



## Massachusetts Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

A Component Society of the  
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

April 27, 2020

Governor Charles Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
Beacon Street #280  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: MDS Recommendations for May 18

Dear Governor Baker,

We are writing to urge Massachusetts to remove restrictions on the practice of dentistry on May 18, 2020, following the most recent recommendations of the Massachusetts Dental Society.

Massachusetts has the highest concentration of dentists in the country. We have three top dental schools and perhaps the highest level of dental expertise available in any of the 50 states. Dentistry in Massachusetts has an impeccable track record of excellence, practicing infection control unrivaled by any specialty in healthcare. We are not aware of any dental transmission of Covid-19 by the dental community, which was practicing until mid-March, long after the disease had already unknowingly infiltrated our Massachusetts population.

Dentists are fully aware of the “new” environment that will require changes in the practice of dentistry. These changes include more stringent infection control and PPE, physical changes to our offices and waiting areas, altered scheduling patterns, improved screening and reporting, and strict adherence to the recommendations from the CDC, OSHA, ADA and Mass Dental Society. We can assure you the dental community is fully committed, as we always have been, to public safety and the safety of our staff and practitioners.

Putting dentists back to work will ensure that dental disease prevention, the cornerstone of any dental practice, can resume. The current practice of treating only severe emergencies was an acceptable stopgap measure but can no longer be sustained without the progression of more involved dental disease in our community. Dental infections can be life threatening. In oral and maxillofacial surgery, we have been managing our patients conservatively with antibiotics and local measures. Over the last 6 weeks we have seen patients return with significant dental infections and failing on antibiotics. These patients need oral surgical care, and this is exactly what we are expertly trained to do. The longer we delay the reopening of dental offices, the more limited access to dental care in the state will be, and a larger strain on our already taxed hospitals will exist.

Additionally, there are over 6000 general and specialty dental offices in Massachusetts, employing approximately 30,000 people. These are small businesses, just like many small businesses in Massachusetts hanging on with short-term loans, goodwill and severe trepidation.

We strongly urge you to allow the full scope practice of dentistry on May 18, 2020, as recommended by the Massachusetts Dental Society. The practice of dentistry and in particular oral and maxillofacial surgery in Massachusetts is safe, vital to our community's health, and important for our economy. We feel strongly further delay will result in severe long-term consequences to our beloved Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Pushkar Mehra, DMD, MS, FACS  
MSOMS President

An-Louise Johnson, DMD, MD  
MSOMS Vice President

Robert Memory, DMD, MD  
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MSOMS Immediate Past President

CC: Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Monica Bharel, MD, MPH, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health