

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human  
Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

On behalf of our collective dental organizations, we are writing to thank you for your strong support of dentists across the country during this public health emergency. We are requesting immediate financial assistance for dentists who are only providing care for patients with urgent needs. Dentists are taking on significant financial risk due to postponing non-essential procedures and visits during this crisis.

Dentists were some of the first to recommend a postponement of all elective procedures at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, dentists are only seeing patients for emergencies in order to slow community spread, preserve medical supplies, and alleviate emergency departments as much as possible from the burden of caring for dental emergencies, rather than patients with COVID-19. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has classified dental health care personnel in the **very high exposure risk** category<sup>1</sup> and the ability to fully reopen dental practices is contingent on the ability to completely control the coronavirus pandemic in a relatively short period of time. Dentists across the country continue to navigate the unique challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic while growing more alarmed that their practices are risking solvency issues as they try to remain open for emergencies but have less and less access to capital. Even with Small Business Administration (SBA) loans coming online, the delays in processing are requiring dentists to make long-term business decisions about keeping employees on payroll and whether they will ever be able to open again.

We strongly recommend that HHS provide immediate access to capital by **releasing funding from the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund to dentists that are Medicaid providers**. After releasing \$30 billion in Medicare payments to health care providers last week, dentists who are Medicaid providers should also be made eligible for payments in the next round of payments. These payments would help dentists who provide a critical access point for oral health care to many lower income Americans. To remain sustainable in the long-term, these dentists need funding immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [Infection Control – Dental Settings](#), April 2020.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you in more detail and answer any questions you have regarding these comments. Please contact David Linn at [linnd@ada.org](mailto:linnd@ada.org) or (202) 789-5170 to facilitate further discussions.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association  
Academy of General Dentistry  
American Academy of Dental Group Practice  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American Association of Endodontists  
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons  
American Association of Women Dentists  
American College of Prosthodontists  
American Dental Education Association  
American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists  
American Student Dental Association  
National Dental Association

Alabama Dental Association  
Alaska Dental Society  
Arkansas State Dental Association  
California Dental Association  
Colorado Dental Association  
Connecticut State Dental Association  
Florida Dental Association  
Hawaii Dental Association  
Indiana Dental Association  
Iowa Dental Association  
Kentucky Dental Association  
Maryland State Dental Association  
Massachusetts Dental Society  
Minnesota Dental Association  
Mississippi Dental Association  
Missouri Dental Association  
Montana Dental Association  
New Hampshire Dental Society  
New Jersey Dental Association  
New Mexico Dental Association  
North Dakota Dental Association  
Ohio Dental Association  
Oklahoma Dental Association

Oregon Dental Association  
Pennsylvania Dental Association  
South Carolina Dental Association  
South Dakota Dental Association  
Tennessee Dental Association  
Texas Dental Association  
Vermont State Dental Society  
Virginia Dental Association  
Washington State Dental Association  
West Virginia Dental Association