



Connecticut State Dental Association

Message from the President

April 9, 2020

Dear CSDA Members,

I hope you are safe and well. As we know, we are fighting an invisible enemy. The COVID-19 virus is something that we have never seen before and I hope we never see again. Like many other states around the country, there is a significant shortage and varied availability of personal protection equipment (PPE) in Connecticut during this COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor stated in his news briefing on Wednesday, that getting PPE to the front-line workers is his #1 priority. His priority is the hospitals, physicians, nurses, hospital staffs, and more; they are the front-line responders, dealing with life and death every moment during this pandemic.

We all understand and hear the concerns of the dental community—our dental colleagues, hygiene colleagues, assistants and staff—what about us? are we not considered first responders? The oral surgeons, the endodontists, the rest of us treating our emergencies only, following the [guidelines of the ADA](#). Are we not part of the medical community, essential employees, like the first responders, as dentists? The unequivocal answer is yes and we lobby this point. However, I ask you to put the shoes on of the Governor, the politicians and policy-makers, making these decisions. I reiterate, the reality is hospitals are treating people facing death or near death; that is the priority. Once the state gets more PPEs and the front-line workers are getting the supplies and equipment they need, the CSDA will take the appropriate steps to ensure that all members of the dental healthcare team have ready access to the resources needed including the full range of PPEs and any necessary testing for staff and patients as the pandemic begins to subside and the “routine” delivery of healthcare/dental care resumes. My ask is that we be sensitive to the hospitals, physicians’ nurses, etc. and first responders until we start to see the other side of the bell curve.

Connecticut Safe Workplace Rules for Essential Employers

Amid the coronavirus crisis, the Governor is signing executive orders almost every day. Yesterday (April 8) the Governor issued an executive order which enacted provisions for safe workplaces for essential business. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) published new rules outlining additional protective measures that every workplace in Connecticut deemed essential – and any other business or nonprofit allowed to remain open – must follow. [Click here for the guidelines](#).

CDC Guidance Documents

The CDC updated the [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#) on April 7, 2020. Of particular interest are engineering controls, work practices, and infection control considerations when providing emergency dental care to non-COVID-19 patients. The full list of revisions includes:

- Description of risk to dental health care personnel (DHCP) when providing emergency care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Recommendations for contacting patients prior to emergency dental care.
- Recommendations for providing emergency dental care to non-COVID-19 patients including engineering controls, work practices and infection control considerations.
- Potential exposure guidance.
- Contingency and crisis planning.

Legislative/Regulatory Updates

Although the Legislature is still closed, we continue to work with agency heads to advocate on your behalf. One of our members contacted the CSDA regarding the suspension of radiation renewals. We reached out to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and received a response on Wednesday (April 8) that the department has moved the deadline for the Diagnostic and Therapeutic x-ray registration to June 30, 2020. [Please click here to read the letter from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.](#)

In addition, we just learned yesterday (April 8) that the legislature repealed the requirement that limited dental hygienists to not more than 4 CEUs online during a 2-year period the last legislative session. Now your hygienists can take more than 4 CEUs online.

Dental Licensure

Over the course of the next few weeks, dental students will begin graduation and will be looking to get their initial licensure. We have verified with the Department of Public Health that students can still apply for initial licensure, and that they will be processed as usual. The licensure process is outlined online. [Click here to read more.](#) Dentists can also renew their license if they wish, but have been given a grace period. Please note that once offices reopen you still need to have a valid license so please keep up-to-date with your licensure renewal.

COVID-19 Guidelines and Timeline

As you all know by now, the CSDA Board of Governors strongly urges that Connecticut dentists cancel all elective procedures, and only provide emergency/urgent care as defined by the American Dental Association through April 22, 2020. This timeline was established in Governor Lamont's Stay Safe, Stay Home Executive Order.

Just today, Governor Lamont has extended closure of bars, restaurants and schools until May 20, 2020. The Governor has indicated that additional guidance for businesses will be released within the coming week. **We would anticipate that the Governor will make similar orders for essential businesses, including dental offices.** The CSDA will certainly inform members immediately when we receive clarity from the Governor.

The Department of Public Health continues to recommend adhering to the guidelines that are put forth and updated by the CSDA, ADA and CDC. This has not changed and they have not wavered from this. In addition, the ADA continues to say to follow the guidelines of your state and local government, and we are. If the April 22, 2020 date changes, rest assured, we will get that pertinent information to you.

Lastly as you know there are several government plans regarding how to manage the financial side of your practices during this crisis. We have shared the links with you and will do so again. Please keep in mind to discuss these options with your banker, accountant, lawyer and financial professional(s) to see what is the best solution for you.

The CSDA staff continue to work tirelessly for you the member. You are now seeing firsthand the value or worth of the CSDA and ADA membership and know we appreciate you. In the end, I ask you to please remain calm, cool, collected and as informed, as possible. Your teams, families and communities continue to need you to lead them. There is no handbook for a situation like this, and we appreciate all of your support, as you are the foundation to our great organization.

Finally, permit me to reiterate, please, constantly check the following websites for information updates:

www.csda.com/coronavirus

www.ada.org/virus

www.cdc.gov

portal.ct.gov/dph

I hope that this update covers the concerns that many of you may have. As always, we will work on these and additional issues, and keep you updated on our progress. Feel free to contact me at president@csda.com, or any of our hard working CSDA staff members if you have any comments, questions or concerns.

Please stay safe and stay healthy.

Regards,

Albert Natelli, DDS

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