

This a quick follow up to yesterday's messages from the SDDA and ADA. Thank you for your continued patience as we carefully monitor information from all parties regarding the COVID-19 situation. We believe we have a duplicitous situation on our hands. South Dakota vs. US.

As of Noon Tuesday, South Dakota has confirmed 11 positive cases. All have been travel-related and the SD Department of Health continues to tell us that we do not have community spread of the virus in South Dakota. This situation could change at any time and members are encouraged to review available resources and apply that information to their individual situations when making a decision about whether to keep offices open and whether to postpone elective procedures.

Today the White House recommended the public delay any elective medical or dental procedures. This is consistent with yesterday's recommendation to dentists from ADA to delay elective procedures. So, expect to see more cancellations from patients in the coming days.

Absent governmental directives (federal, state, county, or municipal), it is up to each individual dentist to exercise their professional judgement in deciding what additional precautions should be implemented and whether or how to continue dental office operations. Practice are encouraged to exceed standard infection control procedures and implement policies to minimize patients' time and possible contact in the waiting rooms.

In the coming days we plan to provide you with information about any financial relief that may be available to small businesses who are impacted by closure or loss of business.

Additionally, consider the following if your office closes:

1. Create a communication plan for patients stressing the importance of their safety but assuring them that you are available for emergencies, if needed. Be sure to put this notice on your office voicemail, text network, website, social media accounts, and office door, etc.
2. Make an agreement with a nearby dental office to take on dental emergencies if you become unable to do so.
3. Have remote access to your patient schedule for the following four weeks and a way to contact patients, if needed.
4. Be sure all employees have a clear understanding of the sick leave policy and PTO benefits.