

## Memorandum

**To:** Perioperative (Surgical) Services Staff, Surgeons and Anesthesiologists  
**From:** Dr. Marcy Saxe-Braithwaite, Senior Director, Perioperative (Surgical) Services  
Dr. Greg Hirsch, Senior Medical Director, Perioperative (Surgical) Services  
**Date:** March 17, 2020  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Response and Cancellation of Elective/Non-urgent Surgeries

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To support efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and the conservation and redeployment of resources, Nova Scotia Health Authority is temporarily suspending a number of services.

This includes the cancellation of non-urgent/elective procedures, clinics, surgeries and appointments.

Effective March 18, 2020, all elective surgeries are being cancelled until further notice. Time-sensitive cancer surgeries and other urgent surgeries will continue to be provided. Emergency cases will continue with only level 1 and level 2 cases completed after hours.

These measures will help limit non-essential pre-operative and post-operative interactions for patients and clinicians within our day surgery units, operating rooms, post-anesthesia care units, and surgical units. They will also allow us to preserve vital human and equipment resources, and create capacity to establish COVID-19 units in designated hospitals.

Examples of non-urgent/elective cases include, but not exclusive to:

- Arthroplasty, Arthroscopy, extremity surgery
- Elective Cholecystectomy, non-incarcerated hernia surgery, non-urgent upper and lower endoscopy, hemorrhoidectomy, nissen fundoplication
- Tonsillectomy, tubes, septoplasty, sinus surgery, sleep apnea surgery, benign head and neck, undetermined or low suspicion head and neck lesion, non-urgent laryngoscopy
- Hydrocele, circumcision, TURPs
- Varicose veins, non-limb threatening claudication, non-life threatening aneurysms
- Ovarian cystectomy, tubal ligation, uterine ablation, hysterectomy

Please work with local leadership to identify local specific needs and proceed with implementation by cancelling elective operating cases starting today, March 17, 2020.

Information on these and other service changes, is being shared with the public at [www.nshealth.ca/temporaryclosures](http://www.nshealth.ca/temporaryclosures).

For more information and updates, please visit <http://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus>.

As a health care organization, it is important that we take these steps to reduce the spread of illness and support our ability to deliver vital services.

We recognize such changes can have a big impact on your patients and also acknowledge the concerns some providers have about how such changes may impact your practices. We are working closely with our partners in government and Doctors Nova Scotia relative to these concerns.

Thank you for your cooperation and support during this challenging time.