

March 24, 2020 - COVID-19 UPDATE: Update from NDDA President, Dr. Brad Anderson

NDDA membership, we will continue to do our best to keep you updated on COVID-19 and business shut downs. Unfortunately, this is an evolving situation and one that could drag out longer than any of us expected. Our State seems to be handling this situation week by week, which is different than other States. As a reminder, the ADA's recommendation is to concentrate on emergency dental care only for three weeks. There are other States that have closed their dental offices to all but emergent treatment until mid-MAY. For more information and updates please visit NDDA's website by clicking the following link - <https://www.smilenorthdakota.org/> or the ADA's website at <https://success.ada.org/en/practice-management/patients/infectious-diseases-2019-novel-coronavirus>.

With the above in mind, I encourage you to visit with your practice and financial consultants to determine how to navigate a 6 to 8-week office closure. I sincerely hope this will not be the case however at this point we need to take proactive steps. We do not know what the Federal and/or State Government will do to help out small businesses or how the two laws passed last week will apply to dental offices. The ADA has asked the Secretary of Labor to exempt businesses with under 50 employees from last week's laws, which would require paid leave to staff in the event they contract COVID-19. I am going to be relying on updates from the ADA regarding national issues and we will pass that information on to you. Please keep your eyes open for emails coming directly from the ADA. I have also heard discussion with Senators addressing underwriting small business payroll completely during this time.

The financial advice I received is to cut back on personal and business spending as much as possible. In our office, we are functioning on a skeleton team, the remaining team is filing for unemployment. If you have a practice loan or home mortgage, talk with your lenders to inquire if you can have your payments deferred or pay interest only for a few months. Worst case scenario, we should all be eligible for small business disaster loans. Our office is working hard to get through this without going that route but we have realized it may come down to that. I do realize everyone's personal and practice financial situation is different, I just implore you to do what is best for your situation in the event this is a prolonged closing.

As far as personal protective equipment and the restrictions placed on masks and gloves by suppliers, we are placing an order once a week as allowed by dental supply companies. The goal is to have enough on hand so we will not run out when we are allowed to practice fully. Again, it is up to you how you decide to run your individual practices. The Mission of Mercy does have some supplies on hand however, have decided to wait to see how the next couple weeks play out before decided if supply distribution is needed. In some States, dental offices are being asked to donate their supplies to local hospitals. We genuinely hope it does not come to this in North Dakota.

There are numerous companies and organizations offering webinars, giving advice on several of these topics. I have seen some from the [ADA](#), [the Seattle Study Club](#), [Cain Watters](#), [Henry Schein](#), and [Patterson Dental](#). I encourage you to utilize these resources, as they will probably be able to give in depth discussions on these topics.

I will try to send updates daily however, if the situation does not change drastically, it may be two or three days before you receive communication from me. Please reach out to me if you have questions, I will do the best to help you.

Brad Anderson, President NDDA