

## NC State Board of Dental Examiners Statement on Providing Dental Services During the COVID-19 State of Emergency

The purpose of this statement is to provide resources to help guide dentists in the safest possible way to offer dental services, including safely and deliberately offering emergency, non-emergency, and routine services, and to do so in such a way as to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to patients and Dental Health Care Personnel (DHCP). Although individual dentists may use their professional judgment as to what procedures to perform and when to perform them, **failure to follow heightened infection control, sterilization, and patient safety recommendations may be viewed as a failure to meet the standard of care necessary for offering treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Infection control protocols considered adequate prior to the pandemic in many instances may no longer be sufficient for DHCP during the state of emergency.

The decision to resume offering routine and non-emergency care is a decision that must be made by individual dentists. Currently, the Governor's Executive Order 121 lists dentists as essential businesses and does so without restriction. This means there is no current legal restriction preventing dentists from performing any dental procedure they judge to be appropriate for any patient. While there is no legal prohibition, the procedures and protocols necessary for the safety of patients and DHCP have changed **significantly** since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The NC State Board of Dental Examiners **highly recommends** that DHCP review the following sites that provide excellent information for dentists and their teams as offices continue to care for patients in these unprecedented times:

<https://pages.ada.org/return-to-work-toolkit-american-dental-association>

[https://www.ada.org/~media/CPS/Files/COVID/ADA\\_COVID\\_Int\\_Guidance\\_Treat\\_Pts.pdf?utm\\_source=adaorg&utm\\_medium=covi%20d-resources-lp&utm\\_content=cv-pm-ebd-interim-response&utm\\_campaign=covid-19](https://www.ada.org/~media/CPS/Files/COVID/ADA_COVID_Int_Guidance_Treat_Pts.pdf?utm_source=adaorg&utm_medium=covi%20d-resources-lp&utm_content=cv-pm-ebd-interim-response&utm_campaign=covid-19) .

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html>

The Board also encourages dentists to contact malpractice insurance carriers for any information, advice, or forms that may provide additional support and guidance through this state of emergency.

During this time of uncertainty and severe stress for dentists as health care professionals and business owners, the Board would like to encourage all dentists and hygienists to be aware of your own mental and emotional health. If the pressure seems overwhelming and you need a confidential place to seek help dealing with these issues, or with problems associated with drug or alcohol use, please remember that the NC Caring Dental Professionals is always available to provide assistance, support and a road to recovery. They can be contacted at: 910 944 1150

<https://nccaringdental.com>