

SDDA Members:

March 16, 2020.

The low number of official COVID–19 cases (10) in South Dakota, combined with a minimal number of new cases (one new case since last Friday, March 13) are positive signs that COVID -19 is not spreading in South Dakota at the same rate as other areas. Given this information, **and at this point in time**, the SDDA is not in a position to call for dental offices in South Dakota to close. This is a very difficult decision and this position could change as new information becomes available and can be preempted by any state, local or federal announcements.

We do want members to know that dentists are in one of the highest risk categories for both transmission and contraction of the Coronavirus as a majority of dental procedures performed create significant aerosols in the operatories. As a part of the healthcare community, we have an obligation to protect the safety of our patients and staff. Please give added consideration to the risks of exposure to yourself, anyone on your staff, or anyone within your patient base, that has compromising health conditions.

Please pay attention to announcements regarding the report of cases locally and act accordingly. Offices that chose to remain open should implement best practices to protect staff and patients. The attached document is for use by dental offices in response to an infection disease outbreak. Please review it and consider implementing any aspects that are applicable in your office. This document was developed by a South Dakota dentist and has been reviewed by the ADA.

Thank you for your continued diligence in containing the spread of the Coronavirus. This is an evolving situation, so please visit both www.ADA.org/virus and <https://doh.sd.gov/> for the latest recommendations regarding dentistry and actions here in South Dakota.

Thank you.