

COVID-19 Health Alert for Dental Providers

Washington dental practitioners should be aware that there is:

- Community transmission of COVID-19 in Washington as well as outbreaks of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities.
- A shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare settings.
- High risk of severe disease in persons older than 60 years and in those with underlying health conditions.

Action Requested:

- **Postpone all elective and non-essential dental procedures** to minimize potential for healthcare transmission of COVID-19, and to mitigate limitations on availability of PPE for healthcare personnel caring for those with COVID-19.
- Dentists should **prioritize seeing only patients with dental emergencies** defined as:
 - “Dental care related to the relief of pain and management of infection.”
- Patients experiencing a dental emergency should be seen in their regular dental clinic. Patients should not be directed to an emergency room, including afterhours, unless they are experiencing a life threatening emergency.
- The CDC is expected to release further guidance for responding to COVID-19 in dental settings. Providers should use professional judgment for what care can be provided given available PPE.
- **Limit orders for PPE to only what is necessary for urgent visits.**

Background:

The virus causing coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19), emerged in December 2019 and has since spread around the world causing a global pandemic. Eighty percent of cases are mild, but severe disease and deaths are more common in the elderly (older than 60 years) and in those with underlying health conditions. Health experts are concerned that increasing transmission in our state and an increase in severe disease will limit the ability of our healthcare system to provide urgent care to all who require it. Healthcare facilities are reporting difficulty in accessing adequate PPE for transmission-based precautions. **We are asking all healthcare facilities to cancel or postpone non-essential procedures in the near future to limit transmission in healthcare settings and to limit non-essential use of PPE. We are relying on dental practitioners to do their part.**

Resources for Dental Practitioners:

- [National Network for Oral Health Access COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Organization on Safety, Asepsis and Prevention \(OSAP\) Guidance for Facemask Shortage](#)
- [OSAP Coronavirus Toolkit](#)
- [Washington State Dental Association COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [DOH Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)

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