



Technical Bulletin



Date: December 14, 2020
Topic: Requirement for Hospitals to Report Ban on Medically Necessary Procedures
Contact: Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D., Chief Medical Officer, State of Nevada
To: All Nevada Hospitals

Overview:

This Technical Bulletin is addressed to all Nevada hospitals. The Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) is requiring Nevada hospitals to notify the Division within 24 hours of any intention or decision to implement a ban on medically necessary procedures.

Nevada is in the midst of an alarmingly high COVID-19 incidence. As of December 9, 2020, the state has recorded the highest number of cases diagnosed on a single day, 3,450 positive test results. This is more than double the previous highest peak, which was 1,638 cases on July 10, 2020. Additionally, the 14-day test positivity rate has reached 22.3% and is expected to continue rising as a result of the Thanksgiving-related surge. Such a high test positivity rate indicates that COVID-19 continues to actively spread within Nevada communities in a concerning manner. Subsequently, lagging indicators such as hospitalization, intensive care use, and mechanical ventilation started to increase in an overwhelming manner. In a single month period, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients has increased by more than 230% and the need for mechanical ventilation has increased more than 250%, straining the health care system.

As the need to provide timely medical care for severe and critical COVID-19 patients is rapidly exceeding the capacity of the state health care system, and is expected to worsen as we approach the holiday season, the Nevada Crisis Standards of Care (CSC) Plan provides the option for hospitals and other health care facilities to selectively cancel or postpone medically necessary, non-urgent medical or surgical procedures, and appointments. These options may include, but are not limited to, discontinuation of medically necessary surgeries, strict ICU admission criteria, increasing inventory of key equipment, medications, and optimizing staffing levels. The Nevada CSC Plan aims to focus the efforts to spare existing human resources and procure as much needed equipment, supplies and other resources as possible.

In order to ensure the state readiness and to timely assist the health care system in facing these unprecedented challenges, effective immediately, all hospitals are required to notify the Division of Public and Behavioral Health within 24 hours of any decisions or intention taken by the hospital to discontinue medically necessary surgical procedures and provide the dates that these procedures will remain in effect.

Reporting:

Please notify the Division of any intention or decision to implement a ban on medically necessary procedures by emailing lsherych@health.nv.gov and jpfilippi@health.nv.gov.

For updated guidance, please review the DPBH Technical Bulletin [website](#) and Nevada's health response [website](#) regularly.

Lisa Sherych, Administrator
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D.
Chief Medical Officer