

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 May 8, 2020.

Advocacy Updates

Update! Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to be extended: As part of his regular briefing on Friday morning, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) will be extended beyond the planned end on June 6, 2020. Further details about the extension will be released next week. The request for an extension of the CEWS program was part of CDA's presentation to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance last Friday. As of today, approximately 180,000 businesses across Canada have applied for the CEWS.

Now Available! Statistics Canada reveals the economic impact of COVID-19 through its Labour Force Survey, April 2020: On May 8, 2020, Statistics Canada revealed facts and figures about COVID-19's impact on the Canadian economy. The base unemployment rate reached 13%, an increase of 5.2 percentage points in just one month. Moreover, [the results](#) for April, 2020 show that more than one-third (36.7%) of the potential labour force did not work or worked less than half of their usual hours, illustrating the continuing impact of the COVID-19 economic shutdown on the labour market.

The "recent labour underutilization rate" combines those who were unemployed; those who were not in the labour force, who wanted a job, but did not look for one; and those who were employed but worked less than half of their usual hours. In comparison, this rate was 11.3% in February.

Advocacy Tool and Tips! Letter and Tactics to reach Provincial Government Officials to Access PPE Stock: This week, CDA provided Corporate Member PDA Executive Directors with a [sample letter](#) to reach out to provincial officials with regards to accessing PPE from their stocks. Corporate Member PDAs are welcome to personalize, adapt and send the letter to the Minister of Health, the Chief Medical Officer, or the Dental Director in their respective province. CDA suggested the following tactics to bring further attention to the discussion:

1. **Email the Health Minister and copy the Chief Medical Officer (CMO):** Provincial health ministers have been deferential to CMOs throughout the COVID-19 crisis; however, the CMOs ultimately answer to the Provincial health minister. Getting the provincial minister or their staff to ask questions about this issue can help draw further attention to the matter.
2. **Engage the Provincial Dental Director:** Copy the dental director on your correspondence, and follow up directly. Let them know that it is important to raise the issue from within government.

Update! Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA): CECRA aims to lower rent for small businesses that have been affected by COVID-19. It is anticipated that the CECRA program will be launched in the coming weeks. A number of commercial landlords have expressed their concerns about the program. One issue pertains to requiring a mortgage on the property in order to receive aid. CDA has raised this issue with the Federal government in recent weeks, and underlined the issue as part of its presentation to the Finance Committee. CDA will report any further updates about the Program as new information becomes available.

Reminders:

- **View CDA President Presentation to Federal Finance Committee:** Last week, Dr. James Armstrong, CDA President, addressed the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance as part of its study regarding the Government of Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Armstrong outlined the challenges that COVID-19 and the ensuing shutdown have posed for dentistry, and emphasized the need to support dental practices in the coming months. Other key recommendations included the need to extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, tax credits for practices that need to physically adapt to new guidelines, facilitated access to PPE, and support for extended health care benefits. [View a copy](#) of Dr. Armstrong's opening written statement or the [webcast](#) presentation beginning at **16:22:40**. He also answered questions at 17:26:40, and 17:47:47.
- **Visit CDA's website for federal funding program information** that is specific to certain business models used in dentistry, including:
 - [For Dental Professional Corporations or Self-Employed Dentists](#)
 - [For Cost Sharing Arrangements \(Unincorporated Association\)](#)
 - [For Partnerships](#)

Other Important Updates

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Ongoing! Discussions with Federal Government: CDA remains in discussion with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and participates in bi-weekly updates with the Chief Medical Officer on the availability of PPEs. This week's discussions surrounded clarifying a range of issues pertaining to masks, including the effectiveness of KN95 masks compared to N95. In summary, the standards used for the certification of KN95 and N95 masks are different but equivalent. The most important point to remember when looking at KN95 and N95 masks is that both come in a medical and a commercial version. The medical versions are tested and certified for fluid penetration, but the commercial version is not. The difference between a level 3 surgical mask and a N95 mask is not filtration but the fit. Proper fit prevents infiltration around the mask for N95 but not for level 3 surgical mask.

Update! Allocating PPE for Dentistry: Government-procured PPE stock continues to be distributed to health organizations from provincial governments. On May 6, 2020, CDA was invited along with the Chief Dental Officer, the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation (CDRAF) to participate in a phone call with the Clinical Lead COVID-19 at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) about PPE allocation for dentistry. CDA underscored the reasons for fulfilling the need for PPE for the dental profession, which include keeping dental emergencies away from hospital ERs and minimizing the need for pharmacological management of dental conditions that are better handled surgically.

New! Logistic Advisory Committee Established: The Government of Canada has struck this Committee to look at the availability of PPE. Based on initial reports from the Committee, it seems that there are sufficient PPE supplies for hospitals and long-term care facilities across Canada, but shortages remain in community care settings, including medical and dental clinics.

