



March 23, 2020

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt  
Governor, State of Oklahoma  
Oklahoma State Capitol  
2300 N Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Gov. Stitt,

The Oklahoma Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (OMSs) would like to thank you for your leadership during this difficult time for our state in response to COVID-19. We as OMSs are a vital part of the health care team and part of the response. One of our primary goals is to alleviate dental pain and infections, which can be life threatening if left untreated.

As the COVID-19 pandemic crisis continues to escalate, our profession will play a crucial role in treating these patients in private facilities and away from the emergency rooms. This is so vital because it decreases an already overtaxed medical system and minimizes patient exposure to the virus.

However, in order to accomplish these objectives, our surgeons must have access to the proper personal protective equipment, including N-95 masks. We are in close proximity to these patients and aerosols are generated, which puts us at high risk for exposure to COVID-19. In fact, [CDC Interim Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Setting](#) recommends prioritizing respirators and AIIRs for aerosol-generating procedures.

**The OSOMS implores you to consider making OMSs critical first responders allowing for immediate access to these masks as they become available.** With these important protective devices, we can simultaneously provide essential care to patients in need and stem the spread of the virus.

We thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you have questions and if we can be of assistance in any way to protect the health of Oklahoma patients, providers and other residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Mendenhall DDS".

Jacob Mendenhall, DDS  
OSOMS president

CCC:

Jerome Loughridge, Secretary of Health

Dr. Kayse Shrum, Secretary of Health and Innovation

Carter Kimball, Secretary of Health

Michael Junk, Chief of Staff for Governor

Gary Cox, Commissioner of Health

Ashley Scott, State Department of Health Legislative Liaison