
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: TEXAS STATE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS
SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE ORDER GA-15
DATE: APRIL 20, 2020

Under Executive Order GA-15 licensed dental professionals are required to postpone procedures that are not medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who without timely performance of the procedure would be at risk for serious medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's dentist. This means that a dental professional may perform procedures that are medically necessary as described in the first statement of the order. In addition, dental professionals are directed to follow CDC guidelines when performing those procedures and are directed to follow state and local orders related to social distancing.

FAQs

1) May I perform elective procedures between April 22 and May 9 if I a) do not take away hospital beds and b) do not order any PPE? (In other words, I will use what I already have on hand for procedures from 4/22-5/8)?

No. Because dental offices are not licensed healthcare facilities, that exception for PPE does not apply to the dental offices. Therefore, licensed dental professionals may not perform elective procedures before May 9. GA-15 limits licensed dental professionals to performing only procedures that are medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who without timely performance of the procedure would be at risk for serious medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's dentist.

2) Executive Order GA-15 prohibits the use of PPE that would deplete the supply of PPE needed to treat COVID. May dental professionals return to practice on April 22nd if they use masks not needed to treat COVID patients?

A licensed dental professional is directed to follow CDC guidelines on the use of PPE and until May 8 is limited to performing procedures that are medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who without timely performance of the procedure would be at risk for serious medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's dentist. .

3) It appears that GA-15 was written for hospitals and surgical procedures. Should dental professionals continue to treat only emergency patients?

Licensed dental professionals are required to postpone procedures that are not medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who without timely performance of the procedure would be at risk for serious medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's dentist. This means that a dental professional may perform procedures that are medically necessary as clarified in the first statement of the order. In addition, dental professionals are directed to follow CDC guidelines when performing those procedures.

4) GA-15 states that hospitals may resume surgeries that had been postponed by COVID-19, but only if they do not take away from the hospital's capacity to treat COVID, how does this affect dentists?

This exception applies only to licensed health care facilities and a dental office is not a licensed health care facility.

5) May Orthodontists return to work on April 22?

A licensed orthodontist may perform procedures that are medically necessary to diagnose or correct a serious medical condition of, or to preserve the life of, a patient who *without timely performance of the procedure* would be at risk for serious medical consequences or death, as determined by the patient's orthodontist. The licensed orthodontist is directed to follow CDC guidelines in performance of the procedures.

6) Are dental professionals required to use N95 masks?

Licensed dental professionals are directed to follow CDC guidelines.

7) How does a dental professional determine the level of COVID-19 risk a patient presents to dental staff?

When determining the level of COVID-19 risk a patient presents, licensed dental professionals are directed to follow CDC guidelines as well as state and local orders related to social distancing.