



Minnesota Hospital Association

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Minnesota hospitals, health systems postpone elective surgeries, nonessential procedures in line with federal, state recommendations

ST. PAUL – To protect patients and staff and in order to conserve personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment in Minnesota, hospitals and health systems are taking action today to postpone and defer elective surgeries and nonessential procedures. This is in line with an executive order issued by Gov. Tim Walz March 19, as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) (CDC) and [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](https://www.cms.gov) (CMS). MHA sent a [letter](#) to Walz and Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm March 17 requesting that this step be taken statewide.

“We thank the governor for following the recommendations from the CDC and professional medical organizations and applying this policy across the state,” said Dr. Rahul Koranne, president and CEO, Minnesota Hospital Association (MHA). “While this is a difficult decision for the hospital and health system community, it is the right thing to do in order to protect our patients and preserve supplies, equipment and staffing for the most urgent and time-sensitive patient needs. We need to make sure we can protect our front-line care teams with supplies and prepare for the inevitable surge of COVID-19 patients. We recognize that this will be very disappointing to our patients and we want to care for them, but this protects their health as well. We will rely on our physicians to ensure that surgeries and procedures that are lifesaving and needed for the health of our patients will continue to go forward.”

The CDC and CMS recommendations outline factors that should be considered for postponing elective surgeries and nonessential medical, surgical and dental procedures. Those factors include patient risk factors; availability of beds, staff and PPE; and the urgency of the procedure.

Under Walz’s executive order, Minnesota health care settings including hospitals, health systems and ambulatory surgery centers will postpone nonessential surgeries and procedures that can be delayed without negative consequence to patients such as a threat to life, permanent disability including to teeth or jaw, and spreading metastasis or a delay in cancer staging. Hospitals and health systems will work directly with patients affected by this executive order.

“Patients who have upcoming elective surgeries or procedures will be contacted by their health care

provider regarding their care plans in light of the postponement,” Koranne said. “Concerned patients should contact their health care provider with any questions.”

Hospitals and health systems want all Minnesotans to practice diligent **social distancing now in order to reduce the number of cases in our state and reduce the surge of patients who will need hospital level of care.**

“If all Minnesotans act together now, we may be able to reduce the surge that our health system will see,” said Koranne. “Our hospitals, health systems and care teams need your immediate help and proactive actions.”

Hospitals and health systems want to emphasize for community members that **if you are concerned about your symptoms, call your health care provider.** Your provider will work with you to determine whether you should be tested for COVID-19 and may only recommend testing if you meet certain criteria. You may be asked to isolate at home and monitor your symptoms at the direction of your provider.

Hospitals and health systems also want to be sure patients are receiving the right care in the right location. **Based on your symptoms, you may not need to come to a hospital or clinic.** It cannot be emphasized enough: hospital care needs to be preserved for those who are acutely ill. Patients should not visit the hospital emergency department unless they are experiencing an emergency situation. Your provider can help you determine if you should come in.

The Minnesota Hospital Association represents Minnesota’s hospitals and health systems, which provide quality care for their patients and meet the needs of their communities.

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