

CMS RECOMMENDS LIMITING ALL NON-ESSENTIAL PLANNED SURGERIES AND PROCEDURES IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

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CMS released guidance on limiting all elective surgeries and non-essential adult medical, surgical and dental procedures in order to conserve critical healthcare resources such as ventilators and Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) and to limit the potential exposure of patients and healthcare staff to COVID-19. CMS specifically recommends that all non-essential dental exams and procedures be postponed until further notice as they have one of the highest risks of transmission due to the proximity of the healthcare provider to the patient. Given the current public health emergency, these considerations will assist in managing the critical healthcare resources.

While the ultimate decision remains with the local healthcare delivery systems, CMS published a tiered framework to assist systems in considering resource conservation along with the risks and benefits of all planned procedures. It is expected that these recommendations will fluctuate over the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak. Decisions on elective cases should be made in consultation with the hospital, physician, patient and other public health professionals. CMS advises case-by-case evaluations for all non-essential procedures and suggests that the following factors be considered in addition to the clinical situation:

- Current and projected COVID-19 cases in the facility and region,
- Supply of PPE to the facilities in the system,
- Staffing availability,
- Bed availability, especially intensive care unit (“ICU”) beds,
- Ventilator availability,
- Health and age of the patient, especially given the risks of concurrent COVID-19 infection during recovery, and
- Urgency of the procedure.

The current version of CMS’s framework can be found [here](#). Hancock Daniel’s [COVID-19 Taskforce](#) is prepared to assist with any issues or questions related to the coronavirus.

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