



March 15, 2020

Physicians,

Due to the national emergency involving COVID-19, the [American College of Surgeons](#) and the Surgeon General have recommended the following:

Each hospital, health system and surgeon should thoughtfully review all scheduled elective procedures with a plan to minimize, postpone or cancel electively scheduled operations, endoscopies or other invasive procedures until we have passed the predicted inflection point in the exposure graph and can be confident that our health care infrastructure can support a potentially rapid and overwhelming uptick in critical patient care needs.

In response to this announcement, SIH respectfully requests the postponement of all elective surgeries and procedures for the next 30 days or until the crisis is under control. Urgent and emergent procedures will continue to be supported as normal. Prior to coming in, all patients being scheduled for procedures will go through a phone screening process to identify any patients are risk for COVID-19. Also, vendors will only be allowed when their presence is required for the procedure to be performed. Vendors will go through a screening process at entry to the hospital.

SIH will support the following procedures that cannot be postponed:

- Cardiovascular, oncology and acute pain patients cases
- Diagnostic procedures related to cancer or other imminent health risks
- Outpatient endoscopies and other related procedures that meet the criteria should be performed at St. Joseph's Memorial Hospital.

Other procedures may arise that do not fit into the above categories. We will evaluate those on a case-by-case basis. SIH Surgical Services and scheduling will help you and your staff work through this process. We understand this will take time as your offices reach out to the patients this week.

SIH will always put safety first for our patients, staff, physicians and our community. We trust your knowledge and judgement regarding these recommendations during this difficult time. If you have questions about this process and need to talk it through, please call SIH System Director for Surgical Services Tim Kernan at (940) 808-9011.

Respectfully,

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