



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### **Dental Quality Assurance Commission COVID-19 Pandemic Statement April 2, 2020**

Dental practitioners currently face extraordinary circumstances and the Dental Commission would like to provide some clarity during this time. Governor Inslee's [Proclamation 20-24](#) issued on March 19, 2020, prohibits dentists from providing procedures that, if delayed, are not anticipated to cause patient harm within the next three months. Dentists are to provide "urgent and emergent" care only. The Dental Commission does not have a list of procedures that meet this criteria, but encourages dental practitioners to use professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. The ADA has provided [definitions](#) that can help you assess situations you may encounter. Dental practitioners must work within the mandate of the governor to limit the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and reduce the risk of transmission among the public and staff. The nature of our profession positions us uniquely to greatly benefit the public through our knowledge of infection control.

The Dental Commission's mission is to protect the public's health and safety and to promote the welfare of the state by regulating the competency and quality of professional healthcare practitioners under its jurisdiction. The Dental Commission has received reports about dentists who are not complying with the proclamation, and are continuing to see patients on a non-urgent/emergent basis, or refusing to see patients for urgent/emergent care. Given the extraordinary nature of the current dynamic, we offer the following:

- Dentists acting in good faith to comply with the governor's mandate, with a strict focus on "**urgent and emergent care only**" are applauded and setting the example. Please do your best to care for patient's urgent and emergent needs with significant effort to minimize the spread of disease. We thank you for the good that you do in judiciously providing care.
- Dentists practicing with disregard to the mandate, who unnecessarily or unreasonably risk the spread of disease may face disciplinary action. We expect the sound judgement and good faith that having a license to practice dentistry implies. Our position of trust, with a very vulnerable population, demands it.

We thank you for your diligence in providing only urgent and emergent care. Please use this opportunity to show what we, as a profession, are capable of. Help the public, help each other, and keep Washington residents safe.