June 2, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
State of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On behalf of the Florida Dental Association (FDA) and the Florida Dental Hygienists’ Association (FDHA), we would like to commend you for allowing elective procedures to resume, especially dental procedures. As you know, many dental procedures that have been delayed could have turned into dental emergencies, if not treated properly in a dental office.

Based on your Executive Order 20-112, elective procedures may resume only if health care practitioners maintain adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), without seeking further assistance of PPE from federal or state government. Due to high demands and limited supplies, acquiring PPE has unfortunately become a significant challenge for dentists all over the state. Dentists have tried purchasing PPE from their normal dental suppliers, but if the largest dental supply companies in the country cannot get access to PPE, then what are dentists supposed to do? The other challenge is counterfeit PPE flooding the marketplace that has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, potentially creating a false sense of security to those who have purchased them under false pretense. If dentists and hygienists are not able to access PPE, they will not be able to address dental emergencies, that could result in increased traffic in the hospital emergency departments.

Anticipating this challenge, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) created a priority list for distribution on PPE, which dentistry is now listed as #4 on the FEMA PPE priority list. FEMA agrees that dental emergencies should be addressed in dental offices instead of hospitals. As of May 15, FEMA Region 4, which includes Florida, has received over tens of millions of PPE. This state-by-state PPE list indicates the amount of PPE specifically sent to Florida. The FDA is requesting the state provide dentists and hygienists with PPE supplies to continue to treat dental emergencies in dental offices.

After surveying other states, it is evident that several governors have provided their dentists with PPE that has been supplied by FEMA to ensure the safety of dentists, dental team members and patients who require dental treatment. In Texas, Governor Greg Abbott has provided dentists with 300,000 N95 respirators in coordination with the Texas Dental Association. In addition,
states like Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and the list goes on of states that have worked with their state dental association to help dentists and hygienists get access to PPE through the state’s stockpiled supplies.

Dentists are willing to pay for their share of PPE through their normal dental supply chain. Since this is not an option, the FDA and the FDHA are requesting the state’s assistance through the PPE supply the state continually receives from the federal government. The distribution process of the PPE could be coordinated locally through the emergency management offices to help expedite PPE acquisition at the local level.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue. We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible. We are available to discuss further and can be reached at rliddell@bot.floridadental.org and poole.robin@gmail.com. You can also contact Joe Anne Hart, FDA’s Chief Legislative Officer at 850.224.1089 or jahart@floridadental.org and Leslie Dughi, FDHA’s Lobbyist at 850.519.3903 or DughiL@gtlaw.com for additional information.

Sincerely,

Rudy T. Liddell, DMD
FDA President

Robin L. Poole, CRDH, MA
FDHA President

cc: FDA Board of Trustees
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    Drew Eason, FDA Executive Director
    Joe Anne Hart, FDA Chief Legislative Officer
    Tami Miller, FDHA Executive Director
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