



Guidance Issued for Elective Surgeries and Procedures, Expanded Availability of COVID-19 Testing

April 28, 2020

The Illinois Department of Public Health has released new [guidance](#) for elective surgeries and procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Effective May 11, hospitals and ambulatory surgical treatment centers (ASTCs) may begin to perform elective procedures that had previously been postponed to conserve resources for the care of COVID-19 patients, but they must meet several criteria in doing so.

For both inpatient and outpatient procedures, facilities must fulfill several conditions detailed in section D of the guidance, including:

- Convening a Surgical Review Committee to develop and implement guidelines for prioritizing elective inpatient procedures;
- Testing each patient for COVID-19 within 72 hours of a scheduled procedure and following certain procedures to ensure negative status and reduce face-to-face contact as much as possible;
- Ensuring adequate supply of personal protective equipment; and
- Implementing several additional facility-wide infection control procedures.

Once the above conditions are met, the facility may proceed with appropriate elective **outpatient** procedures. Facilities wishing to resume elective **inpatient** procedures must also take into account facility and regional hospital capacity and ensure that three resource-utilization conditions, described in section C of the guidance, are met:

1. Hospital availability of adult medical/surgical beds exceeds 20% of operating capacity for adult medical/surgical beds
2. Hospital availability of ICU beds exceeds 20% of operating capacity for ICU beds
3. Hospital ventilator availability exceeds 20% of total ventilators

If any of the above conditions are not fulfilled, elective inpatient procedures are not permissible. The sole exception is for pediatric procedures, which can proceed on an inpatient or outpatient basis even if the regional capacity conditions in section C are not met; the section D facility requirements must still be met, however.

The Department reserves the right to modify this guidance and/or re-suspend elective procedures at any time, as conditions evolve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other important notes:

- This guidance gives facilities broad discretion to prioritize their cases and perform elective surgeries and procedures, but we are aware of continued challenges with regard to the availability of the required COVID-19 RT-PCR tests.
- Individual health systems and facilities or national specialty societies may have their own recommendations or additional guidelines regarding resumption of elective procedures; this guidance reflects only the requirements put in place by the State of Illinois.
- **IDPH has also released new [guidance](#) that expands availability of COVID-19 testing** to individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath and fever) OR have a risk factor, such as contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19, a compromised immune system, or a serious chronic medical condition.

As always, ISMS and ISMIE will keep members and policyholders informed regarding new developments.