

The CEO: Groote Schuur Hospital
The CEO: Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital
The Acting CEO: Tygerberg Hospital
The Chief Director: Rural Health Services
The Chief Director: Metro Health Services

Circular H62 / 2020

ELECTIVE SURGERY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

At present all public hospitals are performing surgery for emergency and urgent cases only, where patients cannot wait more than 3 months (e.g. for cancer surgery). This is in line with the current Provincial policy.

Whilst it is acknowledged that operating theatres are a precious resource that must be used appropriately for those requiring them, and that utilisation across the Province is much lower at present than before the current pandemic, the Province does not support the reintroduction of purely elective cases at present. Not only would uninfected patients be placed at risk of infection in a known COVID-19 hotspot (i.e. a hospital), but also, early studies have indicated that the peri-operative mortality in COVID-19 patients can be as high as 17%, even when the patients are asymptomatic at the time of surgery.

The Province thus remains committed to performing emergency and urgent surgery only (where patients cannot wait more than 3 months), until further notice.

For further distribution as required.



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Acting DDG : CoO
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