
Board of Dental Examiners of Alabama <bdeal@dentalboard.org>

Sunday, March 29, 2020 7:55 PM

Covid - 19 Message from Dr McIlwain, President of the Board of Dental Examiners of Alabama



To: All Alabama Dentists and Hygienists

From: Mark R. McIlwain, DMD, MD, President, Board of Dental Examiners of Alabama

Subject: Clarification of Governor of Alabama and Alabama Department of Public Health March 27 Order

Dear Licensee:

First, the **March 27 order**, posted on our website at www.dentalboard.org, is a public health order that is mandatory and enforceable by law.

Second, the Order at provision 7.a. clearly states that all elective dentistry is to stop. Emergency procedures to alleviate severe pain, dangerous swelling, or infection with the potential to necessitate hospital care are allowed. It is up to the judgement of the licensed professional which cases require emergency treatment. Clear, recorded justification of a patient's necessity for care and subsequent care is required. Dentistry's ability to keep patients out of the hospital during this pandemic requires good judgment and conscientious care. The use and preservation of proper personal protective equipment is in the patient's and staff's best interest.

Third, the Order's provision 7.b. is not an instruction to continue with an ongoing elective dental or orthodontic treatment plan. 7.b. refers to a plan of treatment such as a cancer diagnosis, placing a port for IV access, or ongoing chemotherapy. It is referring to a treatment plan that if delayed will create a threat to the patient's health and life.

Dentistry does not need to become a vector for the spread of Covid-19. We have limited PPE and must proceed accordingly. The CDC and OSHA have labeled the aerosol created with the intra-oral use of a dental hand piece very high risk. The very nature of the practice of dentistry makes it virtually impossible to practice while complying with social distancing. As the risk/benefit ratio of various dental encounters and procedures evolves over the course of this pandemic, the Dental Board will advocate for the return of those privileges. Each member of the Dental Board is in the same situation as every other practitioner, with the inability to see patients and lost income, and we are diligently seeking solutions. At our next meeting, the Dental Board will consider modifications to current CE requirements in the light of the many cancellations of in-person CE made necessary by social distancing. We ask that during this crisis you act in such a way as to be part of the solution and not add to the problem.

Board of Dental Examiners of Alabama | 2229 Rocky Ridge Rd., Birmingham, AL 35216

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