



Donnalee Lozeau, Chairman  
Sen. Chuck Morse, Chairman  
GOFERR Stakeholder and Legislative Advisory Boards  
One Eagle Square  
Concord NH 03301

Via email: [info@goferr.nh.gov](mailto:info@goferr.nh.gov)

April 28, 2020

Dear Chairman Lozeau and Senator Morse:

On behalf of the NH Dental Hygienists' Association (NHDHA), I am writing regarding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's health, safety and economy and specifically the work of oral health providers. I have presented our Association's concerns to the Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force and wish to put our comments on the record with your advisory boards as well.

Dental professionals are a high-risk profession in spreading the COVID-19 virus. In addition to the physical closeness of patients and providers, dental equipment produces and disperses many aerosols into the air, which pose a huge threat to anyone entering the practice. Our Association has serious concerns about the health and safety of patients and hygienists if dental practices are allowed to re-open too quickly; we therefore support a phased in approach.

Our parent organization, the American Dental Hygienists Association (ADHA) supports the guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in recommending that dental facilities postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-urgent dental visits, and prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures now and for the next several weeks.<sup>1</sup>

Until more is known about how COVID-19 spreads, OSHA recommends using a combination of standard precautions, contact precautions, airborne precautions, and eye protection (e.g., goggles, face shields) to protect healthcare workers with exposure to the virus.<sup>2</sup> Like other health care providers, however, dental offices around the state

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/infectioncontrol/statement-COVID.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#healthcare>

have had difficulty procuring PPE and other necessary supplies. If we don't have the protective equipment we need, we cannot safely and effectively provide any care to patients, emergency or elective.

NHDHA is glad to provide you with additional information from our national organization and other reliable sources, if you so desire. I am also available to speak and answer questions of any of your board members if that would be helpful to you. Thank you for your hard work and efforts to manage this crisis and to include as many voices of the health care, business, and non-profit communities as possible in your hearings and deliberations.

Sincerely,

Myra Nikitas, President  
NHDHA Board of Trustees  
[Mjnrdh@yahoo.com](mailto:Mjnrdh@yahoo.com)

cc Gerald Little, GOFERR Executive Director