



March 17, 2020

RE: GDA COVID-19 ADVISORY TO MEMBERS

Dear GDA Member:

As always, our number one concern is the health and safety of patients, dentists, and staff teams.

For more than a week, your GDA Board of Trustees and staff have been actively monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 cases in Georgia. Last night, with continually evolving information, your Board of Trustees met to provide an advisory statement and guidance to the members of the GDA. We, the Board members, who are your colleagues and also small business owners, were very careful and cognizant of your independence as health care providers. We, the GDA, cannot mandate that you do anything. Only the government and regulatory agencies like the Georgia Department of Public Health can mandate that you close your practice for the health and welfare of the citizens of Georgia.

To that end, after considerable debate, the GDA Board of Trustees is advising all GDA member dentists to follow the recommendations provided by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the ADA, with one exception. We advise following the recommendation of the CDC and the President's White House Coronavirus Task Force Member, Dr. Deborah L. Brix, to postpone any elective surgery through the end of March [fifteen (15) days].

Although this situation is in a very gray area due to a lack of a state or federal mandate, your GDA BOT strives to provide every member with the best available guidance and recommendations. Without a Civil Authority Mandate, you must utilize your clinical judgment and best practices, because it is ultimately your decision as health care practitioners and small business owners.

GDA has been in active communication with the Georgia Department of Public Health, Governor Kemp's office, and state legislators. As of the writing of this letter, there are no federal or state directives mandating dental office closures. This morning, GDA learned that Governor Kemp and the Georgia Department of Public Health recommended that Georgia dentists follow the ADA's guidance. GDA remains in active dialogue with all aforementioned parties and will defer to their guidance on the appropriate future course of action for our members.

Last night the ADA issued the following recommendation to all members:

"In order for dentistry to do its part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the ADA recommends dentists nationwide postpone elective procedures for the next three weeks. Concentrating on emergency dental care will allow us to care for our emergency patients and alleviate the burden that dental emergencies would place on hospital emergency departments."

As health care providers during a pandemic, we implore dentists to continue with the relief of pain and management of infection with their patients in order to keep patients out of hospitals and emergency departments. Please continue to adhere to CDC and ADA [guidelines for infection prevention and PPE](#).

We continue to actively monitor the COVID-19/coronavirus situation and will remain a resource for all Georgia dentists, providing current, credible clinical and scientific information for our members.

Should your practice remain open, GDA recommends all offices implement heightened levels of disinfection. GDA recommends anyone identifying with the following, including staff, not go to the dentist for elective procedures:

- Fever
- Currently has a cough or shortness of breath
- History of significant chronic illness
- Compromised immune system
- You or a family member are considered high-risk
- You or a family member have traveled to a location with a level 3 travel health notice
- Airline travel in the past 2 weeks
- Previously asked to self-isolate or self-quarantine
- Close contact to an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 infection

GDA Member Dentists Get Free COVID-19 Training

GDA members can receive no-cost online training modules on Coronavirus in Dental Settings on March 18th at 12 pm and March 19th at 12 pm. The link to register for these training modules are available at www.gadental.org/coronavirus.

GDA COVID-19 Resources and Toolkit

To help support your practices and communications with patients, we are providing you with resources and templates you can tailor to address questions from patients and staff relating to COVID-19.

In this Toolkit, the GDA provides the following documents you can customize for your patients and staff:

- Template email for patients
- Social media content to share on your practice channels
- Template language for your practice website
- FAQ to assist your office staff with patient inquiries/questions
- Template email for your internal communications with office staff

Please visit the www.gadental.org/coronavirus access these templates.

As this is an evolving situation, Georgia dentists and patients seeking news and updates should visit:

- GDA's website: <http://www.gadental.org/coronavirus>
- The CDC's [COVID-19 website](#) for the latest updates.
- OSHA [guidelines for preparing workplaces for COVID-19](#).
- ADA's [Coronavirus](#) webpage, which provides information tailored to dentists, including prevention guidance, information on patient assessment and use of personal protective equipment.

This situation could change. We urge you to read all communications from the GDA and ADA, in addition to regularly visiting the GDA, CDC, and ADA websites for updates.

We urge all members to exercise their best judgment and caution during this time and to reach out to the GDA or ADA with any questions or concerns. We thank you for your commitment to providing the highest level of care for Georgia's patients and dental profession. As this issue continues to evolve, please be advised that our communications could also change as new research and scientific data are brought forward.

Best Regards,
GDA Board of Trustees

THE FOREGOING IS NOT INTENDED TO BE LEGAL ADVICE AND IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CONSULT WITH A GEORGIA LICENSED ATTORNEY BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH ANY COURSE OF ACTION.