Another week, and another seismic change in this pandemic.

As you may have heard, San Diego just announced that everybody should be wearing a mask or face covering when they are out in public. All of our staff in the office will be wearing masks when they are interacting with you. There is now some new evidence that shows that the virus may be more easily transmissible than previously thought. What is important to realize is that is STILL thought that most transmission occurs if you have the virus on your hands and then touch part of your face where it can enter through mucous membranes such as your eyes, nose, or mouth. While it is possible, it is much less likely to be transmitted just through the air. Because people that have a mask on the face touch their faces more often than if they don’t, make doubly sure that you have cleaned or sanitized your hands before you touch your face. It is also important to know that you DO NOT need a medical-grade mask, especially an N95 mask. I work with many of the hospitalists at Scripps La Jolla, and I do know that the hospital has a shortage of many supplies, including masks. Several people have said that they are making homemade masks which, although are not approved to donate to hospital settings, are perfectly adequate for your own personal use when you are out. If you end up obtaining some homemade masks for personal use and have a supply of medical-grade masks to donate, please let us know as they will be extremely appreciated by the hospital staff.

At our office, we are starting a new HIPAA compliant platform for telemedicine visits. You can access it through an app on iPhones or android phones by searching for “Chiron Health.” If you use a computer, you will need to have Google Chrome or Firefox as the browser. If you currently have a virtual visit set up and you want to change it to the Chiron app, please contact the office so we can change your appointment. Once you have a Chiron appointment booked, you will receive an email giving you instructions on how to set up the app and how the app works. They will also have you run a test to make sure everything is functioning well. Please be sure to do this well in advance of your appointment time so there can be time for troubleshooting if things don’t work the first time.

At this time we are still closed on Fridays, but we will be setting up telemedicine visits with PA Lea on Friday mornings. Nurse Practitioner Patti will also be back in the office on Wednesdays starting April 8. Because it will likely be a few months before we get back to normal, we may not have enough time to do annual physical exams on everyone that would like one this year. If you would like, you can do your lab work, and we can set up a virtual telemedicine visit in case you are not able to do your physical this year. For those of you who do not want to go to the lab to have blood drawn, there are several companies that provide mobile lab services. Someone will come out to your house wearing protective gear and draw your blood there and bring it to the lab of your choice. The average cost is around $75, although one company (VeniExpress) states that MedicarePart B will cover it. I cannot confirm this, so please check for yourself. Just let us know which company you want to use, and we will fax your order form to them. Here are some companies we looked at, but you can certainly find one yourself.

Veni Express: 877-670-8364

Phleetbo: 714-406-3435

Express Tech: 800-400-4118

Remember to stay home as much as you can, clean you hands often, and use a face covering if you do go out!