

1 **Resolution Number:** 300-2021

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3 **Title:** Dentistry as Essential Care

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5 **Reference Committee Assignment:** Professional Issues and Licensure

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7 **Sponsor(s):** 2020-21 Executive Committee

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9 **Financial Impact:** None

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11 **Board of Trustees Comments:** The board recommends a yes vote.

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13 **Reference Committee Comments:** The Reference Committee recommends a yes vote.

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15 **Background:** On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the global spread of
16 Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. From March 16-April 30, 2020, dentists were
17 urged to postpone all but urgent and emergency procedures to help mitigate the spread of
18 COVID-19 and keep patients out of emergency departments. As more is understood about the
19 spread of COVID-19, safety precautions have been implemented so dental students and dental
20 professionals can provide necessary care.

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22 The 2000 Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health in America highlighted oral health as
23 essential to overall health and well-being. Poor oral health can have negative effects on a
24 patient’s overall health, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and adverse pregnancy
25 outcomes. A delay in routine oral health care can be detrimental to a patient’s health, and may
26 lead to abscess, pain, infection, or undetected pathology. Therefore, dentistry should be
27 considered an essential service.

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RESOLUTION

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32 **Resolved,** that the American Student Dental Association supports the American Dental
33 Association definition of “Essential Dental Care” as any care that prevents and eliminates
34 infection, preserves the structure and function of teeth as well as the orofacial hard and soft
35 tissues; and be it further

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37 **Resolved,** that the association urges federal and state agencies to designate the oral health
38 workforce as essential workers to promote the health of its constituents.

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40 **Action:** The Chair moves 300-2021 with a recommendation of a yes vote and be placed on the
41 Consent Calendar.