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odha
Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association

**COVID-19
Update**

March 17, 2020 updates

Update #1

Following up on the employment insurance (EI) information sent out yesterday, ODHA has had further discussion with our employment legal counsel regarding dental hygienists' whose practices have not closed. They have offered the following advice:

If your practice has not closed its' offices and you are not comfortable going to work, you have the right to refuse unsafe work as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Please click on this link for detailed information.

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-occupational-health-and-safety-act/part-v-right-refuse-or-stop-work-where-health-and-safety-danger>

The proposed provincial legislation announced yesterday is not yet in effect to protect leaves of absence, due to having to stay home as a result of COVID-19, but we expect it to be in place shortly. You can only apply for employment insurance benefits if you are sick (sick benefits) or your employer has laid you off (regular benefits).

If you need further information please call Legal-Line, your free benefit with ODHA membership.

Accessing your free Legal-Line benefit

- Go to odha.on.ca and login
- Under the Member Benefits menu, click [accessing your member benefits](#)
- Click the Legal Advice member benefit listed
- It will drop down and show the Legal-Line information including the phone number and the member access code.

Update #2

Today, the provincial government declared a state of emergency in Ontario because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The provincial government is using every power possible to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians. Ontario is also investing up to \$304 million to enhance the province's response to COVID-19.

In a press conference today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is looking to recall parliament to pass legislation on issues related to EI entitlements and requirements in an effort to get money in the pockets of Canadians. Prime Minister Trudeau also stated the Federal government is looking at the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* to see if they can utilize options in the act to help Canadians. We anticipate details will be available in the coming days.

ODHA office hours

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak the ODHA team will be working remotely in rotation and staff is committed to being available to our members. ODHA will be responding to your calls as follows.

- Phones will be answered from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday to Friday.
- From 11a.m. to 4 p.m., please leave a message in the general mailbox or email info@odha.on.ca. If you know your party's extension, please leave a message or follow the instructions to send an email.

All the ODHA staff are available and will respond to your phone and email messages promptly.

Take care of yourselves and we thank you for your patience as we navigate through these challenging times.