



March 31, 2020

RE: UPDATED GDA COVID-19 ADVISORY TO MEMBERS

Dear GDA Member:

During this temporary period of uncertainty, we know that all our members are facing challenges impacting every aspect of their daily lives and practices, the likes of which few have ever seen. Unfortunately, dentistry has been one of the hardest hit professions by COVID-19, both clinically and economically. However, this too, shall pass. To that end, the GDA's Board of Trustees (BOT) wants you to know that the GDA is here to support you and that you are not alone during this time.

The COVID-19 outbreak is requiring policymakers, healthcare providers, and small business owners to make decisions based on constantly changing information. As you may recall from our initial "[GDA COVID-19 Advisory to Members](#)" dated March, 17, 2020, out of concern for the health and safety of you, your patients, staff, and the citizens of Georgia, the GDA issued a recommendation that GDA member dentists postpone "any elective surgery through the end of March [fifteen (15) days]."

However, as the COVID-19 outbreak evolves and more cases continue to be reported both nationally and in Georgia, leadership at the federal and state levels, as well as the CDC, have issued new guidance, the most pertinent of which are as follows:

- On March 23rd, Gov. Kemp issued a statewide [Executive Order](#) prohibiting businesses from having gatherings of 10 or more people at a single location "if such gathering requires persons to stand or to be seated within six (6) feet of any other person.";
- Soon after this order, many local cities and municipalities in Georgia began issuing similar mandatory stay-at-home orders;
- On March 27th, the CDC issued COVID-19 guidance for dental professionals entitled, "[Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response](#)," which included the following recommendation:

"Postpone Elective Procedures, Surgeries, and Non-urgent Dental Visits

Services should be limited to urgent and emergency visits only during this period of the pandemic. These actions help staff and patients stay safe, preserve personal protective equipment and patient care supplies, and expand available health system capacity.";

- On Sunday, March 29 President Trump announced that he would be extending his National Social Distancing guidelines to April 30th.

In light of the foregoing information, the BOT met this afternoon to revise the GDA's previous advisory statement to provide further guidance to our members, which is as follows:

In observance of current federal, state, local, and CDC guidelines and mandates to extend social distancing practices, as well as to coincide with the termination date of Governor Kemp's Executive Order declaring a Public Health State of Emergency in Georgia, the GDA recommends that until further notice, all Georgia licensed dentists and dental facilities should continue to postpone elective procedures, surgeries, and non-

urgent dental visits, and prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures pursuant to CDC guidelines, through April 13, 2020.

Currently in Georgia, there is no statewide mandate prohibiting dentists from performing elective dental procedures, although many local governments are issuing stay-at-home orders. To echo our previous advisory, the GDA does not have the authority to issue or enforce any such mandates. They must be issued by a state or local government. At this time, the ADA has not revised its [original member advisory issued on March 16th](#).

As vital and respected members of the healthcare community in this state, we urge our members to continue to adhere current CDC guidelines and use their best clinical judgment at this time. To further aid and educate our members, we also encourage you to view the resources, especially the free webinars, posted on the [GDA's COVID-19 Resource Page](#).

For your convenience, GDA staff has assembled materials on numerous clinical and business-related topics, including summaries of the federal COVID-19 stimulus packages and the SBA loan programs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the GDA office with any questions or concerns. Once again, we thank you for your continued commitment to providing the highest level of care for your patients and the dental profession. Please be advised that our communications could also change as the underlying research on COVID-19 continues to evolve.

Please take care of yourselves and your families.

Best Regards,
GDA Board of Trustees