



Updated March 25, 2020

## Summary on Executive Order 20-72: Non-essential Elective Medical Procedures

By Mary Thomas, Esq.  
FMA Assistant General Counsel

On March 20, Gov. Ron DeSantis issued [Executive Order Number 20-72](#) limiting non-essential medical procedures in an attempt to conserve medical supplies and resources needed to combat the COVID-19 outbreak or for any other medical emergency.

Effective immediately, all hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, office surgery centers, dental, orthodontic and endodontic offices and other healthcare practitioners' offices are prohibited from providing any medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedure or surgery.

The Order specifies that non-essential procedures are ones that, if delayed, do not place a patient's immediate health, safety or well-being at risk, or contribute to the worsening of a serious or life-threatening medical condition.

Citing the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services recommendations](#), examples of procedures to delay include, but are not limited to:

- Some endoscopy
- Non-urgent spine and orthopedic procedures
- Cosmetic procedures
- Most cataract and lens surgeries

Examples of permissible procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of cancerous tumors
- Transplants

- Limb-threatening vascular surgeries
- Trauma-related procedures
- Dental care related to the relief of pain and management of infection

Once again, the FMA's interpretation of Executive Order 20-72 is that only medically unnecessary, non-urgent or non-emergency procedures or surgeries are prohibited. This has been confirmed by staff at the Florida Department of Health in communications to the FMA.

The Department also confirmed that physicians can continue to see patients for purposes of evaluation and management. Telemedicine visits can continue unabated. Primary care practitioners can continue to see and treat patients with chronic and acute conditions, perform wellness exams, and provide mental health services that do not consume personal protective equipment. Specialists can see patients for follow-up care and other non-surgical purposes.

This Executive Order expires upon the expiration of [Executive Order 20-52](#), which will expire on May 8, 2020, unless extended.

We understand the negative impact this will have on countless physicians and their patients. The FMA will be here to help guide you through this unprecedented event. If you have questions and are an FMA member, please contact our General Counsel's office at [legal@FLmedical.org](mailto:legal@FLmedical.org) or call (850) 224-6496.