



ARKANSAS BOARD OF HEARING INSTRUMENT DISPENSERS

4815 West Markham Street, Slot 2 • Little Rock, AR 72205 • Office: (501) 203-4032

Governor Asa Hutchinson

Greg Smith, Board Director and Stephanie Pratt, Executive Director, ADH

March 27th, 2020

Attention all Hearing Instrument Dispensing Specialists:

In light of on-going COVID-19 concerns Governor Hutchinson's recent State of Emergency Declaration, the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas State Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers recommends **voluntary suspension of all NON-EMERGENT care or services to patients until further notice**. This recommendation is subject to change at the discretion of the Governor and Secretary of Health.

Arkansas Department of Health recommends that procedures, testing, and office visits that can be safely postponed should be rescheduled to an appropriate future date. Delaying treatment is especially recommended for high-risk patients who meet any of the following criteria:

- Patients and visitors who have a temperature of 100.4° F or greater, cough, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- Aged 65 and older
- Have compromised immune systems and/or present with chronic disease (ASA 2 and above)
- Returned from international travel within past 14 days

Universal precautions are to be strictly followed in order to minimize the possibility of disease transmission. Here are several suggestions:

- Magazines and children's toys be removed from your waiting room areas to help prevent the spread of the virus.
- Providing a single sing in sheet per patient and/or sanitizing digital screens and/or stylus after each patient.
- Make sure your office is being sanitized more frequently and making sure that exam tables, rooms, etc., are being sanitized after each patient following the manufacture instructions.
- Instruct your patients and staff to practice social distancing in the waiting room and/or have some wait in their cars or work out some other alternative waiting room procedure.

Recommended strategies for employers to use now, for any infectious disease.

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Separate sick employees.
- Emphasize staying home when sick.
- Respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees.
- Perform routine environmental cleaning following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Advise employees before traveling to take certain precautions.

Collective actions taken by the community can help deter the proliferation of the COVID-19 Virus in Arkansas. By rescheduling high-risk patients, professionals can do our part to prevent community spread, as well as help to preserve the limited supply of personal protective equipment that is critical for frontline healthcare personnel responding to this pandemic.

For the most up-to-date information and support, visit our website: www.healthy.arkansas.gov

For the most up-to-date information and guidance on COVID-19 in Arkansas, visit:

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

For questions regarding this guidance, please call the Executive Director for the Board at 1-501-203-4032. For other COVID-19 related questions, you can call ADH at 1-800-803-7847.

We appreciate your cooperation and willingness to act in concern for the health of all Arkansans.

A Message from the Director:

To all Arkansas Hearing Instrument Dispensers,

The Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers is recommending that all Arkansas licensees see only essential patients at this time. That is current patients with severe problems that cannot wait. We are further recommending that those whom you must see, due to the up close and personal nature of our profession, are only "well" patients (make every effort to determine this). Please be sure to use a good face mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, and thoroughly sanitize the office after each appointment. We also suggest that you take no visitors with the patient; make it the patient only, if possible. We understand that this will affect your business adversely. We are all in this together.

We will keep you updated, as needed. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, your patients, our state, our country, and the world during this pandemic.

Soundly,

Greg Smith, Chairman
Arkansas Board of Hearing Instrument Dispensers