



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

MAY 19 2020

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY

SUBJECT: Resuming Elective Surgical, Invasive, and Dental Procedures in Military Medical and Dental Treatment Facilities

Reference: (a) Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Memorandum, "Elective Surgical, Invasive, and Dental Procedures in Military Medical and Dental Treatment Facilities," March 24, 2020
(b) Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Guidance for Commanders on Risk-Based Lowering of Health Protection Condition (HPCON) Levels During the COVID-19 Pandemic," May 19, 2020
(c) Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs Memorandum, "TRICARE Policy for Access to Care," February 23, 2011

Given the evolution of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this memorandum provides guidance on how each Military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) and Dental Treatment Facility (DTF) may resume elective medical and dental procedures. This memo supersedes reference (a).

The decision by an MTF or DTF Commander or Director to resume elective procedures shall be informed by local conditions and coordinated with installation leadership to align messaging and posture, as appropriate. Reference (b) provides a framework for MTF and DTF Commanders and Directors to consider as they resume elective procedures consistent with the President's guidelines for "Opening Up America Again," found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica>. Factors to consider in resuming elective procedures include:

- Installation Health Protection Condition (HPCON)
- Healthcare capacity, including TRICARE network capacity
- MTF and DTF Staffing
- Individual personal protective equipment availability
- COVID-19 testing availability, both for patients and staff

With these factors in mind, MTF and DTF Commanders and Directors may:

- Authorize elective procedures that can be safely performed at their facility if required to maintain deployability and readiness of Active Duty Service members (ADSMs) including any Reserve component or National Guard member activated or issued a delayed-effective-date Active Duty order, as provided in 10 U.S.C. 1074(d).
- Authorize elective procedures if, after consulting with the relevant medical or dental specialist, the MTF or DTF Commander or Director determines the risk to the patient of delaying the surgery or procedure outweighs safety concerns and logistics considerations (e.g., availability of beds, supplies, equipment, and medical providers).
- Resume outpatient elective procedures while at HPCON C.
- Resume inpatient elective procedures while at HPCON B.

When performing elective procedures, careful attention must be paid to local conditions, as changes may require reverting back to prior levels of MTF service. MTFs shall continue to utilize virtual health capability and capacity when appropriate. Prioritization of resumption of procedures will be done in accordance with reference (c). Prioritization of ADSMs will focus first on those deploying or preparing to deploy; and second, on those ADSMs who are integral to sustaining or rebuilding unit readiness.

My point of contact for this policy is Richard Mooney, M.D., MPH, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Services Policy and Oversight at richard.l.mooney.civ@mail.mil or (703)-681-8367.

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**HON THOMAS MCCAFFERY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
HEALTH AFFAIRS**