

CDA COVID-19 UPDATE



A Message for CDA Stakeholders

Below is a snapshot of the Canadian Dental Association's (CDA) pandemic work for the week ending December 11, 2020. CDA's next update is slated for January 22, 2021.

This Week's Fast Facts: COVID-19 Situational Report

CDA's COVID-19 Team Lead, Dr. Aaron Burry, Deputy CEO - Professional Affairs, provides a video update on trends and case growth related to COVID-19 across Canada. Click on the image below to view the video discussion. The discussion includes information about:

- COVID-19 trends over the last 7 days;
- trends of infection across Canada;
- the number of cases per 100,000 over the last 7 days, by province;
- an update on the COVID-19 vaccine, World Health Organization (WHO) approach, WHO priority groups, Canada's approach, and
- emerging prioritizing by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and geographic/provincial hot zones.



Video Length: Approximately 11 minutes. Recorded: December 8, 2020.

CDA Advocacy and Federal Government Announcements

Mr. Don Moors, President of Temple Scott Associates, provides a video update on the Federal Government's Fall Economic Statement and available federal funding support programs. Click on the image below to view the video discussion.



Video Length: Approximately 8.5 minutes. Recorded: December 8, 2020.

Highlights:

On November 30, 2020, the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Chrystia Freeland, tabled the Government's [Fall Economic Statement](#). The statement provided a snapshot of the Federal Government's fiscal position for the next 5 years; announced additional programs to help individuals and businesses that continue to be economically impacted by COVID-19; and announced new measures aimed at stimulating the economic recovery when COVID-19 eases.

Support for Businesses:

- **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS):** The government is increasing the maximum wage subsidy rate under CEWS to 75% for the period beginning December 20, 2020, and to extend this rate until March 13, 2021. CDA continues to watch for new information to follow.
- **Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS):** To provide greater certainty to businesses and other organizations, the government plans to extend the current subsidy rates of the CERS for an additional three periods. This means a base subsidy rate of up to 65% will be available on eligible expenses until March 13, 2021.
- **Lockdown Support:** Under the new Lockdown Support program, organizations that are subject to a lockdown and must shut their doors or significantly restrict their activities under a public health order are eligible for an additional 25% top-up, in addition to the CERS base subsidy of up to 65%. The government is proposing to extend the rate of 25% for the Lockdown Support for an additional three periods, until March 13, 2021.

- **Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA):** As of [December 4, 2020](#), eligible businesses facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are able to access a second CEBA loan of up to \$20,000 – on top of the initial \$40,000 that was available to small businesses.

Half of this additional financing, up to \$10,000, will be forgivable if the loan is repaid by December 31, 2022. This means the additional loan effectively increases CEBA loans from the existing \$40,000 to \$60,000 for eligible businesses, of which a total of \$20,000 will be forgiven if the balance of the loan is repaid on time.

The deadline will be extended from December 31, 2020 to March 31, 2021. To apply, eligible businesses and not-for-profits need to contact the financial institution that provided their initial CEBA loan and provide the appropriate information and documentation.

See video for complete details on individual support programs. CDA will update its [federal funding program website pages](#) with the latest information in due course.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Government of Canada is allocating an additional \$1.5 billion, on top of prior amounts, in order to continue to procure PPE and provide warehousing and logistics support to rapidly deliver critical PPE and medical supplies to provinces, territories and Indigenous communities, as well as to maintain the readiness of Canada's National Emergency Stockpile System.

The government plans to remove the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) from the purchases of face masks and face shields, making these important items more affordable. This [applies to supplies purchased after December 6, 2020](#).

Vaccines

- **National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI):** On December 4, 2020, NACI updated its preliminary [guide on vaccine prioritization](#). NACI recommends that initial doses of authorized COVID-19 vaccine(s) should be offered to individuals without contraindications in the following populations:
 - Residents and staff of congregate living settings that provide care for seniors
 - Adults 70 years of age and older, beginning with adults 80 years of age and older, then decreasing the age limit by 5-year increments to age 70 years as supply becomes available
 - Health care workers (including all those who work in health care settings and personal support workers whose work involves direct contact with patients)

- Adults in Indigenous communities where infection can have disproportionate consequences

New! CDA Writes Health Minister on behalf of Dental Profession: It is unclear whether NACI's definition of Health Care Workers includes dental health care professionals. As such, on December 10, 2020, CDA's President, Dr. James Armstrong, [issued a letter](#) to the Hon. Patti Hajdu, Minister of Health, to confirm that dental health care professionals are included under the [health care workers population group](#), as identified by NACI, and would like to ensure that dental health care professionals can access COVID-19 vaccine(s) at an appropriate time. CDA has also sought clarification by NACI and is awaiting a response. Updates will be communicated to Corporate Members and key stakeholders, as new information becomes available.

Update! Vaccine Distribution: On December 9, 2020, Health Canada approved the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine. An initial shipment of 249,000 doses will be distributed amongst provinces and territories on a per capita basis beginning next week. For further information on Canada's agreements with vaccine manufacturers, see [here](#).

