



**Susan M. Whitely, MD**  
President

**Libby McDannell, CAE**  
Chief Executive Officer

April 16, 2020

Governor Doug Ducey  
State of Arizona  
Via Email

Dear Governor Ducey:

Thanks to your tremendous leadership, the tireless efforts of the leadership at the Arizona Department of Health, the health care leaders of our state, and importantly the commitment of Arizonans to *Stay Home, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected*, we have begun seeing success in mitigating our COVID19 outbreak. We are committed to working with you to ensure we stay on this trajectory.

The Arizona Medical Association (ArMA) recognizes the enormous economic impact COVID19 has had on our healthcare system, hospitals, community physicians / practices, and everyone on the health care team. We applaud you and your team for taking the time to hear from stakeholders on the best ways to potentially restart elective surgeries. As representatives of the AZ medical community, we appreciate the opportunity to provide input in this important area.

Our greatest priority is to make sure our workforce and all patients are protected. The way to do that is as follows:

- Need to be able to test ALL surgery cases pre-operatively, ideally. If not, need to prioritize - cancer cases, any abdominal cases, any cases where there could be aerosolization (can give you a list), any intubations.
- Patients should be tested before the OR, but also need to have a protocol on how to test these people, and what to do given their results.
- If testing is not widely available, then we need to ramp up PPE to protect the operative team, and that means if we cannot test, then we need to treat everyone as positive.

From a facility perspective, the following considerations are requested:

- There should be due consideration to the needs of all hospitals with regard to the distribution of federal or state-supplied PPE, masks, swabs, ventilators, and access to testing.
- All hospitals should have a reasonable chance to re-start their elective surgeries around the same time. If this can't be done, all hospitals should come online as quickly as possible in order to address substantial ongoing losses
- Need to prioritize urgency, slowly restart elective cases based on urgency, with the last group being the purely elective cases.

Bringing patients back onto hospital campuses and surgery centers may cause some uneasiness for patients and staff. To assure patients, comprehensive safety measures should be taken to reduce the risk of transmission, including a robust screening process; universal masking for all patients, visitors and staff; and enhanced cleaning of surfaces, equipment, and patient care areas.

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In summary, as we move forward, our healthcare community must consider how to safely and appropriately address elective patient care and surgery. ArMA would like to serve as a partner in defining a collaborative and adaptable roadmap for managing elective surgeries / procedures.

On behalf of our over 4000 members and the Arizona physicians fighting on the front lines of this pandemic, we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby McDannell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Libby McDannell  
ArMA Chief Executive Officer