

RSNA publishes COVID-19 radiology surge and post-surge preparedness guidance

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The Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) COVID-19 Task Force has published new documents on COVID-19 surge preparedness and post-COVID-19 preparedness for radiology departments.

Communities and hospitals across the country are either already experiencing or soon expecting large surges of patients with COVID-19, which will stretch thin or exhaust hospital resources including hospital beds, personal protective equipment (PPE), and staff and faculty resources. In coordination with their hospitals, radiology departments need to prepare for the expected patient surge.

The RSNA COVID-19 Task Force Surge Preparedness document lays out a series of steps hospitals can take to prepare for an influx of COVID-19 patients during the outbreak. These steps include patient screening, rapid triage environments and redeploying radiologists to the front lines.

After overcoming the peak of health care resource needs in a region, hospitals and their radiology departments must turn more of their focus to patients whose elective, screening and other time-sensitive imaging examinations have been postponed. General guideposts for initiating this phase include adequate health system resources and sustained decreases in new COVID-19 case presentations and admissions.

It is important to consider that continued school and day care closures may have a substantial impact on the availability of sufficient radiology

staff. Mitigating factors may include staggering work shifts, home workstations for radiologists and capacity for flexing or redeploying staff as needed.

The Post-COVID Surge Radiology Preparedness document provides guidance for managing radiology departments after the COVID-19 patient surge has waned. It outlines approaches for reopening elective imaging services. It addresses how to limit potential patient exposures to [coronavirus](#) and protect health care workers. The document also discusses post-COVID-19 planning and education.

"The RSNA COVID-19 Task Force has developed these insights to help guide radiology groups through the COVID-19 pandemic, providing tools and information to help them best care for their patients in an efficient manner, while protecting their patients and [health care workers](#) from potential exposures," said [task](#) force chair Mahmud Mossa-Basha, M.D., from the University of Washington Medical Center.

RSNA is committed to providing trusted resources to the radiology community as they prepare for and manage patient surges caused by the spread of COVID-19. RSNA established the COVID-19 Task Force to lead RSNA's efforts in educating radiologists and health care professionals about the impact of COVID-19 and develop needed tools to help radiology departments handle the crisis.

The Task Force previously published a best practices guidance document: "RSNA COVID-19 Task Force: Best Practices for Radiology Departments During COVID-19."

The RSNA COVID-19 Task Force has been working to identify and prioritize radiology's needs stemming from the outbreak. In addition to Dr. Mossa-Basha, task force members include Javad R. Azadi, M.D., Johns Hopkins Medicine, Christopher Filippi, M.D., North Shore LIJ

Health System, Maryellen L. Giger, Ph.D., University of Chicago, Jeffrey S. Klein, M.D., University of Vermont (RSNA Board member), Jane Ko, M.D., New York University Langone Health, Brian S. Kuszyk, M.D., Eastern Radiologists, Carolyn C. Meltzer, M.D., Emory University (RSNA Board liaison), Christine O. (Cooky) Menias, M.D., Mayo Clinic, Arizona, Richard E. Sharpe Jr., M.D., Kaiser Permanente, Denver, Bien Soo Tan, M.D., Singapore General Hospital, and Erik M. Velez, M.D., University of Southern California.

Dr. Mossa-Basha noted that the goal of the task force is to provide tools and information to radiologists that will equip them to manage the COVID-19 outbreak.

"These resources include guidance on departmental policies, surge and post-COVID preparedness insights, educational resources and [radiology reporting tools](#)," he said.

More information: "RSNA COVID-19 Task Force: Surge Preparedness." M. Mossa-Basha, J. Ko, J. Azadi, E. Velez, C. Meltzer

"RSNA COVID-19 Task Force: Post-COVID Surge Radiology Preparedness." M. Mossa-Basha, J. Azadi, J. Klein, C. Menias, C. Filippi, BS Tan, E. Velez, J. Ko, C. Meltzer

Provided by Radiological Society of North America

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