



Montana Hospital Association Consensus Statement Regarding Resumption of Elective Procedures April 22, 2020

The Montana Hospital Association (MHA) recommended the cessation of elective procedures on March 26, 2020 in support efforts to ensure hospitals could safely and effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the recommendation was made, Montana was facing an unprecedented threat to the health of its citizenry. As of today, Montana is experiencing a significant reduction in the rate of infection and the state's projected death rate has been revised downward to 22 from a high of 268.

The results to date have dramatically changed the healthcare environment. The successful public health response has restored hospitals' ability to effectively treat patients, including those infected with COVID-19, and safely resume elective procedures. Flattening of the disease curve, robust bed availability and extensive surge planning has strengthened hospital response and preparedness.

MHA supports the decision of hospital leaders to resume elective procedures upon lifting of the "stay at home" order issued by the Governor. The resumption of surgeries provided in hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers should include the following considerations:

- All organizations choosing to resume elective procedures should have an established plan in place to safely phase-in surgeries based on sound clinical judgement. Guidelines established by the American College of Surgeons should be used as a benchmark in developing individual resumption plans;
- Measures to ensure necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) for clinical staff and patients must be in place when elective procedures resume;
- All policies governing the resumption of elective procedure should include flexibility to ensure services can be adjusted in response to any change in public health conditions or surge in COVID-19 cases;
- Guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other regulatory agencies should be followed to ensure uniform compliance and public safety.

MHA members are committed to ensuring the protection of our patients and caregivers as we move into a new phase of healthcare delivery. As an association, we have collaborated in the development of our policy guidance regarding the resumption of elective procedures. Keeping patients safe and the public focused on measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 is of utmost importance to the hospitals of Montana.

Consensus Statement:

All Montana hospitals shall be free to determine when to resume elective procedures following the lifting of Montana's "stay at home" order issued by the Governor. Such determination should include: a plan to safely phase-in procedures based on clinical judgement, using the guidelines developed by the American College of Surgeons as a benchmark; sufficient availability of personal protective equipment; flexible policies permitting immediate response to any COVID-19 surge; and alignment with established guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other regulatory agencies. This resumption strategy will ensure the continued focus on patient safety and delivery of the highest quality services for our patients and caregivers.