



Canadian Dental Association

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August 14, 2020

Dr. Benoit Varenne
Dental Officer

Oral Health Programme Noncommunicable Diseases Department Division of UHC
World Health Organization Headquarters
20, avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27

Re: Ill-timed Publication of WHO's Considerations to Delay Non-essential Oral Health Care

Dear Dr. Varenne,

As the national voice for dentistry, the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) would like to express disappointment with the ill-timed release of the World Health Organization's (WHO) [considerations](#) to delay the provision of non-essential oral health care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This publication, which is months late, has caused considerable confusion among Canadians.

Canada currently has very limited cluster outbreaks of COVID-19, which allow for the safe provision of routine oral health care. During its peak infection period in early 2020, Canada—in collaboration with other countries—proactively applied similar considerations to delay non-essential oral health care. As case numbers have declined, Canada has safely and gradually returned to the provision of routine oral health care services.

The WHO publication was unclear about which countries should delay non-essential oral health care during this moment in the pandemic. This has enabled misinformed reporting by the news media, which, in turn, threatens to discourage millions of Canadians from seeking necessary oral health care.

In response, CDA issued a [public statement](#) on August 12, 2020, clarifying that the WHO's considerations are not relevant for Canada. Still, in the uncertainty that has followed the WHO publication, Canadian dentists have found it necessary to explain to patients that routine oral health care is safe and permitted in Canada.

Safeguarding the public's oral and overall health is Canadian dentistry's highest priority. Canadian dental professionals follow strict guidelines and regulations for infection prevention and control. They practise vigilance in pre-screening patients, wear additional required personal protective equipment, and perform other necessary precautions to avoid the spread of infection—all of which are informed by the best and latest scientific evidence.

Sincerely,

James Armstrong, BSc, MBA, DMD
President