

**January 14, 2020 Update**

**SUBJECT: COVID-19: Work as a team**



The continuing fight against COVID-19 has gone on longer than anyone anticipated, and the more time passes it may be harder to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The second provincial state of emergency and stay at home order has understandably brought feelings of uncertainty and anxiousness within the profession to the forefront.

Back in March, during the first state of emergency, practices were closed except those offering emergency services. This time, circumstances are different. Oral health professionals, along with other regulated health professionals, are now seen as essential health-care workers, and practices remain open to offer oral health care services.

As professionals, dental hygienists are well qualified to understand and mitigate concerns regarding PPE and managing the practice environment. Always practice care and due diligence when in practice to protect yourself and others. Follow practice and infection prevention and control guidance from the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario at all times. Our understanding is any transmission in a dental practice has been outside the client/clinician interaction, continue to be careful and take precautions – even during break times.

It is vital to maintain open communication with your employer and the oral health team in the practice where you work, so as a team you can work through the daily challenges of practising during these unprecedented times – together. Always be respectful in your interactions to ensure everyone on the team is being heard when voicing concerns. Take individual consideration of your own personal risk, including your family and home situation and discuss any suggestions or changes to your schedule with your employer. The Ontario government has not indicated an interest in closing down private sector health care services, therefore it's the employer's decision regarding opening and closing.

Whenever there is change or uncertainty, how we respond sets the tone for the course ahead. Make the decision to be a positive contributor to your workplace conversations, offering solutions, and have a resolve to work as a team.

ODHA continues to monitor the pandemic closely. We have worked to ensure you are recognized for the care you provide and have been acknowledged for vaccine priority. We are here for you, and we will get to the other side of this pandemic together – one day at a time.

Refer to the ongoing information on the ODHA [COVID-19 update page](#) to stay informed.