



**Update Call from the Department of Health  
May 13, 2020**

The following is a summary of the update provided to dental organizations by the PA Department of Health at 11:00am on May 13, 2020. This update is informational only and transcribed to the best of PCOH's ability.

Dental organizations on the call:

AmeriHealth/Keystone First  
PA Academy of General Dentistry  
PA Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
PA Coalition for Oral Health  
PA Dental Association  
PA Dental Hygienists' Association  
Temple University  
University of Pittsburgh Dental School

PA Department of Health and PA Department of State representatives provided clarifying information on questions received.

1. Effective date of revised guidance – This guidance is effective **statewide** as of May 8, 2020.
2. Clarification of procedures – revised guidance provides for clinical judgement and offer procedures for prevention of irreversible harm. (use incidence of COVID19 disease and availability of PPE)
3. Not a return to routine dentistry – This is way to assure patients who need care can obtain it safely.
4. The Department does NOT recommend that routine cleanings resume at this time. Cleanings that are necessary for larger medical issues such as prior to chemotherapy would be permitted.
5. PPE recommendations – Please refer to CDC and OSHA guidance.
6. PPE will need prioritized. The state has chosen to prioritize congregate care settings like nursing homes and personal care homes as they have the highest level of cases and deaths. The Department has provided the current prioritization list.
7. Communications strategy – All representatives of the dental community should disseminate this information to their members. The State Board of Dentistry has posted it to its website, and an email blast will be going out to licensees very soon.
8. Information will be shared on PA state social media today to provide clarification.
9. Enforcement – The Department of State shared that the dental board has the authority to discipline licensees for failing to follow the CDC guidance for infection control. There is also a document clarifying the CDC/DOH guidance on the State Board of Dentistry's website. State guidance should be followed if there is a conflict. PA State of Dentistry can immediately suspend a license if needed for a violation to safeguard the public's safety. There is a BPOA Complaints office and [form](#) that individuals should reach out to with any complaints; the State Board of Dentistry or any of its members should not be contacted directly.
10. The Communications Director clarified that the reason behind opening up the entire state is to ensure we don't have a secondary public health crisis by allowing individuals to put off dental care that is necessary. It is important to support dentistry that is supportive of public health and does not put staff at risk. It is not a return to routine dentistry.