

Public Comment for Ad Hoc Committee on COVID-19 Economic Impact and Recovery Meeting on 5/7/2020.

Submitted by Mary Haugh Rubick, resident of Brentwood, CA

I would like to bring the committee's attention to the current state of affairs in our county regarding the detrimental effects on our residents of limiting elective medical procedures. I ask the committee to recommend that all medical procedures, including elective, be allowed in Contra Costa County effective immediately without limitation.

For example, while the new order effective May 4, 2020 allows for the reopening of Healthcare facilities including dentists' offices, our local offices continue to remain closed because they believe "elective medical procedures" continue to be limited under the new order.

After six weeks of Sheltering in Place, many of these procedures are no longer what we lay people think of as "elective", but also not "emergent." Patients are waiting to see their dentists, oral surgeons, and orthodontists for cleanings, checkups, x-rays, and orthodontic adjustments that cannot wait indefinitely as they risk needing a more invasive treatment course if not attended to in a timely manner.

I understand the initial limitations on elective procedures when we first had community spread of the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in our area to conserve personal protective equipment (PPE) for our medical professionals on the front line of this pandemic.

However, we are now living with SARS-CoV-2 and the disease it can cause, COVID-19. The Shelter-in-Place and attendant restrictions on elective procedures allowed our local hospitals time to source and stockpile the necessary PPE. Our medical and dental offices are staffed by professionals who are used to using universal precautions to limit the spread of a host of illnesses caused by viruses and bacteria. The social distancing guidelines provided by our state and federal governments can be applied to waiting rooms and treatment areas.

I suggest that the committee ask the Health Department to allow all medical procedures, including elective procedures, to be allowed immediately. I ask that elective procedures be designated specifically as being allowed with no limitations.