



COLLEGE OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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URGENT Message from Registrar/CEO about COVID-19: Elective and non-essential dental hygiene services to be suspended immediately; Attendees of 2020 Pacific Dental Conference to self-isolate

March 16, 2020

To the registrants of the College of Dental Hygienists of BC:

As each of us is aware, these are extraordinary circumstances which call for exceptional measures, and it is time to take every precaution to keep people safe.

The College of Dental Hygienists of BC (CDHBC) and the College of Dental Surgeons of BC (CDSBC) have worked collaboratively on this message to provide consistent instructions to all dental professionals.

First, Dr. Bonnie Henry has now advised that **ALL** attendees of the Pacific Dental Conference in Vancouver from March 5-7, 2020 should self-isolate. Therefore, anyone who attended the 2020 Pacific Dental Conference must immediately self-isolate. A joint statement from the BC Ministry of Health and Dr. Bonnie Henry asks that anyone who attended self-isolate until March 22, 2020. Please visit the following link for the joint statement:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020HLTH0086-000499>

CDHBC is offering the following recommendations and guidance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is in place until further notice and we will be in regular contact with you, knowing that this situation is rapidly changing.

1. CDHBC strongly recommends all elective and non-essential dental hygiene services be suspended immediately.
2. Management of emergency concerns from clients must continue. These would include clients requiring immediate treatment due to infection, acute pain and/or trauma. Dental hygienists should dialogue with the oral health team to determine the best place and manner in which the care can be delivered safely and appropriately. Management may include referral to an appropriate facility.
3. If the provision of care is being considered, all registrants must perform a thorough pre-treatment risk assessment that includes risk to the client, to the oral health care provider and to the greater community before any treatment is undertaken. If risks are identified that cannot be immediately or sufficiently mitigated, the determined care must be postponed or referred to an appropriate provider. Pre-screening of dental hygiene clients by phone is recommended. Offices should develop a pre-screening protocol for clients who present in person.
3. Care provided must be compliant with existing CDHBC Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) standards and guidance or the treatment must cease. Capacity to undertake appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be assessed before treatment can be initiated. If appropriate PPE cannot be established, care must not be provided.

CDHBC is also changing our business practices in response to this emerging situation. As a result:

5. Given that a number of CDHBC staff attended the PDC and in compliance with instructions from our Public Health Officer, CDHBC has closed its office for at least the remainder of the week and staff will work as best as they are able

to from home. Voice mails and emails will be checked regularly and responded to. We thank you for your patience during this time. Registrants should check their email and our website regularly for the latest updates.

6. In addition, all in-person meetings have been suspended until further notice, all speaking engagements and presentations by CDHBC staff are cancelled until further notice, all non-essential business travel for staff has been cancelled. All oral health care providers and CDHBC employees must follow current advice from the Office of the Public Health Officer. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

It is the responsibility of all medical professionals to stay up to date with the requirements of public health agencies to keep the public, staff and yourself safe.

Staff are reviewing all the questions submitted to us and will be publishing our responses in keeping with the latest recommendations from public health experts.

We thank you for your prompt attention and co-operation.

Warm Regards,
Jennifer Lawrence
Registrar/CEO