

PSOMS Member Alert: COVID-19 Update

May 1, 2020

Pennsylvania COVID Dental Coalition

The Pennsylvania Dental Association sent a letter to Dr. Levine on April 30th, 2020, concerning the [PA COVID Dental Coalition's](#) advocacy for the use of the American Dental Association's Return to Work Toolkit and Pennsylvania moves closer toward re-opening Dental Practices. This letter was signed by Coalition Presidents of the Pennsylvania Dental Association, Pennsylvania Academy of General Dentistry, the Pennsylvania Academy of Pediatric Dentists, and the Deans of the States 3 dental schools. Conspicuously missing was the presence and involvement of the PSOMS. I was disappointed to see that the PSOMS was not involved in this endeavor as the main organization that advocates for the specialty of oral and maxillofacial surgeons and the safety of patients and the public health in Pennsylvania.

To express the concerns of the PSOMS to the PA COVID Dental Coalition and our disappointment of not being included in the development of this coalition, I personally spoke with current PDA President and oral and maxillofacial surgeon, Dr. Jim Tauberg, who informed me that the Coalition was developed exclusively by the Pennsylvania Department of Health without consultation, once again, from any dental or dental specialty organizational leadership. It does not go without me knowing that two of our own members, Dr. Jim Tauberg, current PDA President, and Dr. B.J. Costello, Dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, were a part of this coalition, and I know for certain that they advocated for the oral surgeons in Pennsylvania. The PSOMS continues to support the PDA as it represents all dental specialties and specialty organizations in Pennsylvania including oral surgery and the PSOMS. Our disappointment lies with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and their continued misunderstanding of organized dental leadership and the role that dentists and dental specialists have in not just oral health but also the general health of the people of Pennsylvania. The PSOMS will continue to pursue its mission through governmental advocacy and partnership with other dental and medical leadership.

In case you missed it or did not receive notification, I also want to make you aware of some of the updates from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the Governor's office:

Gov. Wolf Announces Reopening Targeted for May 8 in North-Central, Northwest

Governor Wolf has presented his plan for reopening the commonwealth in phases and with a targeted May 8 start. These three phases will be: red, yellow, green and will be assigned based on conditions on county and regional COVID involvement. Details can be found: [CLICK HERE](#)

We are not certain at this time what this actually means for dentists and oral surgeon offices. We are advised that only hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers may begin with elective surgery

and dentist and oral surgery office are NOT currently permitted. We are working with our lobbyists in Harrisburg to get better details of the situation as it pertains specifically to oral surgeons.

Temporary Regulatory Suspension of Requirements for Emergency Oral Prescriptions

On March 27, 2020, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) issued guidance in which it granted practitioners 15 days to provide the written prescription to the pharmacy following an emergency oral prescription for a Schedule II controlled substance and allowed practitioners to send the follow-up prescription to the pharmacy via facsimile, or to take a photograph or scan of the prescription and send the photograph or scan to the pharmacy in place of the paper prescription. Details may be found [HERE](#).

As a result of Governor Wolf's Emergency Declaration in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Health is temporarily suspending the regulation that requires a prescribing practitioner deliver a written prescription to the pharmacist within 72 hours after authorizing an emergency oral prescription for a Schedule II drug. This temporary suspension is in effect through the duration of the [emergency disaster proclamation](#) signed by Governor Wolf.

I would like to emphasize that prescribers must continue to comply with the DEA regulations pertaining to emergency oral prescribing of Schedule II drugs.

Creation of *ad hoc* Committee on Anesthesia Continuing Education.

I have created an *ad hoc* Committee on Anesthesia Continuing Education to oversee the continuing educational aspects of the PSOMS's oversight and evaluation of dentists with anesthesia permits in Pennsylvania. This is to be Chaired by the current Chairperson of Anesthesia Evaluation, Dr. Jim Robbins. Dr. Robbins will continue to develop high quality anesthesia continuing education and office anesthesia evaluator courses for the dentists with anesthesia permits in Pennsylvania. Keep a look out for communication from him in a newly created anesthesia specific PSOMS email address.

As always I recommend that for more information on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19, you visit the Department of Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#).

Sincerely,

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