

Dear South Dakota Dental Association Member

Every day dentists make thousands of decisions all around South Dakota. This week has been the longest week of my life and I'm sure yours as well. We are living in unprecedented times which none of us saw coming. Dentistry has and hopefully will always be a self-policing profession. Every day we make ethical decisions that affect our patients. These decisions are very simple like "do I need to do a crown on this tooth or is a filling sufficient?" Some dentists will disagree as to whether something needs one form of treatment or another.

The decision to recommend that practices switch to emergencies only was similar to these little everyday decisions only on a much larger scale and effecting every one of us including our staff, our staff's families, and most importantly to us and our individual families. We are doing everything in our power at the SDDA to get a recommendation for everyone to resume their practices back to normal. I want to plead all dentists to stick together in these difficult times. Difficult budget decisions will have to be made by all. I personally had to put 11 people on unemployment yesterday which ironically is the same day I moved into a brand-new practice building.

I want to commend Governor Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Board of Dentistry. By allowing us to make this decision ourselves it will allow us all to get back to full capacity sooner. Please don't bombard their offices with calls to regulate our profession any more than they have to. Again, we need to be a self-policing profession, or this right can and will be taken away from us. I understand that this decision will affect different practices and specialties in different ways. I want to thank everyone that I've received advice from over the last week. I personally was dragged into this decision kicking and screaming. I want to especially thank Paul Knecht for all the hard work he is doing to get us all back to work at full capacity. We will continue to monitor all ADA, CDC, and Presidential guidelines. I want to assure you the trustees will make decisions based on what's best for the dentists in South Dakota and South Dakota only. Thank you and God Bless!

Tom Kaiser