

To all [REDACTED] Programs:

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the dental world and how services can be safely provided. This health crisis will also affect our [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] programs sites as schools reopen this fall. Since March, many professional organizations have released guidance on how to reopen dental care by following a new set of enhanced infection control standards. I recommend you review the attached CDC Dental Guidance, the ADA Return to Work Toolkit and the ASTDD Dental Screening considerations.

The main concern for virus transmission seems to be with aerosol producing dental procedures, often involving handpiece use. Many of the services our programs offer do not produce aerosols...dental screenings, education, topical fluoride and referrals. However, there is a potential for aerosols with rubber cup prophys, cavitron utilization and air/water syringe use. Hand scaling is an option but placing sealants may involve rinsing/suction and could produce low aerosols. Therefore, **the Office of Oral Health recommends that aerosol producing services be temporarily delayed until 2021** when more will be known about COVID transmission. Public Health Hygienists and Community Health Workers interacting with [REDACTED] participants should **consider the use of COVID symptom screening questions, temperature checks and enhanced PPE. This includes gloves, isolation gowns, N95 respirators (or surgical masks), safety goggles, face shields and frequent use of hand cleaner and surface disinfectants.** LPHDs may wish to include language in their dental consent forms to explain these new safety precautions.

Across the nation, state dental directors are anticipating difficulty in gaining access to children's centers, schools and older adult facilities this fall. In [REDACTED], some schools may still be open to dental disease preventive services, but a lot will depend on following the directed health measures that are issued by each local health department and informing your residents about these changes. We realize that preventive service production will go down this year but remain hopeful that your dental disease prevention teams will actively engage their communities and **emphasize the importance of dental screenings, education, fluoride treatments and referrals during these unprecedented times.**

Recently, the Office of Oral Health has partnered with the [REDACTED] College of Dentistry and the [REDACTED] Foundation to greatly increase production of the Early Dental Health Starter Kits that are aimed at educating parents and caregivers of very young children. Now more than ever, proper daily oral hygiene is essential to help prevent dental decay. All [REDACTED] programs will soon receive English and Spanish kits through their health departments. The OOHD asks that you dispense the Starter Kits widely and evenly throughout your districts. An educational campaign will also be developed which will describe the Starter Kit program in the near future.

In an effort to maintain open communication, coordination and quality control, **the OOHD will be holding bi-monthly conference calls with all LPHDs starting this fall.**

With knowledge we can safely overcome these obstacles and we want to wish you all continued success in improving oral health outcomes!