

PENNSYLVANIA SOCIETY OF
ORAL & MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS

PSOMS

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor, State of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17108

Dear Governor Wolf:

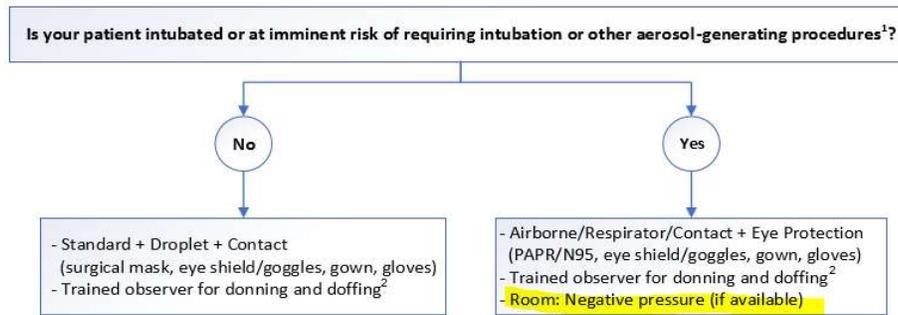
On behalf of the more than 235 members of the Pennsylvania Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (PSOMS), I am writing to express grave concern over the Pennsylvania Department of Health's recent guidance concerning the COVID-19 contagion currently in our Commonwealth.

The latest guidance, entitled "Guidance on COVID-19 for Dental Health Care Personnel in Pennsylvania," dated March 22, 2020, gives direction to all dental providers, including dental specialists, mandates that all personnel must follow proper protocol when donning and doffing personal protective equipment (PPE), all personnel must use N95 masks or higher; goggles or a face-shield covering face and sides; disposable gowns and gloves, and treatment must be provided in negative pressure isolation rooms with HEPA filtration. These overly stringent and unrealistic guidelines will not allow the vast majority of dental practitioners to function and treat the public as these resources are simply not available to dentists and oral and maxillofacial surgeons.

Oral and maxillofacial surgeons are at the forefront of this pandemic as we are the dental practitioners who answer the call for the large number of dental emergency patients that include infections and pain that would end up in the Emergency Department and further remove valuable resources from more urgent needs in this crisis. Additionally, we have cardiac and cancer patients who are awaiting dental extraction prior to them receiving lifesaving treatment. They will not have dental clearance until we are able to treat them and therefore cannot have their procedures, or at least not without much greater risk, with the current guidelines.

I have included an example of the COVID-19 protocol from the University of Washington, another hard hit area, that better streamlines the process and would allow dentists and dental specialists to perform their emergency duties and thereby relieving the health system of undue stress that can be focused on the contagion at hand.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19



¹ **Aerosol Generating Procedures:**

- Endotracheal intubation and extubation
- Care of the intubated patient (in case of inadvertent disruption of closed ventilator circuit)
- Sputum induction
- Bronchoscopy
- Open airway suctioning
- High flow oxygen therapy
- Noninvasive ventilation (BiPAP, CPAP)
- Nebulizer treatment

Please also note:

- Special Droplet/Contact is appropriate for coughing patients not requiring procedures described above
- Oral suction is not an aerosolizing procedure
- Non-rebreather is not an aerosolizing procedure but may indicate need for escalated therapies
- Move to Airborne/Respirator/Contact + Eye Protection if intubation, noninvasive ventilation, or other aerosol generating procedures are anticipated.
- Move back to Special Droplet/Contact once the aerosolizing procedures have concluded. Please allow appropriate room turnover time depending on location. HMC's is 1 hour. UWMC locations (Montlake and NW) vary based on location with a maximum turnover time of 2 hours. Please ask your unit manager.

² **Trained Observation:** A trained observer (TO) is a staff member who has been trained in donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE). **Donning:** You are required to have a TO visually inspect your PPE before you enter the patient's room or care area (this process is also known as "PPE check"). **Doffing:** For your safety, a TO is also required for the doffing process to make sure you do not self-contaminate as you remove your PPE. The healthcare worker (HCW) will notify the TO when they are ready to exit the room and follow the instructions of the TO. It is expected that the TO will respond to the HCW's request to exit the room as quickly as possible, limiting the amount of additional time spent by the HCW in the patient room.

PPE for Specimen Collection: Since nasopharyngeal swabs often generate a strong cough reflex, Standard/Contact/Droplet precautions are required.

More Information: For testing criteria and detailed information about PPE for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, please visit our [UW Medicine COVID-19 Website](#)

I hope you find this information useful and are able to amend the current COVID-19 guidelines to better allow the oral and maxillofacial surgeons the ability to help in this crisis.

I have also instructed our membership to contact your offices in support of this measure.

Respectfully,

Joseph E. Cillo Jr., DMD, MPH, PhD, FACS.
 President, Pennsylvania Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

cc: Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania Secretary of Health