ADC Advisory Notice 4 - COVID-19: ADCI Dive Medical Exams Vs. COVID-19 Risk

As the COVID-19 situation ramps up, concerns about the health risk to divers coming into the clinic for annual dive medicals have been expressed by industry stakeholders. This advisory notice is sanctioned by the ADCI Physicians Diving Advisory Committee (PDAC) and is intended to clarify the issue of whether dive physicians will continue perform dive medical examinations during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been decided that the decision to perform dive medical examinations should be left up to the individual physician, in conjunction with the diving contractors that they service, to determine how to approach this situation. While it may be totally appropriate to continue examinations in some areas, it may be inappropriate to continue examinations in other areas that have more COVID-19 cases. Proper screening protocols should be put into place prior to testing. If physicians are able to completely segregate individuals with symptoms from those that are healthy, they should be able to continue to provide care for healthy individuals.

The ADCI, under advisement from PDAC, is granting a 1 July 2020 extension on a case-by-case basis for those dive medicals that are about to expire. Diving Physicians will need to review the previous dive physicals to determine if the extension will be granted.

It should be noted that the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) advises suspension of routine occupational spirometry testing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Spirometry, the most frequently performed pulmonary function test (PFT), is the cornerstone of occupational respiratory surveillance programs.
Myth Busting
False information about the virus, including transmission, prevention strategies, and potential treatments are circulating on the internet and social media. To help curb these theories and provide accurate information, the World Health Organization (WHO) has put together this helpful myth busters site:


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Chairman, Physicians Diving Advisory Committee, ADCI

This Information was sent to further the communication of all industry stakeholders. Safety is the primary concern of the ADCI. Remember: a real-time Job Hazard Analysis is important, but nothing can replace good common sense.

Sincerely,

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We would appreciate your comments or suggestions. Your email will be kept private and confidential.