In order for dentists to be potentially considered as priority recipients of the vaccine, the best course of action is to continue raising the profession's profile with the provincial Health Minister, Chief Medical Office of Health, and working with the provincial Dental Directors, where applicable. CDA encourages Corporate Members to send letters to the respective officials to maintain pressure on this file.

Other Key Federal Details:

Update! Health Transfer to Provinces: Provincial and Territorial Premiers met with Prime Minister Trudeau this week. There is a unanimous coalition amongst provincial and territorial leaders requesting that the Federal government increase the health transfer to provinces from 22% to 35%. Prime Minister Trudeau signaled understanding of the request, though has not yet agreed. See [here](#) for more details.

Update! National Dental Care: In the House of Commons on December 8, 2020, NDP member, Laurel Collins, asked Minister Hajdu when will the government move forward on providing an affordable dental care program for Canadians, citing accessibility to care statistics that disproportionately affect women and lower income earners. The Minister responded by saying the government is open to working with other parties on this. CDA is closely monitoring the situation.

New! House of Commons' Committee Activity: The House of Commons' Standing Committee on Health is pursuing its study on the Government's response to the pandemic. On Friday, December 11, 2020, it will be reviewing [Bill C-210](#) (An Act to Amend the Canada Revenue Agency Act – organ and tissue donors). CDA continues to monitor the situation.

CDA's Return to Practice Task Force:

This group includes representatives from all Corporate Member provincial dental associations (PDAs). The Task Force continues to work together to discuss deliverables for:

1. information exchange on return-to-practice status across the country;
2. strategies for obtaining and securing PPEs; and
3. communications to the public on dentists returning to practice.

New! Mental Health in the Workplace: Safeguarding your mental health and overall wellness is important - especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force is exploring ways to examine the impact on mental health of dentists and the dental team.

This week the Task Force met with The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) to learn about the national mental health strategy that emphasizes de-stigmatizing mental health challenges and presents standards for psychological health and safety in the workplace. The Task Force will closely be examining this work and determining how best to adapt it to the dental practice environment.

The [MHCC website](#) provides a range of helpful resources pertaining to maintaining good mental health and wellness, including posters, infographics, tip sheets, training opportunities, webinars, and more. Some examples include:

- Brochure: [Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
- Tip sheet: [How to give back \(or reach out\) this holiday season](#)
- Tip sheet: [Cultivating resilience in the wake of COVID-19](#)
- Tip sheet: [Talking to someone in crisis during COVID-19](#)

In Development: The Task Force continues to work on developing a resource document that would offer clarification on the administration of vaccinations in the dental office. The resource will include information on training requirements, as well as a range of other key considerations. The purpose will be to assist the Corporate Members in determining the role (if any) of dentists as vaccinators.

Reminder! Holidays approaching. Use Celebration Edition Holiday Posters: Often patients and dental office staff bring food to the office to recognize special events and holidays. However, celebrating with food and beverages in common areas during the COVID-19 pandemic must be done safely to help prevent the spread of the virus. CDA added two new posters to the “Be Vigilant Inside and Outside the Op!” series. The posters provide tips for common area and how to safely enjoy food in a dental office setting.

Discussion points are available in this package for dentists to use with their teams, and also include tips for safely hosting holiday or year-end parties by spreading cheer virtually this year. All materials are available in English and French, and can be used not only around the holidays, but also for other special events (i.e. staff birthdays, etc.).

The final materials have been distributed to Corporate Members via CDA's Dental Communications Group. Corporate Members can co-brand and adapt the content, as deemed appropriate.

The Public Health Agency of Canada provides additional [safety advice](#) to reduce your risk and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 during holidays and celebrations.



A preview of a poster in the celebration edition of the *Be Vigilant Inside and Outside the Op!* series. Colours and text may vary as PDAs may adapt the materials for use by their member dentists.

Reminder! The Task Force continues to review and prioritize its list of deliverables. Any specific expectations or special requests of the Task Force should be fed forward by Corporate Member PDAs to their PDA member Task Force representative.

CDA's Infection Control Working Group (“The Working Group”):

This Working Group is responsible for collecting and assessing information on infection protection and control to support the *Return to Practice Task Force*. The Working Group meets regularly until its tasks are completed. The Working Group has organized their work into four key areas, including:

- minimizing the emission of infectant particles;
- controlling infectant particles' dispersion to other surrounding areas;

- protecting staff and patients in the dental office, including PPE requirements; and
- contamination and disinfection protocols.

New Resource Coming Soon! Medical Gown Use in Dentistry: In collaboration with CDA's Practice Recovery Task Force, the Working Group developed a resource regarding the use of medical gowns in dentistry. It provides a cross-reference from the medical system to the dental system, and provides generic information regarding gown use in dentistry. The final materials will be available in English and French, and will be distributed to Corporate Members via CDA's Dental Communications Group next week. Corporate Members can co-brand and adapt the content, as deemed appropriate. It will also be distributed to CDA's Affiliate Members in Quebec with CDA branding.



