

Creating Healthy Work Environments VIRTUAL 2021

Securing Personal Protective Equipment in Primary Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study

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Purpose:

This is a case study outlining strategies to secure required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during the COVID 19 pandemic for a Primary Care practice located in New York State. This lack of PPE compromised the safety of patients and staff. This practice is one of many outpatient practices owned by a hospital system.

Methods:

After critical PPE shortages improved, multiple requests for required PPE was consistently denied for the practice. This resulted in an unsafe work environment resulting in an increase COVID 19 exposure for both patients and staff.

A review of the literature was conducted querying infection control practices during the COVID 19 pandemic in a moderate to high risk geographic area for the transmission of COVID19. This search included the CDC, JCAHO, IOM, OSHA guidelines and the AACN Healthy Work Environment Standards. Also, contact with other outpatient practice sites was done to determine the community standard for PPE. Tracking the number and dates of positive COVID 19 patients presenting to the practice were also compiled.

Results:

After the review of the literature, community standards of care and the system short falls was compiled, the findings were presented to the practice administration. Issues related to communication, respect and leadership were quickly evident. The reasons cited by administration were cost and supply chain constraints. Also, providers were told not to examine patients presenting to the office to limit COVID 19 exposure. This was deemed unacceptable.

After exhausting all attempts to secure PPE, a complaint was filed with OSHA. Administration was contacted within 2 days and a plan of correction was mandated. Within one-week, PPE was made available and fit testing for the N95 respirators was done. This was done for all outpatient practices owned by this hospital system.

Conclusion:

It is important to obtain best evidence and practices to make a case for patient and workplace safety. When communication and negotiating systems fail, other actions may be warranted. Involving OSHA, a daunting task, was necessary in advocating for this needed change.

Title:

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Keywords:

Covid-19 Pandemic, Personal Protective Equipment and Primary Care

Abstract Summary:

This case study describes the process of securing needed Personal Protective Equipment for staff working in a New York Primary Care practice in order to safely care for patients during the Covid-19 pandemic. The process outlines advocacy, negotiating systems, recommended standards of care and work place safety.

References:

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