



# PROVIDER QUICK TIPS

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## Elective services should not be provided during the COVID-19 emergency disaster

On March 6, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf issued an emergency [disaster declaration](#) in response to the presence of the COVID-19 virus in Pennsylvania. On March 19, 2020, Governor Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine signed [executive orders](#) which prohibit elective medical and surgical procedures from being performed in Pennsylvania during the duration of the COVID-19 emergency. Hospitals, Ambulatory Surgical Centers, physicians, dentists and other health care practitioners were prohibited by the order from performing elective procedures until the executive orders are lifted.

Additionally, the [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#) recommended health care providers limit non-essential adult elective surgery and medical and surgical procedures, including dental. The recommendations were to limit the exposure of patients and staff to COVID-19 and to conserve resources such as ventilators and personal protective equipment.

For Medical Assistance Fee-for-Service authorization requests for inpatient and outpatient elective procedures, elective interventional radiology and dental procedures will continue to be accepted and reviewed during the COVID-19 emergency disaster. All requests will be reviewed for medical necessity.

If the service is elective and medically necessary the service will be approved other than requested and the effective date for the elective services will be July 1, 2020.

The Department will use the following to determine if the procedure is elective: the [CMS guidance](#), the Department of Health's [Guidance on Hospitals' Response to COVID-19](#), the [Guidance on Ambulatory Surgical Facilities](#) and the [Dental Guidance](#).

If a provider believes that the elective procedure is life-sustaining and needed to protect the health of the patient, the requesting provider or facility should indicate this during the authorization phone call or note this on the authorization request form (MA-97 or ADA Dental Claim form). Providers may be asked for documentation to justify the life-sustaining need for the service. If a physician reviewer agrees there is a life-sustaining need for the procedure the service will be approved with an immediate or the requested effective date.

If the emergency disaster declaration ends prior to July 1, 2020, the Department will reissue updated notices of decision to patients and providers with new effective dates.

If the emergency disaster declaration ends later than July 1, 2020, the Department will reissue updated notices of decision to patients and providers with new effective dates.

If a patient's condition changes and the elective services is now a life-sustaining need, providers should contact the Department to report the change and determine if a new effective date is necessary.

Medical Assistance Fee-for-Service claims for services authorized with a future effective date will not pay if the date of service is prior to the effective date on the notice of decision when the service is approved other than requested.

Additional guidance will be issued for CHIP and the managed care programs.

Providers should continue to check the Department of Human Service's COVID-19 [website](#) and the Department of Health's [website](#) for updates.





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For elective inpatient, outpatient and radiology authorization questions, please contact 1-800-537-8862, option 2, option 3, option 1.

For dental questions regarding this information please contact 1-800-537-8862, option 2, option 6, option 1.

Thank you for your service to our MA recipients.  
We value your participation.  
Check the Department's website often at: [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov).

