



4 Biggest Mistakes Doctors are Making During COVID-19

Do you have a Reopen Action Plan to make your practice safe & effective?

Medical practitioners have stood on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic and many have been instrumental in continuing to provide care while working to stop the spread of the virus. But, private medical practices have not been immune to the financial toll that COVID-19 has had on their business. Many have had to adapt by transferring services to telehealth, cutting down on in-office hours and staff, and losing revenue through canceled or postponed procedures and surgeries.

While society is indebted to the medical community for their commitment during this tough time, there is no assurance that practices will be able to survive in a post-pandemic environment.

Doctors have the opportunity during this time to prepare their practice for the new normal. Unfortunately, mistakes are being made and opportunities are being lost.

HERE ARE 4 OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES TO WATCH OUT FOR:

1

Assuming everything will go back to “normal” after the pandemic. Doctors need to be preparing for the “new normal,” which will include heightened patient safety concerns and ongoing social distancing needs. This means many patient visits and procedures will continue to be done via telehealth. Doctors need to prepare both their in-person and online presence to be prepared for this new, hybrid form of medical care.

2

Ignoring the competition. Other practices are using this time to evolve and adapt to the current medical environment. If doctors are not taking action during the pandemic, then their practices won't be prepared to survive after the pandemic.

3

Not recognizing that “-less” is more. Patients will be prioritizing their physical safety and medical practices needs to be prepared to do more than the status quo. This includes a touchless (soap and water dispensers in the bathroom), contactless (appointments and payment), and frictionless (waiting room times and location) patient experience. By appointing a Safety Captain in the office, doctors can implement protective measures that will last beyond the time of COVID.

4

Missing the opportunity to overhaul the entire patient experience to make it more seamless, safe and effective during and after COVID-19.

SAFETY IS THE NEW CURRENCY

Although you may feel weighed down by uncertainty and you may have recognized your own practice in one of those 4 big mistakes, there are steps you can take TODAY that will prepare the way for a safe and effective reopening.

Safety has become the new currency in our daily living, as we strive to figure out what it means to keep ourselves and those around us healthy and protected. Think about how many steps you’ve already taken in your personal life to be safe: staying at home, wearing masks, and keeping distance from others when outside the house.

“In a world seeded with anxiety, fear is gripping not just people who are ill with the coronavirus but those in urgent need of other medical care. Even as the number of Covid-19 cases declines in many places, patients with cancer, heart disease and strokes, among others, are delaying or forgoing critical procedures that could keep them alive.”

(New York Times, May 29, 2020)

As a medical provider, you are being judged. Patients are thinking twice about what they do. Should they even go to a routine doctor’s appointment at all? Are they getting a clear message that you are taking steps to keep them safe?

Nobody wants to take unnecessary risks, and people are now actively canceling what would have been a mandatory appointment to receive care. That’s our new reality and **it is necessary for your practice to adapt to these anxieties through measures that create a safe and comforting patient experience.**



BECOMING SAFE & EFFECTIVE: YOUR REOPEN ACTION PLAN

This guide has been created to help doctors and their teams achieve in their practice the same standard used when they evaluate clinical protocols: making sure it is safe and effective. This applies to both patients and your employees.

	PRIORITIZE NOW	PLAN FOR LATER
 <p>SAFETY: Hygiene and Environment Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint a Safety Captain and review every patient “touchpoint” in your office to make sure you are able to clean and verify. “Less” is more (see mistake #3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate the wait. Work with your team on tools to identify root causes of long waiting room and total visit times.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use all available technology to communicate virtually: text, phone, email. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invest in UV sterilizers, but only if they are certified by the EPA.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate your waiting room. Use exam rooms to isolate patients and, if needed, shift to the parking lot with a text/ phone check-in system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify procedures that can be performed in-office rather than at an ASC or hospital, giving you greater control over the environment and equal/better safety for patients (e.g., office-based cataract surgery).
 <p>EFFECTIVE: Motivating & Emotional Factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual cues to indicate to patients and staff if an area is sterilized. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-deploy your team into newly defined roles to match new enhanced safety processes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shift to telemedicine for most consultations and routine appointments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Move as much of the traditional patient visit process to outside the office; reserve in-person encounters for measurements, procedures and required follow-up.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopt the “Go slow to Go Fast” mindset: invest in the habits/protocols that take time to develop, then move quickly when taking action to implement them in your practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimize in-person interaction and maximize the overall patient experience by making it frictionless at each step, from scheduling to payment, arrival to departure.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rethink what it means to “schedule” your patients and procedures as capacity gets re-defined. 	

DON'T JUST SAY IT'S SAFE, PROVE IT.

We are already seeing messaging where practices are saying "it's safe to come here" in one form or another. That's fine for now, but realize that pretty soon that message will become noise. Safety is a hygiene factor, meaning it is already expected. It's not a motivating reason for someone to come to your practice. What's changed with COVID-19 is that the bar has been raised significantly as to what it means to be safe at a medical practice.

The above protocols and procedures can help your practice establish new safety measures that go above and beyond the status quo.

Renewed Focus on the Patient Experience

The pandemic, as awful a crisis as it has been, has also created opportunity. Putting your focus and effort into the "patient experience" used to be optional, something that would be looked at "someday." Now it has become mandatory that every practice re-think the patient experience from "door-to-door." This means from the time the patient gets out of their car door until the moment they get back in it. While safety needs to improve, the effectiveness of your patient experience can, and should, as well.

Now is the moment for your entire team to come together and implement changes that will make for a better patient experience. There are multiple benefits to doing this:

- Patients are happier and more loyal
- Doctors experience more joy in their daily profession
- Team members are more engaged
- The practice grows with increased word-of-mouth

In our work over the past 25 years, we've seen growth take place in practices of all shapes and sizes from an improved patient experience. No matter your specialty, location, or size of your facility, the dedication to improving the patient experience will pave the way for your sustainable success in our post-pandemic world.

To see all the latest cool things you can learn from other practices go to [PXMovement.com](https://www.pxmovement.com).



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