

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

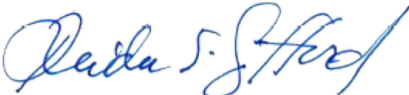
Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH
Acting Commissioner



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Governor
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Memo

TO: Connecticut Licensed Dentists and Dental Hygienists

FROM: Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH 

CC: Deputy Commissioner Heather Aaron, MPH, LNHA
Barbara Cass, RN, Branch Chief, Healthcare Quality and Safety Branch
Christian Andresen, MPH, CPH, Section Chief, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations

DATE: July 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Ongoing Dental Guidance Updates

The Department of Public Health acknowledges the efforts that dental practices throughout Connecticut have made to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission in dental settings.

Components of the *Best Practices for Dental Offices Considering Expanding Operations Beyond Emergency Care to Include Non-Urgent and Elective Procedures During the COVID-19 Pandemic* document that was distributed a few weeks ago have since been updated multiple times. This has created understandable confusion and concern among dental hygienists, dental assistants, dentists and other staff working in dental settings.

As the response to COVID-19 evolves and moving forward, dental practices in Connecticut should prioritize following the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response*. The CDC guidance is referenced in Connecticut General Statutes Section 20-114(a)(15) that relates to the practice of dentistry. The most updated version of the CDC guidance can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html>

The June 17, 2020 changes to the CDC guidance are:

- The recommendation to wait 15 minutes after completion of clinical care and exit of each patient without suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to begin to clean and disinfect room surfaces has been removed to align with CDC [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#).



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- The time period recommended for patients to inform the dental clinic if they develop symptoms or are diagnosed with COVID-19 following a dental appointment has been changed to 2 days (down from 14 days) to align with CDC's [Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure Guidance](#).
- Clarifying language has been added to Engineering Controls.

Guidance issued by the American Dental Association and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) can be used to complement or supplement the CDC guidance.

The Department encourages ongoing COVID-19 infection control and prevention communication between dentists and dental health care practitioners and other staff working at the practice, especially as the CDC guidance is updated. The Department's recent experience working with dental practices where COVID-19 related concerns have been raised by staff has shown that most offices have taken appropriate precautions. However, staff were often not sufficiently trained or clearly informed about the measures taken by the practice to mitigate COVID-19 transmission risk. Clear communication and training of staff will assist in reducing unnecessary COVID-19 related tensions and fears in the workplace.

We appreciate all of your efforts. Thank you and please be safe.