

Governor Phil Murphy

New Jersey Department of Health Releases Guidelines on Resuming Elective Surgeries

05/19/2020

Today the Department of Health issued guidelines on the conditions for hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers to begin resuming elective surgeries. Last week, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order No. 145, allowing elective surgeries and invasive procedures, both medical and dental, to resume on Tuesday, May 26.

“Hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers are encouraged to gradually resume full scope of services when possible and safe to do so consistent with the Department’s guidance,” **said New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. “This is an important step forward for individuals who are battling an illness or are dealing with chronic pain as these surgeries are vital to their health and well-being.”

Facilities shall establish a prioritization policy for providing care and scheduling of these procedures. Scheduling must be coordinated to promote social distancing: minimize time in waiting areas, stage appointment hours and post signs at entrances in appropriate languages about symptoms and precautions.

Patients should be counseled to self-quarantine following testing until the day of surgery. Facilities must have a process to screen patients for COVID-19 symptoms prior to scheduled procedures.

Facilities resuming elective services are required to:

- Comply with state and CDC guidelines to protect against further spread of COVID-19
- Institute screening of staff for symptoms and have policies in place for removal of symptomatic employees
- Enforce social distancing requirements in work and common areas
- Require masks for patients, expect patients receiving services that would not allow for masking
- When possible non-COVID care zones should be used in facilities that serve both COVID-19 and non-COVID patients
- Have an established plan for cleaning and disinfection prior to using facilities to serve non-COVID patients
- Facilities providing COVID-19 care should continue to be prepared for potential surges
- Facilities should be prepared to modify resumptions of clinical services in conjunction with surge status and to repurpose and redeploy staff to urgent care roles to the extent feasible

Ambulatory Surgical Centers should not perform procedures on COVID-19 positive patients.

Hospitals should have available—and staffed ICU, Critical Care and Medical Surgical beds.

They must have a sustained downward trajectory for 14-days, with each day's data calculated using the average of the three most recent days

- Influenza-like illness or COVID-19 like illness
- COVID-19 Infection rates
- COVID-19 Hospitalizations
- COVID-19 Emergency room admissions
- COVID-19 ICU, Critical Care and Medical Surgical bed use
- Ventilator use
- Ventilatory availability

Facilities must also have a plan, consistent with CDC and Department recommendations, for patient and patient support person use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). They should implement PPE policies that account for: adequacy of available PPE, staff training on and optimized use of PPE and policies for the conservation of PPE.

Facilities must implement disinfection and cleaning protocols and cohort COVID-19 patients and non-COVID patients. No visitors should be allowed except for limited circumstances, which includes labor and delivery and pediatric patient surgery.

To view the guidance for hospitals please visit: https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/5-19-2020_HospitalGuidance_forResumingElectives.pdf (https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/5-19-2020_HospitalGuidance_forResumingElectives.pdf)

To view guidance for ambulatory surgery centers please visit: https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/5-19-2020_ASCGuidance_forResumingElectives.pdf (https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/5-19-2020_ASCGuidance_forResumingElectives.pdf)

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