

**Purpose:** To provide guidance to members of the healthcare team in effectively addressing patient refusals to adhere to SCCA COVID-19 response policies and interventions.

**Goal:** To ensure the safety of our patients and staff and reduce unnecessary transmission of COVID-19 while respecting patients' autonomy and needs.

**Definition:** The term "**patient**" in this policy does NOT include patient's caregiver, patient representative, family member, and/or other person(s) involved in their care.

Additional considerations for caregiver, patient representative, family member and/or others involved in the patient's care are at the end of this document.

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**Background:** As part of the SCCA COVID-19 Response, the following initiatives regarding masking and testing are in place.

### *Patient and Caregiver Mask Use*

Initiated April 27, 2020: SCCA requested all patients and visitors entering an SCCA clinic to wear a mask at all times while on the premises. Patients and visitors may wear their own cloth masks. Patients and visitors who do not have a cloth mask or have COVID-19 symptoms will be given a procedure mask to wear when screened at entrance points.

### *COVID-19 Patient Testing*

COVID-19 testing has been made available for all SCCA patients through testing infrastructure - including drive up and walk up testing, a testing triage center (SLU), testing kits at community SCCA clinics, adequate testing supplies, and clinical guidance documents and pre-screening workflows.

### **NOTE:**

**SCCA reserves the right to escort the patient or those accompanying the patient off campus if they refuse to comply with our infection prevention policies. Therefore, every effort should be made to ascertain why the patient is refusing and to adjust the care plan.**

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### **Patient refusing to wear a mask on SCCA premises - SLU Process:**

When a patient refuses a mask at point of entry screening, primary screeners should alert the patient escort and connect them with the patient. The roles of the patient escort is to advise the patient that SCCA policy requires everyone entering the facility to wear a mask. This guidance is based on recommendations from CDC and WA DOH in an effort to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our center. The reason for wearing a mask is to help protect oneself and all other individuals in the clinic as physical distancing is not always possible.

If the patient continues to refuse a mask, the patient escort should ask the patient to wait while the escort calls the patient's care team. Please have the patient wait in a secluded or respiratory isolation area while the escort connects with the care team.

- A representative of the patient's care team should make every effort to:
  - Understand the reasons why the patient is refusing a mask
  - Explain the reasons why SCCA recommends mask use for patients
  - Provide alternative options based on the reason for refusal (see Table 1)
  - Consult both Patient Relations and Infection Prevention teams.
  - Document the occurrence and alternative plan in the care plan/ electronic health record
  - Mobilize alternative solutions based on the revised care plan

### **Patient refusing to wear a mask on SCCA premises - Community Site(s) Process**

When a patient refuses a mask at point of entry screening, primary screeners should alert the patient care team, and connect them with the patient. The care team designate should inform the patient that SCCA policy requires everyone entering the facility to wear a mask. This guidance is based on recommendations from CDC and WA DOH in an effort to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our center. The reason for wearing a mask is to help protect oneself and all other individuals in the clinic as physical distancing is not always possible.

If the patient continues to refuse a mask:

- A representative of the patient's care team should make every effort to:
  - Understand the reasons why the patient is refusing a mask
  - Explain the reasons why SCCA recommends mask use for patients
  - Provide alternative options based on the reason for refusal (see Table 1)
  - Consult both Patient Relations and Infection Prevention teams.
  - Document the occurrence and alternative plan in the care plan/ electronic health record
  - Mobilize alternative solutions based on the revised care plan

Table 1. Care team options for patient refusing to wear a mask

Patient Status	Scenario/Reasons for Refusal	Alternative Solutions
Symptomatic	Patient reports allergy/irritation with mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer hypoallergenic procedure mask. Note: to obtain this, please contact SCCA storeroom.</li> </ul>
	Patient refuses to wear a mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If known in advance arrange and reschedule for a telehealth appointment if possible</li> <li>• If non-essential, reschedule appointment when asymptomatic,</li> <li>• If the patient must be seen, they must be seen in droplet/contact precautions and escorted to the floor for immediate rooming               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow COVID-19 positive policy for travel in the clinic</li> <li>- If multiple appts, discuss with Infection Prevention to address options</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Asymptomatic	Patient reports allergy/irritation with mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer hypoallergenic procedure mask or cloth mask</li> </ul>
	Patient refuses mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If known in advance arrange and reschedule for a telehealth appointment if possible</li> <li>• If non-essential, reschedule appointment</li> <li>• If the patient must be seen, they must be seen in droplet precautions with eye protection</li> </ul>

**Patient refusing COVID-19 Test:**

When a patient refuses a COVID-19 test, a representative of the patient’s care team should make every effort to:

- Attempt to understand the reasons for why the patient is refusing a test (e.g. pain of NP swab, recent negative test, fear of being refused care, etc.)
- Explain rationale for testing – this will vary based on the patient’s care plan

## COVID-19 Response: Patient Refusal to Mask or Test

- Provide alternative testing options based on the reason for refusal. For example, if the patient states discomfort with the nasopharyngeal swab, a nasal swab may be an alternate test
- Consult the patient’s provider to discuss potential changes to care plan if patient refuses testing
- Consult Patient Relations and Infection Prevention teams as necessary
- Document the occurrence and alternative plan in the care plan/electronic health record
- Mobilize alternative solutions based on revised care plan

**Table 2. Care team options for patients refusing COVID-19 testing**

Patient Status	Precautions
Symptomatic	<p>Droplet precautions until they meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)</li> <li>• other symptoms have resolved (for example, no cough or shortness of breath)</li> <li>• at least 10 days have passed since onset of first symptoms</li> </ul> <p>Until the patient meets the criteria above follow the same process outlined in <a href="#">COVID-19 Positive Patient IP Guidance and Workflows</a></p>
Asymptomatic	<p>Standard Precautions</p> <p>If testing for pre-procedure, care team will have to decide the if the treatment/procedure is essential.</p> <p>If procedure is still required, it would have to be completed in Airborne Contact Precautions in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR) or negative pressure room</p>

Additional content:

### **Caregiver refusing to wear a mask on SCCA premises:**

When a caregiver refuses a mask at point of entry screening, primary screeners should alert the patient escort and connect them with the patient and caregiver. The roles of the patient escort is to advise the that SCCA policy requires everyone entering the facility to wear a mask. This guidance is based on recommendations from CDC and WA DOH in an effort to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our center. The reason for wearing a mask is to help protect oneself and all other individuals in the clinic as physical distancing is not always possible.

If the caregiver continues to refuse a mask, the patient escort or a member of the care team should make every effort to:

- Understand the reasons why the patient is refusing a mask
- Explain the reasons why SCCA recommends mask use for patients
- Provide alternative options based on the reason for refusal
  - The caregiver can leave the clinic and wait for the patient.
  - Wear a mask, and accompany the patient to their appointment
- Consult both Patient Relations and Infection Prevention teams.
- Document the occurrence and alternative plan in the care plan/ electronic health record