



**TO:** Medical Staff

**FROM:** Mark Sullivan, President & CEO  
Hans P. Cassagnol, MD, EVP & Chief Clinical Officer/Physician Executive

**DATE:** November 19, 2020

**RE:** Temporary Suspension of Inpatient Elective Surgery

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As the COVID-19 virus continues to increase at a dramatic pace in our community, surpassing the peak we saw last spring, we must ensure we have flexibility in our the bed capacity and available staff to care for the growing number of patients in our hospitals. Making necessary adjustments now is the best way to manage what we know is here and prepare for what we project is coming. Based on our two-week COVID projections, we anticipate needing 100 or more additional staffed beds.

There is a high probability Western New York will be faced with bed shortages. Catholic Health's ability to keep pace with the current and anticipated demand for inpatient COVID care is only possible if we reduce non-COVID elective surgery admissions. Therefore, **we will temporarily suspend all inpatient elective surgery procedures from Saturday, November 21 through Saturday, December 5**. We will continue to perform *emergent* and *urgent* procedures, as needed, as well as ambulatory procedures, at the discretion of our surgeons.

*Elective* procedures are scheduled in advance and not considered a medical emergency. *Emergent* procedures generally involve a medical emergency, while *urgent* procedures are those that if not performed will likely lead to more serious complications. Decisions on urgent procedures will be made in consultation with the surgeon based on the patient's defined medical status.

This proactive decision to cancel inpatient elective surgeries was made in close consultation with our medical staff and hospital presidents. We believe this is the safest approach for our patients, medical staff, and associates to ensure we put our caregivers in the best position to respond to the second wave of this pandemic. In addition to a significant increase in COVID patients throughout our system, we rely on predictive analytics to forecast the surge we expect to see across WNY.

At Catholic Health, the health and safety of our patients, medical staff, and associates is our top priority. We will continue to review this decision and assess trends in the community to evaluate our forecast moving forward. The week leading up to Thanksgiving and following the holiday will be critical as we monitor the degree of COVID transmission and hospitalization rates across the region. Our greatest hope is that with everyone's support, following the safety measures of masking, handwashing, social distancing, and limiting large gatherings, we can reverse this alarming trend.

You remain our healthcare heroes. Thank you for your ongoing support during these challenging times.