



Dr. Sheila L. Armstrong

**Greetings National Dental Association Members!** I hope and pray that all of you are healthy, your families are healthy and you have returned to your practices. I know that you are going to great lengths in this COVID-19 pandemic, to establish safe spaces to provide dental care to your patients. The NDA advises you to consult the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention** for the most up to date information regarding the protocols that you should be using in your offices and treating your patients. The Guidance for Dental Settings was recently updated on **August 4, 2020**. This recent update gives guidance regarding employees and physical distancing in the office, staying informed and consulting state and local health departments, optimizing teledentistry services, updated definition of a fever (100.0+ degrees F), update regarding protective eyewear ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/dental-settings.html))

The Department of Health and Human Services is providing additional funding for COVID-impacted Healthcare providers through the **CARES Act Provider Relief Fund** ([www.hhs.gov/providerrelief](https://www.hhs.gov/providerrelief)). The application deadline for any dental provider that bills Medicare, Medicaid, Medicaid managed care, CHIP, dental providers that accept dental insurance, and providers that bill patients directly, the deadline for this funding is **now September 13, 2020**. **\$175 Billion dollars** has been allocated for this program. Providers can receive up to 2% of their patient revenue. The application portal is found at: <https://cares.linkhealth.com/#/>. The Provider support line (866) 569-3522 is available from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Central time.

**The World Health Organization** recently issued recommendations stating that routine non-essential oral health care should be delayed. This would include oral exams, dental cleanings and preventative care. They also stated that providers should take direction and guidance from their state and or local health departments in the regions that they practice in. The National Dental Association believes that **oral health care is “essential” health care** and the suspension of these services leads to a decrease in optimal overall health. Studies have already shown the oral-systemic link in many health abnormalities such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and COPD. There are now studies being reported that show that the presence of periodontal disease and gingival inflammation are directly related to the severity of the COVID-19 infection. The National Dental Association believes that our members are equipped to provide essential treatment to our patients with the proper protocols in place. These protocols include the wearing of face masks for all patients entering the dental office, the use of screening questions regarding symptoms, and exposure to COVID-19, body temperature recording, pulse-oximeter measurements, hand washing, pre-procedural rinsing with hydrogen peroxide, use of four handed dentistry, external suction devices, air filtration systems with HEPA filters, use of sneeze guards/plexiglass in front desk areas, use of N-95 masks (or level 3), face shields, Isolation gowns, hair/shoe coverings, gloves, eye protection (glasses) with side shields, sterilization of instruments, disinfection of hard surfaces in the office and in the treatment rooms with hospital level chemicals and screening and temperature recording, and maintenance of social distancing in the office of all office personnel. These measures help to mitigate the spread of Coronavirus and cannot be suspended under any circumstances at this time! To date there have been no recorded or documented transmissions of Coronavirus between dental office personnel i.e. dentist, hygienist, assistant and a patient. The dental community has historically taken great precautions to prevent the spread of blood borne pathogens and now air borne pathogens, such as Coronavirus. The



dental community is to be commended for their continued level of excellence in this area. Again, please refer to the CDC website for protocols and guidelines that will help you to safely provide dental treatment during the Coronavirus pandemic.

If you were unable to attend the **107<sup>th</sup> National Dental Association Annual Virtual Convention**, you still have the opportunity to view and receive up to 22 Continuing Education credits. Our virtual convention this year was an awesome event with speakers from around the world. This opportunity will be available until **September 10, 2020**, please invite your colleagues and friends!

Please continue to check the NDA website for updates and new information.

**Resources:**

[www.dentalproductsreport.com/view/new-research-suggests-a-deadly-link-between-gum-disease-and-covid-19](http://www.dentalproductsreport.com/view/new-research-suggests-a-deadly-link-between-gum-disease-and-covid-19)

The Mouth-COVID Connection, IL-6 Levels in Periodontal Disease, Potential Role in COVID-19 Related Respiratory Complications

Shervin Molayem, DDS & Carla Cruvinel Pontes, DDS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila L. Armstrong, DDS". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Sheila L. Armstrong, DDS, FACD, FICD**  
National Dental Association, President  
[www.ndaonline.org/coronavirus/psa](http://www.ndaonline.org/coronavirus/psa)