmacies open to the public, consider developing a process for older adults (60+), pregnant women, and individuals with chronic health conditions to pick up medications without waiting in line (i.e. post signs directing to drive-thru, offer curb-side delivery, mail delivery, senior hours, etc.).

- Implement infection control procedures, especially for waiting areas, to include the following:
  - Pharmacists and pharmacy interns shall no longer be permitted to administer immunizations or other injections without standard protective measures, which includes gloves and proper hand hygiene (i.e. routinely washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds). Standard protective measures do not include the use of masks or gowns.
  - Pharmacists and pharmacy interns shall not administer any immunizations or other injections to patients displaying or reporting symptoms of respiratory illness, including any of the following:
    - Fever (NOTE: This does not require mandatory temperature checks);
    - Cough; or
    - Shortness of breath.
  - Pharmacy professionals who are older adults, pregnant women, or individuals with chronic health conditions shall not be prohibited from wearing appropriate PPE to operate within a pharmacy.
  - Regularly clean and disinfect counters, credit/debit card devices, waiting areas, and other spaces where public interaction occurs with an EPA-approved disinfectant. Clean at least every hour or after every 10 patients, whichever is more frequent. If cleaning and disinfecting products are in short supply, the Ohio Department of Health has developed the following guidance:

- Provide regular breaks for staff to engage in proper hand hygiene (i.e. routinely washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds).

Failure to comply with the requirements set forth in this document may result in administrative discipline for the pharmacy and the pharmacy’s responsible person.