NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19, A.K.A. 2019-NCOV) GUIDANCE FOR DENTISTS IN A COMMUNITY-BASED SETTING

Dentists in a community dental practice should:

**PREPARE**

Follow routine practices and additional precautions, including contact and droplet precautions.

Assess whether your practice has the capacity to safely conduct a clinical dental examination, in a true emergency situation*, for patients at risk of having COVID-19. Capacity requirements include access to and ability to safely use N95 masks, face shields, gowns and gloves, as well as having an appropriate isolation room and cleaning procedures in place.

Implement a process to screen patients, flag suspected cases and refer them to your local Public Health Unit to determine next steps.

**SCREEN**

Screen Patients

- By phone (whenever possible)
- At the door (via signage)
- At reception

**ASSESS**

Assess the patient to determine if they meet the definition of a “Probable Case of COVID-19”.

**REPORT**

Report all suspected cases to your local Public Health Unit and determine next steps.

* In dentistry, a “true emergency situation” includes trauma, significant infection, prolonged bleeding or pain which cannot be managed by over-the-counter medications.
How to respond to COVID-19 in a community-based dental practice:

1. If a patient screens positive by phone:
   - Take a detailed history by phone.
   - Determine if the patient meets the definition of a “Probable Case of COVID-19”.
   - If the patient reports a true emergency*, determine the nature of the emergency and consider whether your practice has the capacity to safely conduct a clinical dental examination (see steps outlined below for option 2b).
   - **REPORT**: If the patient is a PUI, call your local public health unit to report the case and determine next steps.

2. If a patient screens positive at the office:
   a) If the patient presents without an emergency:
      - **ISOLATE**: Mask the patient and isolate them in a room with a closed door upon arrival.
      - **ASSESS**: Maintain contact/droplet precautions and a 2-metre distance from the patient. Take a detailed history and conduct a visual assessment to determine if the patient meets the definition of “Probable Case of COVID-19”.
      - **REPORT**: If the patient is a PUI, contact your local Public Health Unit to report the case and determine next steps.
   
   b) If the patient presents with a true emergency*:
      - **ISOLATE**: Mask the patient and isolate them in a room with a closed door upon arrival.
      - **ASSESS**:
        o If your practice has safety precautions in place to manage COVID-19, including access to and ability to safely use N95 masks, face shields, gowns and gloves, take a detailed history and conduct a visual assessment to determine if the patient meets the definition of “Probable Case of COVID-19”. If necessary, conduct a limited clinical dental examination to determine the nature of the emergency and provide limited care. DO NOT PERFORM ANY PROCEDURES THAT MAY GENERATE AN AEROSOL.
        o If your practice does not have safety precautions in place to manage COVID-19, maintain contact/droplet precautions and a 2-metre distance from the patient. Take a detailed history and conduct a visual assessment to determine if the patient meets the definition of “Probable Case of COVID-19”.
      - **REPORT**: If the patient is a PUI, contact your local Public Health Unit to report the case and determine next steps.

3. If a patient is asymptomatic, but reports a positive travel history:
   - An asymptomatic patient with a travel history to an affected area in the past 14 days, and with concerns about possible exposure to COVID-19 cases, should be advised to contact their local Public Health Unit for further direction.
   - An asymptomatic patient with a travel history to an affected area in the past 14 days, but with no known exposure to COVID-19 cases, may be treated like any other patient. If there is no emergency, the patient may be asked if they wish to reschedule their appointment to a date beyond the 14-day period. As part of this conversation, the patient may be asked to contact their local Public Health Unit for advice.

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**Questions?** Contact the Practice Advisory Service at practiceadvisory@rcdso.org or 416-934-5614.