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60661-6600 agd.org

March 31, 2020

Bill McBride
Executive Director, National Governors Association
444 N. Capitol St., NW, Ste. 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor, State of Maryland
Chair, National Governors Association
444 N. Capitol St., NW, Ste. 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Request to Distribute Attached Memo from Academy of General Dentistry to Governors of the United States and Territories of the United States of America regarding PPE for Dentists Performing Emergency Care during COVID-19 Pandemic

Gentlemen:

As President of the Academy of General Dentistry and representative of our 39,000 members, I would be grateful if you would forward the attached memorandum to the 50 State and five Territorial member governors as soon as possible. We know they are under incredible stress during this unprecedented time and we appreciate your unique position to centralize communications with them.

We truly are all in this together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD'.

Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD
President, Academy of General Dentistry



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To: Governors of the States and Territories of United States of America
From: Dr. Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD
President, Academy of General Dentistry
Subject: Availability of PPE for Dentists Performing Emergency Procedures
Date: March 31, 2020

The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) appreciates the extraordinary challenges you, as Governors, are facing during this unprecedented pandemic. AGD members are general dentists who provide the full range of dental care to patients. Our 39,000 members recognize the importance of prioritizing stopping the spread of COVID-19 and assuring that front line health care workers have personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to protect themselves and avoid spreading the virus.

To decrease the number of patients presenting in over-burdened hospital emergency rooms, dental offices should remain available for treatment of dental emergencies. To safely and effectively treat patients with severe tooth pain, bleeding, swelling, trauma and/or infections, dentists must have the PPE required to protect their staff as well as patients.

As with all healthcare workers, dentists and staff who provide emergency dental treatment place themselves at risk for acquiring the virus. It is believed that COVID-19 has an aerosol half-life of 1.1 hours. Most dental procedures create an aerosol, which requires the use of proper PPE.

At present, dentists are unable to obtain much needed PPE such as N95 masks and face shields, and are utilizing their existing supplies of PPE in order to treat emergency patients. Despite judicious use, these existing supplies are alarmingly low. Dentists who remain available for patients seeking care for severe pain, trauma, bleeding, swelling and/or infection should not be required to relinquish PPE.

Across the country, general dentists continue to work with our specialists' partners ensuring patients are properly triaged and rendered free from severe pain and infection. They are following the CDC Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response. This willingness to remain available to treat urgent dental problems significantly decreases the burden in hospital emergency rooms and allows our medical colleagues to focus on exigent medical issues.

Dental facilities must be able to provide critical, emergent care. Additionally, all emergency surgical, invasive dental procedures should be performed without delay, thereby avoiding potential complications that could lead to hospitalization. In accordance with the CDC, the urgency of a procedure is a decision based on clinical judgment and should be made on a case-by-case basis.

The AGD recognizes that in the current crisis, a Governor may need to take measures to control the distribution of available PPE for workers on the front lines. We ask that you work with appropriate agencies to balance requirements of our front-line medical personnel with the needs of dental personnel who are providing emergency dental care with access to the necessary PPE.



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We urge you to seek input from the dentists in your States and Territories as you promulgate or revise any executive orders pertaining to dental practices and/or maintenance or redistribution of PPE inventory. The AGD stands ready to help in this effort, whether working with your office directly or with the appropriate state health agencies. For a recommendation of dentists in your State or Territory who are willing to serve in an advisory capacity please call Michael Toner, Manager, Government Relations at (312) 440-4307 or email at Michael.Toner@agd.org.

Working together we can find solutions.

Thank you for all that you are doing to protect the citizens of the United States and its Territories, especially our health care workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD'.

Connie L. White, DDS, FAGD
President, Academy of General Dentistry