New! Immunity Task Force Established: The Federal Government has struck this Task Force to coordinate nation-wide COVID-19 testing. The Task Force is specifically interested in COVID-19 tests that attempt to detect the body's immune reaction to the virus, none of which have been approved for use in Canada to date. CDA will share more information as discussions of this Task Force progress. Watch a [video](#) to learn more about tests and testing for COVID-19 by the University of Buffalo, School of Dental Medicine.

Liability: Personal Procurement of PPE: There are reports of corporate dentistry organizations or unauthorized resellers procuring PPE directly for Canadian dentists in the global market. When an individual or an organization procures PPE directly, they become the importers of those products. This can be extremely risky as under Health

Canada regulations, the importer of any class of medical device becomes responsible for all liabilities, including fraudulent or defective products should they cause harm to patients or staff. Corporate Member PDAs may wish to caution dentists about importing their own PPE, particularly masks, due to the risks involved.

Reminder: Mask Certification vs. Fraudulent Markings: As efforts to secure PPEs intensify, increasing numbers of counterfeit materials are being identified. Corporate Member PDAs are encouraged to remind dentists to carefully examine supplies procured from non-government stockpiles. Here is more information about [how to identify a NIOSH-approved respirator](#), and [additional tips for spotting counterfeit respirators](#).

CDA's Return to Practice Task Force:

CDA's newly established ***Return to Practice Task Force***, which includes representatives from all Corporate Member PDAs, meets weekly to discuss deliverables for:

1. evidence-based treatment protocols and how to carry these out;
2. strategies for obtaining and securing PPEs; and
3. communications to the public on dentists returning to practice.

New! Return-to-Practice Office Manual Tool Coming Soon: The *Return to Practice Task Force* has drafted a *Return-to-Practice Office Manual*. The document consolidates considerations from around the world related to return to practice, and it serves as a tool for Corporate Member PDAs. A Word document format of the Manual can be modified by Corporate Member PDAs when developing their own specific provincial information for dentists. Since the roll-out of returning to practice is occurring at different stages across Canada, each province will have its own specific guidelines to follow. The *Return-to-Practice Office Manual* tool is expected to be available in the coming days. The document will continue to be updated as guidance and evidence-based findings become available to help guide recommendations.

Important! Avoid Unnecessary or Expensive Dental Office Purchases: This week, a Dental Industry Association of Canada (DIAC) representative met with the *Return to Practice Task Force*. There continues to be reports of some suppliers placing pressure on dentists to purchase expensive materials and equipment in preparation for returning to practice. CDA is advising against making major modifications to dental offices at this time, until more information about what will really be required becomes available. To help with the documentation of these issues presenting, please forward any examples of inappropriate vendor activity or advertisements to [Dr. Benoit Soucy](#), CDA Director for Clinical and Scientific Affairs.

Reminder! Corporate Member PDAs who have specific expectations or special requests of the *Return to Practice Task Force* should feed comments forward to their PDA member representative.

CDA's Infection Control 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 will meet every Thursday until its tasks are completed. The Working Group has organized their work into four key areas, including:

1. minimizing the emission of infectant particles;
2. controlling infectant particles' dispersion to other surrounding areas;
3. protecting staff and patients in the dental office, including PPE requirements; and
4. contamination and disinfection protocols.

With the assistance of the CDA Committee on Clinical and Scientific Affairs, the Working Group is researching credible, science-based information in all four areas. It will be calling on external subject matter experts, as required.

Insurance Coverage and Claims:

New! Documentation of Care for Government Employees: The Treasury Board of Canada (TBC), the largest employer in Canada, contacted CDA to obtain more information regarding the types of accommodations that can be made to help minimize the impact that the interruption of the delivery of elective care is having on their employee benefit plan.

The TBC's primary concern surrounds employees who are aging out of insurance plans or who have left employment. The TBC has sought clarification related to the types of information dentists could provide to the insurer that demonstrate that treatment had been started but was interrupted by the shut down of the delivery of non-urgent services.

Discussions also included initiatives which CDA's Dental Benefits Committee would like to promote to insurance companies, such as the transfer of benefits from 2020 to 2021 and the coverage of temporary restorations, adjustments of frequency limits. CDA will report back any further correspondence with the TBC, as well any updates on this topic as new information becomes available.

Update: Covering Extra Costs for PPE: CDA has initiated discussions with CLHIA about claiming for the additional costs related to new enhanced PPE requirements.

These discussions are essential in order to create an industry-wide approach. These claims will have to be made in a consistent manner across insurance companies. CDA will report further updates as discussions progress.

