



## **Speech Language Pathology in Motion, PLLC**

300 Wheeler Road, Suite 106, Hauppauge, NY 11788

829 Old Nichols Road, Islandia, NY 11749

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### **Practice Policies Related to In-Person Treatment During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have recommend utilizing telepractice when possible to deliver treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SLPIM began offering services through telepractice on March 16th, 2020 and will continue to offer this for the foreseeable future.

Effective June 29th, 2020 SLPIM will resume in person treatment as an option at both our Islandia and Hauppauge locations.

According to the CDC, current data suggests that person-to-person transmission most commonly happens during close exposure to a person infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, primarily via respiratory droplets produced when the infected person speaks, coughs, or sneezes. Droplets can land in the mouths, noses, or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs of those within close proximity. Transmission also might occur through contact with contaminated surfaces followed by self-delivery to the eyes, nose, or mouth. The contribution of small respirable particles, sometimes called aerosols or droplet nuclei, to close proximity transmission is currently uncertain. However, airborne transmission from person-to-person over long distances is unlikely.

In person speech language pathology services present inherent risks as they require close contact between the patient and therapist/treatment team for an extended period. SLPIM has implemented infection control measures and is complying with CDC, federal, state, and local government guidelines. There is an inherent possibility of contracting COVID-19 when receiving in person care, despite infection control measures taken by both Speech Language Pathology in Motion, Occupational Therapy in Motion and Pal-O-Mine Equestrian. The following information contained in this document should be considered when determining if in person speech language pathology services are appropriate for the patient at this time.

The following conditions may place a patient at higher risk when receiving in person treatment:

- Patient has an underlying medical condition which may exacerbate COVID-19 symptoms.
- Patient has difficulty understanding or following social distancing guidelines, performing appropriate hand hygiene, and/or adhering to safety protocols.
- Patient is unable to wear a face covering or mask.
- Patient requires physical contact or assistance from the therapist/treatment team to assist with balance, ambulating, transferring and/or mobility.
- Patient requires physical contact or assistance from therapist/treatment team due to behavior difficulties (i.e. needing their hand held/risk for elopement, decreased safety awareness, presence of aggressive or self-injurious behaviors etc.).
- Patient is not able to refrain from touching his/her face/mouth/nose during treatment.
- Patient has difficulty independently managing saliva and/or frequently drools.
- Patient is prone to placing toys and/or therapy materials in or around his/her mouth.



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Additional considerations for determining if in-person treatment will be more beneficial than telepractice:

- Will the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) by therapist impact client's ability to benefit from treatment?
- Will SLP services delivered with the use of PPE and reduced physical contact be more effective than services delivered via telepractice?

To receive in-person treatment at this time, the patient or their parent/guardian must agree to adhere to the policies below. In addition, the patient or the patient's parent/guardian must indicate that they feel that the benefits of in-person treatment delivery outweigh the potential risks.

Reopening policies:

1. At the start of each therapy session, a COVID-19 screening questionnaire will be completed. The patient or the patient's parent/guardian/caregiver will be asked to respond to the following questions:

**A) Has the patient or anyone residing with the patient tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?**

**B) Has the patient or anyone residing with the patient had any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. fever, cough, loss of taste, loss of smell, flu like symptoms, aches, chills, G.I. upset) in the past 14 days?**

**C) Has the patient or anyone residing with the patient been in contact with anyone who has been confirmed to be COVID-19 positive in the past 14 days?**

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, in-person treatment will not be provided.

2. All visitor's temperatures will be taken at the start of the session using a contact-less thermometer. If the patient, or anyone accompanying the patient to the session have a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, the patient will be sent home immediately.
3. SLPIM is asking clients to minimize the number of people accompanying the patient to the session to 1 parent or caregiver whenever possible. All visitors are required to wear a face covering/mask unless they are unable to do so due to a medical reason or disability, or they are under the age of 2. We ask that you bring your own masks/face coverings. If you do not arrive with one, we will provide you with one. If the patient is unable to tolerate a mask/face covering the therapist/therapy team may wear additional PPE and/or modify the treatment plan as needed as a precaution.
4. Patients will be asked to clean their hands at the beginning and end of the session.
5. To ensure the highest quality service delivery and to allow for additional safety measures, SLPIM will only schedule 45-minute sessions at our Hauppauge and Islandia locations this time. Sessions will be scheduled on the hour and will start and end on time. Session time includes time for the COVID-19 screening and any parent/guardian/caregiver education/discussion time. Following your session, your therapist will have 15 minutes to complete session documentation and cleaning and sanitizing protocols. It is critical that your session is ended on time to ensure this is completed properly prior to the next



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patient's arrival. If you arrive late to your session your session will still end on time. We will offer 30-minute sessions via telepractice only.

