

For Immediate Release

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A Message from MVMA President in Response to Executive Order 20-09

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Last night Governor Walz issued an [Executive Order \[EO 20-09\]](#) that beginning March 23rd at 5PM "all non-essential or elective surgeries and procedures, including non-emergent or elective dental care, that utilize PPE or ventilators must be postponed indefinitely." This has generated a fair bit of discussion among veterinarians and we are receiving several phone calls at the MVMA office asking for specific direction on exactly what procedures we can or cannot do as veterinarians in light of this new Executive Order. Lists of allowed or prohibited procedures do not exist and I cannot foresee that they will ever exist.

Veterinarians, as highly trained medical professionals, need to exercise professional judgment as it pertains to these questions. There is no one better than us to help make these important decisions for our patients during consultation with our clients. Being given a directive or list of allowed procedures could potentially harm the health of our patients as such a list does not consider the individual medical history of a specific patient or situation. Ultimately, these are discussions we must have with our clients and decisions should be made by veterinary medical professionals, based on our medical knowledge, considering individual animal situations, in the context of the public health crisis, and in deference to the definition of 'non-essential' in the EO.

The Executive Order stipulates:

"A non-essential surgery or procedure is a surgery or procedure that can be delayed without undue risk to the current or future health of a patient. Examples of criteria to consider in making this determination include:

- a. Threat to the patient's life if surgery or procedure is not performed.
- b. Threat of permanent dysfunction of an extremity or organ system, including teeth and jaws.
- c. Risk of metastasis or progression of staging.

I know that no one likes ambiguity, but veterinarians are well equipped to decide what is medically necessary for their patients. All the best as we continue to navigate this ever-evolving situation.

Matthew J. Boyle, DVM

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