

NEWS RELEASE

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Georgia Dental Association Responds to World Health Organization Recommendation: Dentistry is Essential Health Care

ATLANTA, August 13, 2020 —The Georgia Dental Association (GDA) in conjunction with the American Dental Association (ADA) respectfully yet strongly disagrees with the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation to delay "routine" dental care in certain situations due to COVID-19.

"Delaying dental care may put your oral and overall health at risk," states GDA President Annette Rainge, D.M.D. "If oral disease is allowed to progress, small problems can escalate to larger problems requiring more extensive treatment. In addition, signs of other diseases and medical conditions, for example oral cancer and diabetes, can appear in the mouth. Regular dental visits can help detect problems early."

Dr. Rainge adds, "We want our patients to know that dentists are experts in infection control and have been for many years. As a result of the science-based, infection control protocols and recommendations issued by the ADA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and GDA, dental offices throughout the state of Georgia have implemented numerous measures to keep patients and staff safe. We have invested significant resources to strengthen our sanitation and safety protocols, which include enhanced personal protective equipment and advanced staff training."

"Oral health is integral to overall health," states ADA President Chad P. Gehani, D.D.S. "[Dentistry is essential health care](#) because of its role in evaluating, diagnosing, preventing or treating oral diseases, which can affect systemic health."

In March, when COVID-19 cases began to rise in the U.S., the ADA and GDA called for dentists to postpone all but urgent and emergency care in order to understand the disease, its effect on dental patients, dental professionals and the greater community, as well as to keep dental emergencies from flooding hospital emergency rooms.

Both the [ADA and the CDC](#) then issued interim guidance for dental professionals related to COVID-19. The ADA's guidance calls for the highest level of PPE available—[masks, goggles and face shields](#). The ADA's interim guidance also calls for the use of rubber dams and high velocity suction whenever possible and hand scaling when cleaning teeth rather than using ultrasonic scaling to minimize aerosols.

"Millions of patients have safely visited their dentists in the past few months for the full range of dental services. With appropriate PPE, dental care should continue to be delivered during global pandemics or other disaster situations," concludes Dr. Gehani.

About the Georgia Dental Association

The [Georgia Dental Association \(GDA\)](#) is the state's leading professional association representing dentists in Georgia. The premier source of oral health information in Georgia, GDA has promoted the highest standards of dentistry through education, advocacy and professionalism since 1859. A constituent of the American Dental Association, GDA is based in Atlanta. More at www.gadental.org.