Create a Surgical Review Committee for COVID-19-Related Surgical Triage Decision Making

*Developed by the American College of Surgeons, American Society of Anesthesiologists, and Association of periOperative Registered Nurses.*

Released: March 24, 2020

The COVID-19 crisis is requiring hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers throughout the country to defer nonessential surgery to preserve personal protective equipment (PPE), protect the safety of health care professionals, and allocate potentially scarce resources for the care of the COVID-19 patient. In the past week, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have promulgated guidance for postponement of elective, nonessential surgery. Implementation has varied from community to community based on health care resources, disease spread in the community, and patient need. National guidance is needed.

To serve as a resource for decision making, the ACS, in conjunction with the surgical specialty societies has prepared triage criteria. The ACS and the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) recommend that decisions on surgery cases be made on a daily basis, no later than the day before surgery, by a leadership team representing surgery, anesthesiology, and nursing. A Surgical Review Committee, composed of surgery, anesthesiology, and nursing personnel is essential to provide defined, transparent, and responsive oversight. This committee can lead the development and implementation of guidelines that are fair, transparent, and equitable for the hospital or system in consideration of rapidly evolving local and regional issues.