



County of San Diego

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NICK YPHANTIDES, MD, MPH
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

May 11, 2020

TO: Dental Providers in San Diego County

FROM: Nick Yphantides, M.D., M.P.H.
Chief Medical Officer
Medical Care Services Division

RE: RESUMING DEFERRED AND PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE

I am sending this communication on behalf of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global outbreak continues to rapidly change day-to-day.

Dentists may resume deferred and preventive dental care as prescribed by the [California Department of Public Health](#) guidance issued on May 7. This guidance is reflected in the updated Public Health Officer Order, dated May 9, 2020, in which hospitals and healthcare providers, including dentists shall:

- a. Take measures to preserve and prioritize resources; and,
- b. May authorize and perform non-emergent or elective surgeries or procedures based on their determination of clinical need and supply capacity, and where consistent with State guidance.
- c. Nothing in this Order shall prevent physicians and other healthcare providers from conducting routine preventive care provided it conforms to any applicable State guidance.
- d. Nothing in this Order shall prevent dentists or dental hygienists from conducting routine preventive care provided it conforms to any applicable State guidance.

According to the Occupational Safety and Healthy Administration's (OSHA) Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, dental health care personnel (DHCP) are in the very high-risk category for exposure to SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 when they are performing certain aerosol generating procedures. This risk requires a level of heightened awareness, training, preparation, and adherence to a combination of standard and transmission-based precautions as appropriate to ensure the safe provision of care. At minimum, dental practitioners must follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for:

- Engineering controls and work practices;
- Infection prevention and control measures including: source control (requires facemasks at all times for everyone entering the dental setting; personal protective equipment (PPE) use, during clinical care; hand hygiene; screening and monitoring of DHCP; and patient management).

Dental Guidance Update

May 11, 2020

Page 2

Dental providers should also regularly check the local health department website at www.coronavirus-sd.com for information and important updates about COVID-19, including case counts and hospitalizations and the impact on the health care delivery system. Depending on the conditions in a community, and based guidance from the State, the local public health officer may issue or update the current “stay-at-home” order. Components of the Order that are more stringent than the State’s Public Health Orders must be followed.

Guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of COVID-19 and the implications for dental practice. Thank you for your cooperation and vigilance during this pandemic. Should you have any questions, please contact Thomas Olinger, our Chief Dental Officer, at Thomas.Olinger@sdcounty.ca.gov or MCSDCallCenter.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Respectfully,



NICK YPHANTIDES, M.D., M.P.H.

Chief Medical Officer

Medical Care Services Division

cc: Helen Robbins-Meyer, Chief Administrative Officer, County of San Diego
Dean Arabatzis, Acting Director, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency
Wilma Wooten, Public Health Officer & Director, County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Public Health Services