

**NEW HAMPSHIRE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS
121 S. FRUIT ST., SUITE 302
CONCORD, NH 03301-2412**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2020
Emergency Board Meeting**

Pursuant to RSA 91.A:2, an emergency meeting of the NH Board of Dental Examiners was called to order by roll call, through telephone participation, at 8:33 am by Puneet Kochhar, DMD with the following members present:

Puneet Kochhar, DMD, President (PK)
Jay Patel, DDS (JP)
Roger Achong, DMD (RA)
Tara Levesque-Vogel, DMD (TV)
Lisa Scott, RDH (LS)
Ellen Legg, RDH (EL)
Linda Tatarczuch, MSW (LT)

Not Present: Dennis Hannon, DDS (DH)
Muhenad Samaan, DMD (MS)

Attendees: Christine Senko, Administrator, Board of Dental Examiners (CS)
Lindsey Courtney, Division Director (LC)
JD Lavallee, Esq., Board Counsel (JDL)

Board Response to COVID-19:

Dr. Kochhar reported that the American Dental Association (ADA) posted recent recommendations regarding closures of dental offices in light of the ongoing national concern over the spread of COVID-19. This statement will also be posted on the NH Dental Society's website.

The statement from the ADA includes a recommendation that offices postpone elective procedures for three weeks and concentrate on emergency dental care.

Dr. Kochhar questioned whether or not the Board has the authority to make similar recommendations and/or mandates to the dental community. It was indicated by Lindsey Courtney and JD Lavallee, that the **Board does not** have the authority to mandate closure of dental offices in the State. If such a decision were to be made, the decisions would come from the Governor's office under the authority provided through the declaration of a state of emergency. If, however, the Board believes that there are specific reasons that need to be articulated to support such a recommendation, Lindsey can take them forward to the Governor's office.

Members engaged in a discussion regarding what type of information to post and communicate to the dental community. Questions such as: how often to evaluate what benchmark is used to keep practices opened or closed; how to re-evaluate the recommendations, how to enforce the recommendations, what time frame should be followed. Additionally, financial pressure of closing businesses was discussed as well as what type of procedures constitute an elective procedure and a

non-elective procedure. Dr. Vogel indicated that the Dental Society did not want to list what cases should be cancelled or rescheduled, but rather leave the decision to the discretion of the individual provider. It was also noted that the pain level of the patient would need to be taken into consideration by providers.

JD Lavellee indicated that the current state of emergency is declared for 21 days and then will be reevaluated after the 21 day period.

It was noted that the Ohio Dental Board in conjunction with the Ohio Dental Society and Ohio Governor's Office included different types of cases that would be considered elective procedures to reschedule. This information is available on their website.

Members also discussed how to flatten the curve and protect the public as well as members of the dental profession, and the need to link any statements from the Board to the current State of Emergency Order.

Upon motion made by Dr. Vogel and seconded by Dr. Kochhar, the Board voted unanimously to forward the following statement to the Governor's office for consideration as the Board seeks to respond to the declared state of emergency due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19):

In order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, and any person practicing dentistry in New Hampshire, the NH Board of Dental Examiners (Board) supports the March 16, 2020 statement from the American Dental Association. Specifically, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the Board concurs with the recommendation dentists postpone elective procedures concurrent with the state of emergency in New Hampshire. Concentrating on emergency dental care will allow the dental community to care for emergency patients and alleviates the burden that dental emergencies would place on hospital emergency departments.

The Board will continue to evaluate and update its statement as new information becomes available. Please visit www.oplc.nh.gov/dental.

This statement will be forwarded to the Governor's office for approval and then will be posted on the Dental Board website.

There being no further business, Dr. Kochhar adjourned the meeting at 9:06 a.m.