

COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

VISION: To improve the health of all Texans.

MISSION: TMA supports Texas physicians by providing distinctive solutions to the challenges they encounter in the care of patients.



Physicians Caring for Texans

Personal Protective Equipment Distribution Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

MAY 15, 2020

What is the TMA PPE Portal?

Because most of the available supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) in Texas was going to other pieces of the health care system, the Texas Medical Association worked with the state to create a separate process for community physicians. TMA established the PPE Portal as a tool to quantify and share with state authorities those physicians' PPE needs.

Who can submit their PPE needs to the TMA PPE Portal?

TMA members and nonmembers or their staff can submit data demonstrating their PPE needs. All practices in the community are eligible, regardless of size, **except for those owned by a hospital**. Practices affiliated with a hospital receive PPE from that facility.

Can I "order" PPE for my practice through the TMA PPE Portal?

No. The TMA Portal is a place where you can tell TMA how much PPE you currently have on hand, and how much you use each day in the current COVID-19 emergency. **Because of the limited supplies and uneven distribution of the PPE, there is no guarantee individual practices will get all – or even some – of what they need.** But the Portal is an important new pathway by which physicians can get at least a portion of the PPE they need because it provides hard data to the state-controlled warehouses.

When and how will I get PPE?

The data you submit to the TMA PPE Portal is sent to the state's Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) partners and Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). The state purchases PPE throughout the worldwide supply chain. The HPPs and RACs are responsible for distributing it. They ship PPE allocated for physicians within their regions to local county medical societies, who then distribute it to individual physician practices.

How will we be notified if and when we will get PPE?

A local county medical society or state warehouse will notify you when and where to pick up PPE as it becomes available.

Where is this PPE from?

The Texas Division of Emergency Management acquires PPE from various manufacturers within the global supply chain. Quality control for PPE is the responsibility of the manufacturer.

How much will the PPE cost?

The PPE you receive from the RAC or HPP through the TMA PPE Portal will be free.

What if I get only a few days' supply of PPE?

Given the current shortage of PPE, HPPs and RACs cannot guarantee how often PPE will be sent to a county medical society. The amount of PPE distributed will vary based on the total amount the county society received. The PPE county societies receive and distribute is completely dependent on the shipments they receive from the RACs and HPPs. County societies do not control what they receive in these highly variable shipments, and each practice will not receive every item it needs.

How often can I submit data to the TMA PPE Portal?

TMA recommends that practices with continued PPE needs submit data through the Portal once per week.

At one point, I was told to complete a STAR or PPE form provided by my RAC. Do I still need to do that?

No. The Texas Division of Emergency Management coordinates requests for PPE using the [State of Texas Assistance Request](#) (STAR). Large health care facilities and hospitals will continue to use this traditional system. That is why TMA worked with the state to create a separate process for community physicians.

What is a Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)?

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) contracts with HPPs, which receive federal funds to help form and coordinate 22 health care coalitions (HCCs) across Texas to improve regional responses to and recovery from disasters and health care emergencies. DSHS tasked the HPPs with managing the distribution of state-acquired PPE. Under contract with DSHS, each HPP must follow DSHS protocols regarding how to distribute this PPE. HPPs and RACs acquiring PPE through other channels have discretion over how to distribute it. The HPPs are a point of contact for physicians, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other health care professionals who have not been able to acquire PPE on their own. To determine which HPP your RAC falls under, refer to the DSHS [contact information](#) or [TMA's county medical society-to-RAC/HPP crosswalk](#).

What is a Regional Advisory Council (RAC)?

Texas established RACs as part of the statewide trauma and emergency response system. They work with regional stakeholders such as hospitals, physicians, nurses, emergency medical service providers, rehabilitation facilities, dispatchers, and community groups.