



DATE: April 7, 2020

## Health Advisory: Sexual and Reproductive Health Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

On March 23, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued an [Executive Order 202.10](#), directing the Commissioner of Health to order all health care facilities, including hospitals and diagnostic and treatment centers, to increase the number of beds available to COVID-19 positive patients. The Executive Order also suspended and modified statutes and regulations, as needed, to accomplish this purpose.

The purpose of this guidance document is to clarify that the **Department considers sexual and reproductive health services as essential services**, however the ultimate decision on when such services must occur is between a patient and clinical provider. These services include but are not limited to:

- Birth control, including Long Active Reversible Contraceptives, such as IUDs;
- Fertility services, including infertility treatment and procedures;
- Gynecological surgeries to address acute complications related to conditions, such as fibroids or endometriosis;
- Abortion services;
- Obstetrical care, such as vaginal and cesarean deliveries;
- Evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases;
- Evaluation for cervical and breast cancer, when medically indicated based on patient history and/or physical exam.

When making clinical decisions regarding the need for services during the COVID-19 public health emergency, the goal of minimizing the use of hospital resources, such as emergency department visits, should be a high priority. Postponing non-essential surgeries and procedures, as well as prioritizing high-acuity surgeries and procedures, will assist the State's efforts to maximize the availability of hospital resources. Hospitals may work with patients and providers to move surgeries and procedures to outpatient settings, such as hospital outpatient departments or diagnostic and treatment centers, if appropriate. Procedures that cannot safely be moved to these settings should not be postponed if a delay in delivering the service, or performing the procedure, risks a patient's sexual and reproductive health, morbidity, or mortality.

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring our inpatient resources are maximized during the COVID-19 response.

### **When a Patient is COVID Positive:**

If a patient positive for COVID-19, or a patient in quarantine, presents to any healthcare setting, please follow infection control procedures and determine a course of action on a case-by-case basis.

### **Additional Resources:**

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine has issued guidance related to fertility services, available at <https://www.asrm.org/news-and-publications/covid-19/statements/patient-management-and-clinical-recommendations-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/>.