

REOPENING YOUR EP LAB FOR ELECTIVE CATHETER ABLATION PROCEDURES

Patients may inevitably be nervous to enter or return to the EP lab in the coming months. However, for some patients catheter ablation is a critical, timely procedure that should not be delayed. Having a plan in place for reopening your EP lab will provide comfort to patients. Below are three steps for reopening your EP Lab for elective catheter ablation procedures.

1 Develop a plan to address new hospital protocols

With your hospital administration, develop a plan to address the following questions:

- **When will the hospital be reopened for elective procedures, specifically catheter ablation?**
- **Will all patients and staff be tested for coronavirus?**
 - How often and how will they be tested?
 - Will the hospital reveal the incidence rate within the hospital?
 - How long will the negative test be valid?
- **What are the new requirements in place to protect staff, patients and their families?**
 - How will coronavirus patients be isolated from other patients coming to the hospital for elective procedures?
 - Will the hospital provide masks or should patients bring their own? What types of masks are acceptable?
 - Where will pre-procedure testing be done?
 - Will there be a waiting room? If so, what will the protocol be and will it be a shared waiting room for all patients? Will family be allowed in the waiting room?
 - What will be the frequency of cleaning/disinfecting waiting rooms, bathrooms and other areas for patients and their family members?
- **What is the Personal Protective Equipment protocol for intubation for staff participating in TEE?**
- **Will catheter ablation procedure protocols change?**
 - Where will patients enter the hospital?
 - Will procedure or recovery times be changed?
 - How will patients be monitored post-procedure?
 - Will patients need to stay in the hospital overnight or will they be discharged same day?
 - Will anesthesia be available for catheter ablation procedures?
- **What are the regulations around family members?**
 - Will family members be able to enter the hospital? How many per patient?
 - Are there any age restrictions for family members?
 - Where will they wait and how will they be notified if and when they can enter?

2 Train your staff

Ensure your employees are familiar with the plan and are executing it appropriately. Post the plan in visible places around the hospitals so staff and patients are constantly reminded of the new protocols in place and make sure employees know and understand what they can and cannot say to patients.

3 Communicate often with your patients

Once finalized and approved by your hospital, share appropriate items from your Reopening Plan with your patients and explain the importance of the procedure, disease management rationale, and applicable State Mandates. Use diagrams or pictures and easy-to-understand text.

Possible mechanisms to communicate plan include email, social media, and direct calls.

- Review the new plan with your patients in real-time so they become aware of the new changes in the EP lab. This will give them the opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns and will also provide comfort knowing there are strict, thoughtful measures in place to keep them safe and protect their health.
- Send a copy of the relevant information in the plan to your patients to reassure them about procedures in place.