

COVID-19

INFORMATION UPDATE



May 22, 2020

To: All IH Medical Practitioners, Divisions of Family Practice
From: Dr. Kevin Beckner, Medical Director, Medical Imaging
Tim Rode, Program Director, Medical Imaging

Re: Restart of Non-Urgent Medical Imaging Services

During the COVID-19 response, and as instructed by the Ministry of Health, elective and non-urgent Medical Imaging exams in Interior Health (IH) were postponed, primarily Priority 4 (P4) and screening exams.

Provincially, and within IH, direction has now been given to begin increasing exam levels, including elective and non-urgent exams, and to address the exams postponed during the COVID-19 response.

To the best of our ability, and dependent on specific site resources and capacity, postponed patients will be accommodated and their exams performed as follows:

- All patient referrals that have been postponed for pandemic reasons by Medical Imaging will be contacted to have their appointment rescheduled based on priority and date of referral.
- In accordance with provincial direction, IH Imaging is using the BC Radiological Society's (BCRS) Prioritization Guidelines for prioritization of MRI, CT, and Ultrasound. Additional information on the prioritization guidelines is listed in Appendix A.
- In some cases referring practitioners may be contacted to determine if more urgent attention is warranted for an outstanding requisition.
- Upon request, referring providers will receive a list of patients that have been postponed.
- BC Cancer is restarting the Breast Screening program effective June 1, 2020.

Increased services will be phased in gradually. New workflows involving departmental physical distancing requirements, booking processes, cleaning, and staff protection will reduce available exam volumes from previous pre-COVID-19 levels. Processes and approaches may vary by site or be modified as we adapt to working towards a normal service level. For example, some sites may still accept drop in X-rays, while others may move towards booking these exams. More information will be provided by your local sites.

We thank you for your patience as we work to implement a comprehensive and robust imaging service for IH patients and our referring practitioners, as well as address accumulated patient backlog, in the setting of new departmental workflows. Please do not hesitate to contact your local Medical Imaging department with any questions or concerns.

Appendix A – Prioritization Guidelines

BCRS Prioritization Guidelines for MRI (2013), CT (2013) and Ultrasound (2016), link: <https://bcradiology.ca/>.

CAR-CSBI Breast Imaging Wait Time Benchmarks – Appendix G, link: https://car.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CAR-Radiology-Resumption-of-Clinical-Services-Report_FINAL.pdf

CAR Interventional Radiology Prioritization Guidelines – Appendix I, link: https://car.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CAR-Radiology-Resumption-of-Clinical-Services-Report_FINAL.pdf

BC Guidelines.ca: Ultrasound Prioritization Guidelines for Referring Practitioners (2018), link: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/bc-guidelines/diagnostics-imaging>

It should be noted these guidelines are not designed to be all-inclusive. The ultimate responsibility for prioritization rests with the attending radiologist after consultation with the referring physician.
