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GOVERNOR

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August 24, 2020

A Message from Dr. Glen Davis, Chair of the Maine Board of Dental Practice

In early 2020, I was elected to serve as the Board's Chair and transitioned quickly into performing typical duties such as convening members for monthly meetings, facilitating discussion during board meetings, and prioritizing the Board's work in the coming months. Within weeks of assuming my new role, it was announced that Maine was entering a state of civil emergency in response to the coronavirus disease referred to as COVID-19. The use of the words "typical" and "normal" would take on new meaning over the ensuing months not only for the Board, but for every Maine citizen.

The Board's new "normal" is conducting board meetings virtually, working remotely without interruption of daily operations, fielding calls from dental professionals and consumers seeking clarity on practice requirements amid COVID-19, responding to dental programs and dental hygiene programs seeking clarity regarding graduation and accreditation challenges, responding to changes to the national and regional examinations required for licensure, and providing flexibility to licensees regarding meeting the continuing education and life support certification requirements.

This new "normal" also includes actively seeking out the most current information to ensure safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic not only for my own family's safety, but for the safety of my patients and my staff members. The Board has also been actively seeking out clarification and guidance by engaging in discussions with the state's top advisors, legal counsel, professional associations, and other stakeholders to stay current on the latest national, state and local guidance. The Board will continue to update its website regarding the latest guidelines and will continue to communicate with you directly in the coming months.

As a reminder, the current practice guidelines which were identified by Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew went into effect on May 18, 2020. Those guidelines are contained in the ADA's *Return to Work Toolkit* and the MDA's *Establishing Safe Dental Care in the Era of COVID-19*. All dental professionals licensed by the Board are required to follow those guidelines which are subject to the Board's enforcement authority. To access the Board's communication dated May 15, 2020, visit the Board's website at: <https://www.maine.gov/dental/>

Below are some highlights of the Board's work over the past few months that I'd like to share with you:

Board Member Updates:

As 2019 came to a close, the Board said good bye to two Board members, Dr. Paul Dunbar and Ms. Nancy Foster, RDH, EFDA. Their years of dedicated service and thoughtful contributions to improving the Board's processes were exceptional. The Board welcomed Ms. Kathryn Walker Norris, RDH as the newest member and looks forward to her continued contributions.

Rulemaking:

After a three-year effort, various chapters of the Board's rules were repealed and replaced effective April 5, 2020. The rulemaking effort fully implemented the various statutory changes to the licensure qualification categories and consolidated all the practice requirements of a dental professional into one chapter. Board Rules Chapter 12 "Practice Requirements" provides exactly what the title suggests - requirements by which a dental professional must follow. Subject areas include, but are not limited to:

- infection control
- emergency protocols
- reporting of adverse events to the Board
- inventory control of controlled substances
- patient recordkeeping; treatment plans; informed consent; patient examination (to include baseline; blood pressure readings); progress notes, etc.
- practice sale/practice closure
- referral network to handle patient conditions outside of a licensee's scope of practice, training, or level of expertise
- adoption of professional codes of ethics

The Board anticipates the passage of LD 2146 "An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Board of Dental Practice Related to the Definitions of "Supervision" and "Teledentistry" in a future legislative session. Once the proposal is enacted, the Board will be convening its Rules Committee to draft a teledentistry rules chapter for consideration.

Continuing Education:

The Board voted to waive the continuing education requirements to an individual licensed as a dental hygienist, a denturist or an expanded functional dental assistant who requests a waiver pursuant to the hardships associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted in the Board's communication dated April 23, 2020, licensees will be able to request a waiver as part of the online renewal of licensure process. To access the Board's communication dated April 23, 2020, visit the Board's website at: <https://www.maine.gov/dental/>

Stay Informed - Get Involved: The Board encourages you to stay informed on the latest regulatory guidelines and/or announcements. You can obtain updates from the Board in one or more of the following ways: 1. Visit the Board's website at www.maine.gov/dental/; 2. Sign up with the Board's Interested Parties list to receive electronic notifications; and 3. Update your email address to make sure you are receiving communications directly from the Board.

In closing, I hope that you and your families are safe and healthy, and that you take some time to enjoy these last few weeks of summer!

Sincerely,

Dr. Glen Davis