



# Connecticut State Dental Association

## Message from the President

*May 5, 2020*

Dear Colleagues,

My time as president of your organization is coming to a rapid end. The Speaker of the House of Delegates encouraged the Board to take a leap of faith and host a digital/virtual CSDA House of Delegates to allow for the smooth transition of officers, Board members, as well as the election of the ADA Delegates to the annual ADA meeting in October. In a matter of hours, Dr. Tam Le will be your new President, and he will work with the new Board members to guide you through the remainder of this pandemic and reopening into the “new normal” of dental practice. We wish them all the best as this has been a huge challenge for all, and I am confident they are up to the task of managing the organization into the future.

At the risk of being accused of being tone deaf, Rahm Emmanuel once said, “you never want to let a serious crisis go to waste; you want to use this as an opportunity to think of things you did not think you could do before.” Many of you have used this opportunity to reeducate yourselves, and re-invent yourselves and your practices. As you take steps to ease back into practice, I encourage you to utilize the “Return to Work Interim Guidance Tool Kit” developed by the American Dental Association to revise how you do things, and prepare for the future. I can assure you there will be a new normal for the practice of dentistry (just like the new normal created during the AIDS crisis of the 1980’s and 90’s.) The worst thing we can all do is be ill prepared. The best thing we can do is become prepared for seeing patients again slowly, practicing social distancing and then ramping up from there. Use ZOOM, GoTo Meeting or some other virtual meeting platform to have discussions in earnest with your staff team, and together prepare a readiness plan for your practice to resume elective and routine procedures.

Of course, PPE is the biggest issue for the safety of the entire dental team and our patients. Unfortunately, there is no easy solution or magic bullet for solving the PPE shortage. It is affecting every corner of healthcare, including dentists. The CSDA has been in communication with the Governor’s office and the state’s Emergency Management Division, explaining how urgently dentists need PPEs, and asking for our profession to be included on the priority list for access to masks and other supplies that will be provided by FEMA to the State of Connecticut. Our advocacy for our members will continue until the supply chain opens and dentists are able to acquire the necessary protective equipment.

I will once again share my quote from the president of the American Association of Orthopedic Surgeons, “The burning question is: when will we be able to perform ‘elective surgery/dentistry’ including dental prophylaxis, and get back to taking care of our patients? The short answer is no one knows.” We have seen repeatedly that the virus is driving the narrative, not the President, not his Medical Advisory Team, not the Governors, the

Department of Public Health nor the ADA and CSDA. We are all responding to the virus and no one has a crystal ball that works to tell us the future of this; we learn more each day, but the science is still very new.

It is no secret that this pandemic and its repercussions on our profession are far from over. I am proud of everything the dentists of Connecticut are providing to our communities in the COVID-19 fight. Rest assured, as we devote our efforts to battle COVID-19 locally, the CSDA and ADA are fighting equally as hard on a state and national level to assure that we get the relief we deserve. In addition, the CSDA is completely aligned with all specialty societies in its advocacy efforts and our entire profession is speaking with one voice on Capitol Hill on behalf of our patients. As I always say, the CSDA staff continues to work tirelessly for you, our valued member. You continue to see firsthand the value of your CSDA and ADA membership and know you are appreciated. In the end, I ask you to please remain calm, cool, collected and 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](http://www.csda.com/coronavirus)

[www.ada.org/virus](http://www.ada.org/virus)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<https://portal.ct.gov/dph>

This is my last update to you the members and I hope it 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 Dr. Le at [president@csda.com](mailto:president@csda.com), or any of our hard working CSDA staff members if you have any comments, questions or concerns. It has been my honor even in these worst of times to serve and guide the CSDA and you during this crisis.

Please stay safe and stay healthy, and we will return to our office in just a couple of weeks.

Sincerely,

*Albert Natelli, DDS*

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*CSDA President*