



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

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Gov. Sisolak: Nevada ready to resume limited medical and dental procedures

Carson City, NV — Today, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak announced the Nevada Hospital Association is preparing to resume medically necessary procedures for care that has been delayed after the hospitals began to cease such procedures to support COVID-19 efforts to ensure hospitals could safely and effectively respond to the pandemic and provide healthcare to patients.

"While the State has been focused on battling the COVID-19 public health crisis, I know many of our hospitals, medical practices and dentist offices proactively paused medically necessary services to help flatten the curve, preserve personal protective equipment and help residents Stay Home for Nevada," **Gov Steve Sisolak said.** "While many states are now rolling back restrictions, Nevada never had to restrict these surgeries by an emergency directive because our responsible communities took it upon themselves."

This move aligns with other states in the nation, who previously restricted these types of procedures, and are now relaxing the restrictions. Nevada's Medical Advisory Team also supports the phased-in approach to resume limited medical and dental procedures under strict guidelines.

"The Governor's quick response to implement and maintain appropriate social distancing and close non-essential businesses, coupled with diligent health care efforts, have flattened the curve, stabilized hospitalization rates and ensured the ability of hospitals to respond to changing needs of COVID19," **said Bill Welch, president and CEO of the Nevada Hospital Association.** "Nevada hospitals share the Governor's goals for putting the health and safety of Nevadans first."

Nevada hospitals will provide medically necessary procedures based on an established plan to safely phase-in procedures based on:

- Clinical judgment
- Established guidelines
- Sufficient availability of personal protective equipment
- Flexible policies permitting immediate response to any COVID-19 surge
- Alignment with established guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and other regulatory agencies.

In response to COVID-19 and the need to ensure that hospitals have the capacity to treat patients and have sufficient resources -- including personal protective equipment (PPE) -- Nevada's medical and dental community adjusted business activities, continuing to treat patients in emergency situations, but postponing others.

This commitment to postpone routine/elective procedures, along with strong social distancing measures, and extensive surge planning helped flattened the curve. At this time, healthcare professionals may wish to consider methods of gradually restarting their operations consistent with state regulatory requirements, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines, state licensure boards, and direction from state and national professional associations.

A memorandum from the Department of Health and Human Services will be released to phase-in essential dental services that minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission to patients, healthcare workers, and the community by maximizing protective measures while avoiding dental neglect and further delays in providing dental care. This phased in approach to expand dental services will address acute infections and chronic disease progression while allowing the state to monitor sustained reduction in the rate of new COVID-19 cases.

In addition to compliance with all guidelines and regulatory requirements, the following priorities should guide decisions to resume medical and dental operations:

- Minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission to patients, employees, healthcare workers and others;
- Avoid further delays in healthcare for Nevadans;
- Maintain adequate hospital capacity in case of an increase in COVID-19 cases;
- Minimize health emergencies presenting at emergency departments;

- Reduce financial impacts to Nevada's health system; and
- Support the healthcare workforce in safely resuming activities.

For patients, medical and dental appointments will appear different and may include pre-appointment screening questions, temperature checks before you enter the office, closed waiting rooms, a request to wash your hands or rinse your mouth in the office, and your physician, dentist, or their staff may be wearing face shields, masks, and gloves. These changes have been made to ensure that care is delivered safely and in line with infection control protocols based on national agencies such as the CDC and OSHA.

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