TripleGuard™ Insurance Pandemic Coverage:

Reminder! Claims not yet submitted: Approximately 600 dentists across Canada have not submitted claims. CDSPI is following-up on this, but Corporate Member PDAs may wish to send a reminder to dentists that sub-pandemic coverage is activated when there is a provincial order in place by the government to shut down non-essential services. Note that this is not the date of any instruction from respective dental associations or colleges. The date of restrictions being lifted is in essence the cut-off date of claims. [Here](#) is more information about the claims process.

CDSPI advises that over 6,000 claims have been filed with Aviva. Claims continue to be processed with some being completed between 48 to 72 hours with appropriate financial information provided. There are delays in the processing of claims and additional communication from CDSPI to Corporate Member PDAs has been requested to assist in the communication with their member dentists. Additional updates are provided weekly by CDSPI with respect to the progress being made by Aviva.

CDSPI is also working to provide Corporate Member PDAs with additional information to convey to members dentists on how to expedite claims, and is planning to communicate an update to policy holders soon. CDA will share any updates as new information becomes available; however, please continue to check [CDSPI's website](#) for new information on pandemic claims.

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.

CDA Oasis produces a series of video interviews with members of the CDA Board, CDA's COVID-19 Team, and other relevant subject matter experts. The following videos were published this week:

- [What Changes Can We Expect Around Drug & Prescription Protocols?](#): When dental offices finally emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, much will have changed. And though none of us has a crystal ball, it is clear that the future of dentistry is evolving before our eyes. So, what about pharmacological protocols? Will the way we prescribe drugs be radically changed? (May 5)

- [Adapting Oral and Maxillofacial Services During the Pandemic](#): So, how have dental surgeons adapted their services in these unprecedented times? Dr. Marco Caminiti talks to Dr. John O’Keefe about some of the initiatives he has introduced to his practice. Dr. Caminiti explains that, though being part of the overall hospital environment has its benefits, considerable hurdles remain. (May 5)

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

CDA Essentials Issue 2 is available [online](#). Issue 3 of the magazine will be ready for distribution shortly.

Mental Health and Wellness: Maintaining good mental health and wellness continues to be a priority. CDA is actively promoting available mental health and wellness support through CDSPI’s Members’ Assistance Program (MAP) via social media, its Help Desk service, and on its website. MAP can be accessed by calling **1.844.578.4040** or visiting www.workhealthlife.com.

New! Data on Mental Health: On May 7, 2020, Statistics Canada [released data](#) on how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed Canadians’ lives in a very short period of time. Given the disruption and stress, it may come as no surprise that the consumption of cannabis, alcohol and tobacco has increased for some. In particular, Canadians who rated their mental health as fair or poor were more likely to report increased use of these substances.

New! Funds Announced to Develop, Expand and Launch Virtual Care and Mental Health Tools: On May 3, 2020, the Prime Minister [announced](#) an investment of \$240 million to develop, expand, and launch virtual care and mental health tools to support Canadians. A portion of the investment will support [Wellness Together Canada](#), an online portal that provides Canadians with free resources, tools, and professional support services to help with wellness and resilience, as well as mental health and substance use. Wellness Together Canada offers the following at no cost to Canadians:

1. Wellness self-assessment and tracking.
2. Self-guided courses, apps, and other resources.
3. Group coaching and community of support.
4. Counselling by text or phone.

New! Three wellness posts have been featured in the Mental Health Corner of [CDA Oasis](#):

- [Your Wellbeing – Resilience During a Pandemic](#): Concern about the pandemic may intensify the effects of other stresses in our daily lives. This can impact your built-in physical stress response, which may leave you more vulnerable to the flu

- as well as other health risks. It is therefore important to take care of yourself and build your resilience. (May 4)
- [Your Wellbeing - Accepting change is vital to your health and happiness](#): Some changes in our personal or work life can ask us so much from us that the impact can lead to depression or anxiety. However, proactive resilience building can make change less frightening and a more fulfilling prospect. Here are some building blocks for a resilient self that will help you be more flexible and prepared for change. (May 6)
 - [Your Wellbeing - Tips on Communicating in the Digital Age](#): Speaking with someone face-to-face is different than sending an email and a phone call is different than a text message. Different mediums are used at home and at work, bringing even more nuances into play. Here are some factors to consider when you are using and moving quickly between multiple forms of communication. (May 8)

Reminder! May 4 to 10, 2020 is Mental Health Week, a Canadian tradition where communities, schools and workplaces rally to celebrate, protect and promote mental health. A growing list of mental health and wellness resources is available in CDA's COVID-19 Repository. Corporate Member PDAs are encouraged to access the information and share helpful mental health resources with dentists, as deemed appropriate.



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

CDA Help Desk:

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

Calls are answered within two minutes, and last approximately five minutes in length. Ontario-based dentists continue to be redirected to ODA for information and services.

Corporate Member PDAs are encouraged to promote CDA's Help Desk service to dentists: **1-866-232-0385, M-F, 7:30 A.M. – 8:00 p.m. EDT.**



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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