

## MAINE BOARD OF DENTAL PRACTICE - March 25, 2020

### COVID-19: A Message from the Board of Dental Practice

Given the COVID-19 health emergency, social distancing and other precautions in compliance with Maine CDC recommendations, we are restricting access to the Board Office to employees. For the safety of the public and our staff, we are requesting that all parties use our online, email or telephone services to transact business, make inquiries or file complaints. During this time, we intend to continue to deliver high quality services to regulated community and to the general public while focusing on delivering those services remotely.

In addition, the Board is working closely with the Governor's Office to provide clarification to its regulated community as federal and state guidelines regarding patient care continue to evolve. To that end, the Board is providing clarification regarding two specific recommendations that have been issued:

1. Postpone non-urgent care: At the urging and recommendations noted in Governor Mill's Executive Order dated March 24, 2020 and the most recent CDC guidelines, non-urgent dental procedures should be postponed based on consultations between patients and the dental professional.

The Board is providing two specific resources to help guide you in determining dental emergencies/urgent dental care:

American Dental Association's guidance entitled "What Constitutes a Dental Emergency?" dated March 19, 2020. See link: [ADA Guidance March 19, 2020](#)

CDC - Division of Oral Health's guidance entitled "CDC Recommendation: Postpone Non-Urgent Dental Procedures, Surgeries, and Visits." dated March 20, 2020. See link: [CDC Oral Health Guidance March 20, 2020](#)

2. Use of "teledentistry" as an alternative delivery of patient care: the current Dental Practice Act **does not** authorize licensees to engage in teledentistry. There is proposed legislation in the Maine State Legislature (LD 2146) authorizing such use, but the bill has been carried over to any Special Session of the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature. See link to status of LD 2146: [Status of LD 2146](#)

The Board has received inquiries regarding the use of teledentistry in Maine during the COVID-19 pandemic, and until such authorization is provided by either law or order, it is not authorized as part of a licensee's scope of practice. It is imperative that the Board continue to fulfill its statutory mandate which is to protect the public and to provide as much guidance as possible during this challenging time.

In closing, the Board appreciates the efforts of all dental professionals statewide who are responding ethically and responsibly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board will continue to do its best to keep you informed by updating its website at: [www.maine.gov/dental](http://www.maine.gov/dental)

Thank you,

Penny Vaillancourt, Executive Director