



DATE: April 22, 2020  
TO: All MultiCare Leaders, Physicians and APPs  
MultiCare Connected Care Providers  
FROM: CEO Council  
SUBJECT: Re-evaluating postponed surgeries, procedures and diagnostic tests

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In March, we postponed non-emergent surgeries and procedures to conserve our personal protective equipment, ensure bed capacity for an anticipated surge and to comply with Gov. Jay Inslee's order to pause this activity.

Thank you for help in reviewing your cases to determine which ones needed to proceed and which ones could be safely delayed. In total, MultiCare paused more than 3,000 surgeries and procedures out of an abundance of caution and concern for patient and employee safety, our uncertain PPE inventory and bed availability.

Now, more than a month later, things have changed for the better. Our social interventions have helped flatten the curve. While we still need to follow our PPE conservation measures, we are in a better position to ensure sufficient supplies to take care of our patients.

Evidence also indicates that the surge in COVID-19 cases in our communities has passed, giving us capacity to handle more surgeries and procedures. **We have the ability to perform procedures safely for both our patients and staff.**

With these factors in mind, the time has come to review all the delayed surgeries, procedures and diagnostic tests again. **Please schedule any patient procedures which may include imaging, lab, interventional procedures and surgeries that in your clinical judgment you believe would cause your patients harm if further delayed.**

Clinical considerations include:

- Will postponement result in delay in diagnosis?
- Will postponement result in delay in treatment?
- Will postponement cause potential harm?
- Will postponement create undo anxiety or emotional distress?
- Will postponement create financial hardship?
- Will proceeding alleviate pain?
- If it is "routine" or "surveillance, how long is it safe to delay?

Any cases now deemed necessary should be scheduled through our normal process. This will allow us to get patients the care they need as soon as possible. The clinical judgment supporting the scheduling and treatment determination should be documented in patient records.

We also want to take this opportunity to remind you that **it's appropriate to schedule new surgeries, procedures and diagnostic tests for patients you are currently seeing** if the delay has the potential to cause harm. The clinical judgment supporting the scheduling should be documented in patient records.

We are also working on a plan to resume all surgeries and procedures once the governor's order is lifted. We will share those plans once they are developed.

We will closely monitor our PPE, testing supplies and COVID-19 activity in our communities and facilities to ensure we are practicing as safely as possible. If we have a surge in COVID-19 activity that jeopardizes patient safety or PPE availability we will communicate appropriately as to any steps necessary to adjust our scheduling and treatment activities.

Please share this information with others who need to be aware of this guidance. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and hard work during this uncertain time.

CEO Council:

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