6. If a patient or anyone accompanying them to the session is showing any signs of sickness and/or allergies, they will be sent home immediately.
7. In-person treatment may be denied if the patient is unable to tolerate the use of a face covering or personal protective equipment (PPE) by others (i.e. attempts to remove masks from therapist/treatment team, or becomes fearful when seeing therapist in PPE and therefore is unable to benefit from the session when PPE is used).
8. In-person treatment may be denied or discontinued at any time at the discretion of the therapist/SLPIM if it is determined that continuing the session may put the patient or treatment team at risk for any reason, including but not limited to observed signs/symptoms of illness, and/or behavior difficulties, that place the patient or treatment team at risk of increased contact or exposure.
9. If any person, who comes to either of SLPIM's physical locations, tests positive for COVID-19, they agree that they will inform SLPIM immediately.
10. If we become aware of a positive COVID-19 case associated at either of our locations we will contact all clients immediately and implement protocols in accordance with the CDC, state and federal guidelines.
11. Sessions may be switched to telepractice at any time, if deemed necessary by the treating therapist/SLPIM. Patients are expected to attend their sessions despite location changes.

The following protocols are specific to our Hauppauge Location:

1. Clients are asked to arrive promptly for their scheduled sessions. If you arrive early, please wait in your car until the session start time to minimize time in the waiting room.
2. A face covering or mask is required when entering the building (exceptions will be made for those who are under the age of 2 or cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons or a disability). Clients will be brought into a treatment room upon arrival with a parent/guardian/caregiver. Parent/guardian/caregiver will be asked to complete COVID-19 Screening questions and assist with hand hygiene if needed. Parent/guardian/caregiver must remain on site for the duration of the session. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be asked to assist with transfers, management of behavior difficulties and hygiene as needed. Parent/guardian/caregiver may be asked to remain in the treatment room for the duration of the session or to wait in their car to minimize the number of people in the waiting room. No more than 2 people may wait in the waiting room at a time, masks must be worn, and 6 feet distance must be maintained in accordance with CDC guidelines.
3. All unnecessary items have been removed from the waiting room. We will not be using sensory bins, or therapy materials and equipment that are not easily cleaned at this time. All items utilized in the session and all contact surfaces will be thoroughly disinfected between clients.

The following protocols are specific to our Islandia Location, on the property of Pal-O-Mine Equestrian:

1. Please arrive to your session promptly and remain in your car. Your therapist will meet you at your car to start your session. The waiting room will be closed. Parent/caregiver must remain on site for the duration of the session.
2. Masks/shields will be worn by everyone who is physically and cognitively able to do so. If the patient will not or cannot wear a mask or shield, Pal-O-Mine is requiring that the temperatures of all people who are in the car with them are taken.



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3. All family members/visitors are asked to wait inside their cars. Family members may exit the car to access the bathroom building and as restrictions lessen may be permitted to wait in other designated areas only if face masks are worn and social distancing from other families is adhered to.
4. The bathroom building will be open for use. It will be cleaned and disinfected each night.
5. There will be a hand sanitizing station located in the parking lot. All patients must sanitize their hands upon arrival and again at the end of the session.
6. Pal-O-Mine will be conducting a health screening of all personnel when they arrive for the day. In addition, a log will be kept of all visitors for contract tracing purposes.
7. We will no longer be able to offer patients the use of borrowed helmets. Patients are required to arrive to their sessions with their own helmet. The helmet must fit properly and be ASTM/SEI approved for horseback riding.
8. Equipment will be cleaned between sessions. Patient's may also opt to bring a clean towel to their session to be placed over the equipment on the horse as a barrier between the patient and the horse/equipment.
9. Families will be asked to leave promptly after their session to allow for disinfecting and to limit the number of people on site.
10. Sessions may be switched to the Hauppauge location or telepractice at the discretion of the treating therapist/SLPIM. Patients are expected to attend their sessions as scheduled despite location changes.

Risk factors may change over time. The treating therapist and/or SLPIM may refuse to provide in person treatment at any time if it is determined that in person treatment places the patient or treatment team at unreasonable risk.