

May 2020

Dear Referring Provider and Clinic personnel,

We hope you, your loved ones, and coworkers are all continuing to be well during these uncertain times. MNGI Digestive Health is adapting to our changing world and our Clinics and ASCs remain open to provide a safe environment for all your patients.

We continue to prioritize procedural patients based upon symptoms and clinical indications. The recent Executive Order 20-51 removed restrictions on elective and non-emergent procedures. We have established policies and operational changes to comply with this most recent EO.

- We have a triage process for all categories of patients, including those which were deferred under the previous EO. Our ASCs have already begun the process of increasing access, and we are capable of caring for all patients in a timely fashion.
- New referrals – We encourage you to send in all new referrals. Don't hold them for a later time. New referrals are prioritized for scheduling based upon indications, similar to our pre-Covid process. There may be situations where a MNGI physician contacts your patient via a virtual or televisit to make a final determination on prioritization.

**Providing a safe environment.**

Because MNGI was continuing to perform some urgent procedures, steps had already been taken to ensure patients and staff would be safe and comfortable in our facility. These safety measures are detailed in our Covid-19 Safety Plan and aligned with MDH and CDC guidelines, and include –

- 3 points of screening for patients; twice before arrival at our facilities and immediately upon arrival
- Mandatory daily screening for physicians and staff, with required quarantine and internal tracking of any illness
- Up-to-date use of PPE along with supply reserves, conservation measures, and a reliable commercial supply chain
- Mask requirement for anyone entering (and for the duration of their time at) our locations
- Limiting guests. Drivers are being asked to wait in a car and patients are being asked to attend clinic, lab or infusion visits alone. One parent or guardian is allowed for pediatric patients
- Social distancing and other infection prevention measures, including hand washing, respiratory etiquette, and re-engineered and administratively controlled spaces and flow in patient and staff areas
- Routine and deep cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination regimens including more frequency of high-touch areas. MNGI also has ventilation systems that help to exchange the air at regular intervals

**Telehealth for Clinic appointments.**

As many of you have done, MNGI has converted most clinic follow ups and new patient encounters to telehealth. Thus, we can better protect the health of your patients and our staff. Telehealth is also available to patients requesting interpreter services. Not every doctor's appointment can be replaced by telehealth and some may still require an in person physical exam or lab tests, which continue to be scheduled as needed. A telehealth appointment may also result in the need for an in-person visit or procedure.

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**ADDRESS**

P.O. Box 14909  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

**WEB**

[mngi.com](http://mngi.com)

**PHONE**

612.871.1145

**FAX**

612.870.5491

### **Infusion Therapy / Biologic Medications.**

We want to remind you that it is particularly important for all IBD and immunosuppressed patients to stay on schedule for biologic medications. MNGI has taken extra measures to ensure those infusion appointments occur while also keeping patients healthy and safe. We have provided for social distancing as well as added an additional location (our Northeast Clinic) offering infusion services for pediatric patients starting at age 9. Patients who are 14 years or older can be scheduled at any of our six infusion locations. Please reach out to your patients and make sure they do not stop taking any biologic medications. They should also talk with a MNGI provider before making any adjustments. If their biologic medications require an infusion, they should not skip those appointments. If you also find that you have patients who are concerned or unable to have their infusions at the hospital or worry about having people come into their home, please refer them to our office so we can assist them.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. As always, you can refer patients to MNGI using our secure online referral portal <https://referrals.mngastro.com/> or by fax, or by phone at (612) 871-1145.

*We look forward to helping you care for your patients during these challenging times.*

Stay well,

The entire team of caregivers at MNGI Digestive Health

**- - - FYI: Information being shared with our mutual patients - - -**

### **COVID-19 Safety**

#### **What is MNGI doing to help keep patients safe during the coronavirus outbreak (also known as COVID-19)?**

Patient safety has always been our top priority. MNGI has followed guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health and made additional adjustments to patient screening and cleaning processes to ensure the safest experience possible.

#### **COVID-19 Symptom Screening**

MNGI will screen all patients for COVID-19 symptoms with three separate screenings, as well as screen all staff and visitors upon arrival to any MNGI facility. At the point of scheduling, MNGI is screening all patients scheduled for in-person visits for symptoms related to COVID-19, then again within one day of the scheduled visit, and once again upon the person's arrival to MNGI's facility. MNGI will ask about recent and new symptoms as recommended by the CDC and will take appropriate follow up steps based on current guidance. The appointment may need to be cancelled on short notice if the patient tests positive for or experiences symptoms of COVID-19, or if the facility or service area requires additional capacity to address COVID-19. In addition, MNGI is screening providers and staff daily for symptoms of COVID-19. Only staff and providers who have certified that they are healthy and passed screening will be allowed to work.

#### **Limiting Guests and Social Distancing**

MNGI is limiting guests in its facilities to help with social distancing efforts. Drivers will be asked to wait in their cars. Patients are asked to attend clinic, lab or infusion appointments alone, unless they are a pediatric patient with a parent or guardian. Accommodations can also be made for those needing physical assistance. Patients in waiting areas are asked to maintain at least six feet of distance, between themselves and other patients, at all times. The clinical spaces have been reconfigured as allowed to also increase the distance between patients. Due to the nature of clinical encounters, staff and providers will be required to interact with patients at less than six feet distance. During these encounters, staff, providers and patients will be wearing appropriate protective equipment.

#### **Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

All MNGI staff, providers and vendors who enter the clinical locations will be wearing masks. We also ask that you wear a mask (cloth or other) upon arrival to our facility. Patients and any visitors arriving without masks will be provided a mask and will be required to wear it for the duration of their visit. Staff and providers in procedure rooms will have additional levels of personal protective equipment that will include masks, eye protection, gloves and gowns.

#### **Cleaning and Air Flow**

Cleaning efforts have been increased at clinical sites for high touch areas such as door handles, keyboards, phones, counter tops, bathrooms, waiting room furniture and more. This includes routine cleaning, increased frequency and deep cleaning processes throughout the facilities. MNGI uses an FDA-approved registered disinfectant that kills coronaviruses. MNGI also has ventilation systems that help to exchange air at regular intervals.