



April 10, 2020

Office of Governor Walz
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 5155

Governor Walz,

Dental clinics have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide emergent services to patients across the state. Providing this care exposes dentists and their staff to the risk of becoming sick with COVID-19. We would like to ensure that dental clinics are considered a priority for receiving necessary PPE to provide care. By staying open and treating patients when necessary, dental clinics are helping to reduce patients seeking oral healthcare at emergency rooms.

Additionally, dental clinics need to prepare for when the restrictions on elective procedures and services is lifted. We need to be forward thinking and ensure that dental clinics will have the proper PPE and can follow safety protocols to ensure patient and provider safety. More Minnesotans will inevitably need oral health care in the coming months and dental clinics need to have the resources to serve them. Dental care puts them in a high-risk position to get sick. As noted by the CDC, the practice of dentistry involves the use of rotary dental and surgical instruments such as handpieces or ultrasonic scalers and air-water syringes. These instruments create a visible spray that contains large particle droplets of water, saliva, blood, microorganisms, and other debris. This spatter travels only a short distance and settles out quickly, landing on the floor, nearby operatory surfaces, Dental Health Care Provider, or the patient. Surgical masks protect mucous membranes of the mouth and nose from droplet spatter, but they do not provide complete protection against inhalation of airborne infectious agents.

We are simply asking that dental clinics be considered a priority when deciding where PPE should be allocated. This will help the dental community provide care now and better prepare to serve patients when they can resume elective procedures and services. If you have any questions, please contact Carmelo Cinqueonce, Executive Director of the Minnesota Dental Association at 651-338-5010 or ccinque@mndental.org.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carmelo Cinqueonce".

Carmelo Cinqueonce, Executive Director
Minnesota Dental Association