New! CDA Clarifies Effectiveness of Pre-procedural Hydrogen Peroxide Mouth Rinse in Reducing the Viral Load of SARS-COV 2 in Saliva

In March 2020, an Italian study was released that suggested that dentists should consider using oral rinses going forward because they are antimicrobial and might play a role in reducing the viral load in the mouth. Since then, oral rinses were included in the recommendations and protocols that were being suggested by Canadian provinces.

Recently, minor studies are finding that oral rinses are not particularly effective against viruses and in particular COVID-19. Currently, there is insufficient evidence to show effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the hydrogen peroxide or other mouth rinses on the viral load in the oral cavity.

A systematic review and a prospective clinical pilot conducted by researchers in Germany were brought to the attention of CDA. Neither proved nor disproved the effectiveness of using hydrogen peroxide pre-procedurally to eliminate the SARS-COV-2 in the mouth.

While the viral load is reduced in the mouth after an oral rinse, it returns after approximately 60 seconds. It is unclear at this point why hydrogen peroxide has been singled out as part of this debate. The common use of pre-procedural mouth rinses has been to reduce the patient's bacterial load prior to dental procedures and has not been shown to harm the patient. This protocol has been considered beneficial for the patient rather than having a virucidal effect or as a replacement of infection control protocols.

Rapid Testing:

Update! Rapid Testing Pilot Approaches: CDA has received inquiries related to the roll out of rapid testing being piloted in Canada, specifically in long-term care facilities. This type of rapid testing is similar to what has been introduced in the transportation sector.

Rapid tests are currently being piloted with some travelers upon return from outside Canada, with follow-up of second rapid test five to six days later to reduce self isolation times. Similarly, rapid tests are being trialed in some long-term care facilities and remote communities. Rapid tests will identify some individuals who have been infected with the COVID-19 virus, but not all.

There are concerns around the reliability of this method; however, CDA continues to monitor the evaluations from these piloting stages to learn more about their effectiveness in managing outbreaks in healthcare settings.

Knowledge and Information Broker:

[CDA Oasis](#) is CDA's primary channel of communication for delivering urgent information to the dental community during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following discussions have been recorded since CDA's November 13, 2020 COVID-19 update. Be sure to check these out:

- [The Impact of Teledentistry on Special Care:](#)
Dr. Clive Friedman reviews three key presentations from this year's IADH Research Competition which highlight how innovations in teledentistry are enhancing oral healthcare in terms of education, mentoring and treatment, and the use of teledentistry to minimize administrative burden, particularly for individuals with special needs. **(December 9, 2020)**
- [What You Should Know About COVID-19 Vaccines:](#)
Dr. Mark Donaldson talks about the implications and the complications of deploying the much-awaited COVID-19 vaccines. Dr. Donaldson outlines the mechanism of action of each vaccine candidate and compares the logistical challenges of the two front runners from Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech. **(December 7, 2020)** Please also see [COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ \(PDF\)](#) and [COVID-19 Vaccine: Side by Side Comparison \(PDF\)](#)
- [Finding Positivity in a Time of COVID:](#)
Navigating a myriad of thoughts and emotions that surely reflected the anxieties

of dentists all over Canada, Dr. Lori Simoens ultimately arrived at the conclusion that, although fear and anxiety were perfectly understandable responses to the most significant health crisis of our time, they were not particularly useful.
(December 3, 2020)

This week's **CDA Oasis Bulletin** collated relevant and timely "[news that you can use](#)" related to COVID-19.

New! CDA Essentials, Issue 7 is available [online](#). Here are some of the edition's highlights pertaining to the pandemic:

- Your COVID-19 Questions Answered;
- Review of the Proposed Pharmacological Treatments for COVID-19



Click image to access Issue 7.

New to CDA Web: Got Mask Mouth?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to protect yourself and others by wearing a mask or face covering when you are in:

- public, and you might come into close contact with others; or
- shared indoor spaces with others from outside your immediate household.

A common side effect from extended mask wearing is known as "mask mouth" or simply, bad breath.

Newly added to CDA's website is a page on [mask mouth and tips for prevention](#). Like and share CDA's related social media posts to create more awareness on maintaining good oral health and how to stay fresh under that mask.



CDA Help Desk:

CDA's Help Desk continues to assist dentists and dental office employees on how to navigate and access federal government support programs.

For assistance, please call **1-866-232-0385, M-F, 7:30 A.M. – 8:00 p.m. EDT.**



Mental Health and Wellness:

CDA reminds individuals that they can access mental health and wellness support by calling CDSPI's Members' Assistance Program (MAP) at **1.844.578.4040** or visiting www.workhealthlife.com

MAP provides a variety of resources to help individuals deal with life's challenges. It is a confidential counselling, referral and information service for individuals who are dealing with mental health challenges or need advice on topics such as physical fitness, nutrition or parenting. MAP services and resources are offered through Shepell, Canada's largest provider of Employee and Family Assistance Programs.



Free counselling, referral and information service for dentists, dental office employees, and their families.

The CDA COVID-19 Response Team works diligently on a range of fronts to help minimize and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the dental profession. CDA is working to address scientific, clinical, economic and business-related matters impacting dentistry, including efforts to increase awareness about the mental health and wellness of dentists, their families and dental office employees during these challenging times. CDA will communicate regular updates as new information becomes available.



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