

Louisiana Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



“Advocate for all children in Louisiana”

Guidance from LA AAP on Continuation of Well-Child Visits During COVID-19 Pandemic

In a March 21, 2020 [memo](https://bit.ly/2y6sLWt) (<https://bit.ly/2y6sLWt>) from the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners, providers were directed to transition all in person healthcare to telehealth and postpone all in-person healthcare visits for 30 days. Specific language from the memo is below.

SECTION II. Healthcare Services, Other than Medical and Surgical Procedures

A The Department hereby directs that all healthcare providers transition all in-person healthcare services to a telehealth mode of delivery, when medically appropriate and when the same standard of care can be met as an in-person visit. Providers shall make a determination about the appropriateness of telehealth on a case-by-case basis. Providers may encounter legitimate and valid barriers to telehealth delivery and may not be able to shift all services to telehealth. Providers acting in good faith shall not be found to be in violation of this directive

B. The Department hereby directs that all healthcare providers postpone all in-person healthcare services that can safely be postponed for 30 days. Providers shall use their best medical judgment within the scope of their license to make this determination. Providers shall consider the entire clinical picture when determining if a service can be safely postponed, including the consequences to the patient of postponement and the consequences to the healthcare system. Providers acting in good faith shall not be found to be in violation of this directive.

We have heard from many of our members seeking advice on how this applies to well-child visits. The Louisiana Chapter strongly believes that well-child visits, especially during the first 24 months of life, are essential and necessary. We share our members concerns that postponing these critical visits and immunization administration could lead to negative health consequences. Guidance from the CDC at the time of the publication of this guidance states “If a practice can provide only limited well child visits, healthcare providers are encouraged to prioritize newborn care and vaccination of infants and young children (through 24 months of age) when possible.” (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>) The Louisiana Chapter supports the CDC’s guidance as well as encourages providers to see patients needing/ requesting catch-up immunizations.

We recognize every provider’s situation is unique and resources vary among practices and regions. We encourage all providers to consider their own situation to determine what is best for their practice and the families you serve.

Suggestions for adjustments practices may consider making to their usual clinical operations:

- Conduct well-child visits for newborns, infants and younger children up to 24 months who require immunizations or older patients needing catch up immunizations. Reschedule well-child visits for those in middle childhood and adolescence to a later date.
- Dedicate specific morning hours for well-child visits and specific afternoon hours for sick visits. Be sure to allow for adequate time for cleaning and disinfecting all patient areas.
- Dedicate specific rooms for well-child visits and sick visits. For those operating in multiple sites, consider using one office for well-child visits only.
- Utilize a “drive through” for sick visits where the provider can assess the patient in their vehicle.
- Increase use of telehealth/ telemedicine for any visit that can reasonably be conducted using this modality.

If you have other suggestions that have been successful in your practice, please share them with the Louisiana Chapter. Contact Chapter staff at (225) 505-7611 or email ashley.poltz@laaap.org