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COUNTY Obstetrics & Gynecology
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To Whom it May Concern:

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our patients. The CDC recommendations continue to evolve as the incidence of COVID-19 in the United States changes. Currently, available data now indicate that pregnant women may be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as compared with non-pregnant people. There may also be an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth. These possible risks reflect the known association between other viral illnesses (like influenza) and the increased risk of severe maternal illness and pregnancy complication.

SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) spreads primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks, and therefore basic but consistent precautions can be taken to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. **These measures include frequent handwashing, wearing facemasks, avoiding prolonged close (<6 feet) contact with people, and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces.**

It is important that pregnant women be allowed to continue to work and be able to work in a safe and supportive environment with special precautions to avoid contracting COVID-19.

In accordance with the recommendations put forth by CDC and government officials as well as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, we would like employers to take the following into consideration with our patients:

- Provide an opportunity to work in a role with a reduced risk of exposure to COVID-19
- Follow current CDC guidelines and direction from state and local health departments regarding practices to reduce the risk of viral spread
- Implement preventive practices, including social distancing, hand hygiene, frequent surface decontamination and consistent wearing of facemasks for all employees, not just pregnant women
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. If an employee is exposed to someone who has tested positive for the coronavirus or who has traveled to a geographical location with a high concentration of COVID-19, they should be asked to stay home and follow State of Connecticut quarantine guidelines.
- Please do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness for return to work
- Please note the additional recommendation that pregnant women are advised to further reduce their risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the anticipated final 2 weeks of their pregnancy. As such, additional work accommodations are requested during this time.

For our pregnant patients who work in critical infrastructure industries, such as health care services, education, public services, pharmaceuticals and food supply, working from home may not be feasible and their employers should follow the infection prevention and control recommendations put forth by the CDC. If possible based on staffing availability, consider limiting the exposure of pregnant health care professionals to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, especially during higher risk procedures (e.g., aerosol-generating procedures).

We appreciate your taking a moment to support your employees as we, as a society, navigate this extraordinary time.

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