

May 6, 2020

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Re: Guidance on safely reopening dental practices during the deceleration phase of COVID-19

Dear Dr. Redfield:

On behalf of our 163,000 members, we respectfully ask the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to quickly provide guidance on how to safely reopen dental practices during the deceleration phase of the COVID-19 outbreak.

On April 7, 2020, the CDC issued interim guidance recommending that dentists postpone all non-essential dental visits during the acceleration phase of the COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> It acknowledged COVID-19 as an emerging and rapidly evolving situation that would require adjustments to the guidance as more information became available. And the agency has thus far acted diligently in keeping its guidance consistent with the changing landscape.

The latest CDC guidance (of April 27) is still appropriate for those parts of the country where COVID-19 infection rates are accelerating or peaking. However, the situation is much different in areas where infection rates are now declining—and the risk(s) of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19 are very low. It is critical for dentists to have a new or revised guideline recognizing a risk-based approach.

We respectfully ask the CDC to update its guidance to address how to protect dental personnel returning to work during the *deceleration* phase of COVID-19. Such guidance will give states the confidence to permit the safe reopening of dental offices and enable patients to access essential dental care.

Thank you for considering our request. We applaud your leadership on this issue and look forward to the resolution of this dire public health crisis. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Robert J. Burns at 202-789-5176 or [burnsr@ada.org](mailto:burnsr@ada.org).

Sincerely,

/s/

Chad P. Gehani, D.D.S.  
President

CPG:KTO:rjb

/s/

Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.  
Executive Director

Dr. Robert R. Redfield

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response (2020).