



COLLEGE OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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May 6, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Update: Province's Restart Plan and Oral Health Care

Dear Registrant:

Today you may have heard the Premier announce the Province's "Restart Plan" regarding establishing the 'new normal'. The plan includes four phases for the re-opening of the province. We are currently in Phase 1. Dentistry is included in Phase 2 of the plan and that second phase will begin in mid-May. The plan emphasizes caution and a slow return to the activities in each phase. The Premier's announcement can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

It is essential to note that we are not in Phase 2 yet and the College is still recommending refraining from in-person non-essential care. The Provincial Health Officer underlines that this is simply an announcement of a plan, not an immediate change to what we have been doing. If the curve continues to flatten and decline, then we will be in a position to proceed to Phase 2 in the middle of May.

That being said, the College understands that registrants are thinking about a return to the provision of in-person non-essential care for their clients. We also understand that you may have questions or concerns regarding how to do that safely and are looking to the regulators for information.

In the coming days and weeks you can expect to receive information on this return from the College. The BC Health Regulators are working collaboratively to offer general guidance for the delivery of community health services, which includes dental hygiene. In addition, the four oral health regulators are also working collaboratively to offer guidance related to a slow return to the provision of in-person non-essential care. We are working diligently on getting that information to you in a timely manner while at the same time ensuring the content is well thought out and carefully considered.

While awaiting this material, you may wish to review [the CDHBC Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Guidelines](#) document. This is a shared document with the College of Dental Surgeons of BC and contains what is considered to be best practice in IPAC guidelines. You will note that it contains information and guidelines related to PPE, patient screening, risk assessment and the prevention of direct or droplet transmission of respiratory illnesses.

It is important to note that throughout the pandemic, BC has taken a different approach than other provinces, both generally and more specifically in oral health care delivery. Unlike other provinces, the BC Colleges have recommended refraining from the provision of in-person non-essential care. The provision of urgent and emergent care has been permitted throughout the pandemic provided proper guidelines are followed. In addition, the College has encouraged registrants to be available to their clients virtually, as needed and as appropriate. Caution must be used when considering 'return to care' plans and guidelines from other provinces as their environment and situations may differ from ours.

It is also vital to understand that information from the Colleges will be principle-based recommendations and guidelines, instead of a prescriptive, one-size-fit-all approach. As always, professional judgement and expertise will need to be applied to ensure that care is provided in a manner that is safe for both the client

and the professional. The manner and level of delivery of any care must be given careful consideration. Even when these recommendations and guidelines are published, each registrant will need to consider a number of factors to determine whether the time is right to return to the delivery of in-person non-essential care. The College will be here to provide support as much as possible regarding those decisions.

These have been challenging times for everyone. We are in this together and will continue to navigate these unprecedented times as best as we can. As we contemplate what the 'new normal' may look like, one thing that will not change is our unwavering commitment to fulfill our mandate of public protection.

Be well and be safe.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Lawrence".

Jennifer Lawrence
Registrar/CEO