



Elective Surgeries & Nonessential Medical Procedures

The State's partial ban on elective surgeries and nonessential medical procedures remains in effect until June 25. Under these restrictions, practices may resume elective surgeries and nonessential medical procedures only if they meet one of the two categories:

- 1) Further delay will pose a significant risk to quality of life; or
- 2) Any outpatient surgery or procedure so long as the hospital or provider complies with the following:

a) PPE Supply:

- i) Adequate inventories of personal protective equipment (PPE) and access to a reliable supply chain without relying on state or local government PPE stockpiles to support continued operations and respond to an unexpected surge in a timely manner; and
- ii) A plan to conserve PPE consistent with guidance from the CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health;

b) COVID-19 Testing

- i) Must have a plan for timely COVID-19 testing of symptomatic patients and staff to rapidly mitigate potential clusters of infection and as otherwise clinically indicated.
- ii) Must comply with any relevant guidance related to testing requirements for patients and staff issued by the Iowa Department of Public Health, the CDC, or a provider's professional specialty society.
- iii) For scheduled surgeries patients should have a negative COVID-19 test performed within 48 hours of surgery date.
- iv) If a COVID-19 test is not available, a hospital or provider should consider alternative methods to determine the patient's probability of COVID-19. If the patient has symptoms of fever, cough, or low oxygen saturation, then postponing the surgery is recommended.

c) Hospital-Only Requirements

- i) Must continue to accept and treat COVID-19 patients and must not transfer COVID-19 patients to create capacity for elective procedures.
- ii) Must reserve at least 10% of intensive care unit (ICU) beds and 10% of medical/surgical beds for COVID-19 patients.

A hospital or provider conducting surgeries or procedures as authorized by the order that is no longer able to satisfy all these requirements must cease providing any surgeries or procedures that do not meet the criteria for an essential service. All hospitals and providers shall have a plan in place to monitor compliance and a transition plan to reduce or suspend procedures or surgeries as necessary.

Essential Surgeries & Medical Procedures

Under the current order, all other elective surgeries and nonessential procedures that utilize PPE remain prohibited unless they meet the criteria to qualify as essential. These include surgeries or procedures that, if delayed, would cause risk to the current or future health of a patient including, but not limited to any:

- 1) Threat to the patient's life if the surgery or procedure is not performed;
- 2) Threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system;
- 3) Risk of metastasis or progression of staging; or
- 4) Risk of rapidly worsening to severe symptoms.

For all services, the order also requires that practices limit all nonessential individuals in surgery and procedure suites and patient care areas where PPE is required. Only individuals essential to conducting the surgery or procedure shall be present in such areas. Practices must establish an internal governance structure to ensure that the requirements outlined above are followed.

Enforcement

The Board of Medicine has issued further clarification to guide determination of elective surgeries and nonessential procedures. Routine screening procedures for patients without symptoms or additional risk factors are considered nonessential. Instances of trauma, uncontrolled bleeding, or malignancy are considered essential. All other procedures should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with the ordering physician, the patient, and external review staff as necessary to determine the essential nature of the procedure. This order is specific to the actions of an individual licensee. Enforcement of this ban will be on a complaint-driven basis with the Board of Medicine investigating each complaint to determine the essential nature of procedures in question. Violation of the order may result in disciplinary action or criminal charges. The order establishes similar restrictions for dental and orthodontic procedures.

Additional Guidance

This summary document does not constitute legal guidance. Practices are strongly encouraged to contact their legal counsel and medical liability carrier prior to making determinations regarding the resumption of elective surgeries and nonessential medical services. In addition, the following resources may be helpful in helping practices prepare:

[Joint Statement on Roadmap for Resuming Elective Surgery](#)

[American College of Surgeons: Guidance for Local Resumption of Elective Surgery](#)

[CMS: Recommendations Reopening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent Non-COVID-19 Healthcare](#)

[COPIC: Suggested Approach for Resuming Elective Surgeries & Procedures](#)