



COLLEGE OF  
DENTURISTS  
OF ONTARIO

# Extension of Emergency Declaration

## COVID-19

April 2, 2020

On Tuesday, the Government of Ontario extended the Declaration of Emergency and associated emergency measures, including the closure of non-essential workplaces and restrictions on social gatherings until April 13. This is an extension to the closure of non-essential workplaces initially put in place on March 24. This extension applies to the list of essential businesses, including Denture clinics for the provision of **emergency** care. Click [here](#) to view the full news release.

On March 16, 2020, we, along with other Oral Health Profession Regulatory Colleges, first communicated the recommendation of suspension of non-essential services. This recommendation was to be revisited on April 6, 2020. Since that time, that recommendation has been superseded by the Order from the Chief Medical Officer of Health (March 20, 2020) and now the continuing Provincial Declaration of Emergency. Consequently, the current direction, based on the Declaration of Emergency, and the continuing Directive from the Chief Medical Officer of Health (March 20, 2020) is that **Registered Denturists should only be engaged in providing essential, emergency care to patients.**

We will notify Registered Denturists of changes to this situation as they arise. We will not have information on when clinics can resume normal activity until the State of Emergency has been lifted. This will be the piece to watch. The Health Regulatory Colleges are in frequent, almost daily contact with the Ministry of Health and we will let you know when we receive any information regarding the return to normal business.

There is currently no indication that this will happen soon. With the trajectory of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is unlikely there will be any lessening of restrictions in April.

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### What constitutes essential or emergency care?

The College expects that Registered Denturists will exercise their professional judgement in determining whether a patient needs essential or emergency care. It is not necessarily the procedure that can be described as an emergency or non-essential but, in many cases, it is the individual needs of a patient that will determine whether the care is essential or emergent.

Registered Denturists need to make the decision around the provision of care, in consideration of whether or not providing care would put the patient's health and safety at risk, or if there is the potential for significant harm, adverse outcomes or suffering, if the patient does not receive the care in question.

One patient who has broken a denture may be able to tolerate not having that denture for a period of time while the same situation may negatively impact the health and well-being of another patient. It is up to the Registered Denturist to make that determination, in honest consultation with the patient by phone first. Please keep in mind that the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments are imploring the public to practise social distancing and remain home. We are in a serious, life threatening pandemic and Registered Denturists should not encourage their patients to disregard these directives unless it is essential or emergent.

If you believe it is in the patient's best interest to receive care, you must follow [procedures for active and passive screening](#) of patients for COVID19 and employ all of the IPAC procedures outlined in the College's dedicated [Infection Prevention and Control webpage](#). These procedures will include using the appropriate PPE and disinfecting contact surfaces before and after treatment. Since the number of patients seen will be

minimal, any appointments should be scheduled so that patients encounter as few people as possible and are not kept in the waiting room. As with any patient care, an emergency consultation must include a review of a patient's medical and dental history within the patient record. The patient's record of this visit should contain all of the relevant information about the care, including a description of why the patient needed treatment during a period when the government ordered only essential, emergency care and service. The record should also include documentation of the after care instructions that were provided to the patient.

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### **Closing Your Practice?**

If you decide to close your practice because of reduced care and service needs during the pandemic, you may do so. However, it is an appropriate expectation of your patients that they have access to essential or emergency care and service during this period when the government has restricted service to essential or emergency care. It is your responsibility as a Regulated Health Professional to ensure that your patients know how to contact you while the clinic is closed (you can provide this information via a voice mail message and/or information on your clinic website). If you are contemplating not providing any care, you can consider using the [Public Register](#) on the College website when assisting a patient in finding alternative care.

Registered Denturists can gather some information about how to manage this brief (hopefully) interruption in care from the College's published [guidelines](#) on closing, leaving or selling a practice.

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I am aware of how challenging this time is for you, especially having your practice activity reduced to zero, or close to zero. There is a direct conflict of interest here between lives and livelihood. It is difficult, there is no arguing that. However, the public and your patients trust that you will make decisions based on the interests of the patient. This is part of the responsibility of being a regulated health professional, even in these very financially challenging times. Registered Denturists are highly regarded oral health professionals who take the trust and confidence placed in the profession by the public seriously and will act to maintain that public trust and confidence in this very challenging time. Although we have different roles, we are in this together.

There is a great deal of information available for consumption right now. We will continue to provide you with email updates regarding the more important items. These will be posted on the College website too. Items that are not included in email communications will be posted on the College website, so please check there for new resources and less critical updates.

My sincere wishes for continued health in these challenging times.

Best Regards,



Dr. Glenn Pettier  
Registrar and CEO

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### **Important Resources:**

[Government of Ontario's Declaration of Emergency Extension News Release](#)

[Guidance for Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting Including Active and Passive Screening](#)

[College's Infection Prevention and Control Webpage](#)

[Closing, Leaving or Selling a Practice Guidelines](#)

## Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact:

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