



Virginia Dental
ASSOCIATION



June 18, 2020

Jay Withrow, Director
Division of Legal Support, ORA, OPPPI, and OWP
Virginia Department of Labor and Industry
600 E. Main Street, Suite 207
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Exemption from 16 VAC 25-220, Emergency Temporary Standard/Emergency Regulation, Infectious Disease Prevention: SARS-CoV-2 Virus That Causes COVID-19

Dear Mr. Withrow:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on 16 VAC 25-220, the emergency temporary standard and emergency regulation for COVID-19 prevention in the workplace. On behalf of the Virginia Dental Association, I am requesting an exemption be made regarding compliance with the emergency temporary standard and emergency regulation to prevent, mitigate, and control of COVID-19 in the workplace for dentists and oral surgeons.

Dentists and oral surgeons throughout Virginia voluntarily stopped elective procedures prior to the Governor ordering the ban. Furthermore, dentists and oral surgeons donated significant amounts of personal protective equipment (PPE) to hospitals and other providers on the front lines of the pandemic early on to help cope with the challenges of virus control. Now offices have reopened. They have restocked their supplies of PPE and implemented additional physical distancing measures aimed at preventing the spread of the virus. Accordingly, workplace settings for dentists and oral surgeons should be treated differently because they are uniquely positioned already to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Illness screening, infection prevention, and infection control are a part of dentist and oral surgeon's training and practice. Regular use of PPE for oral examinations and procedures is the current standard of care. Sanitation and disinfecting are also the standard in the health care setting, and such practices have expanded significantly in recent months. As such, their workplace settings have already implemented extensive measures and follow detailed guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to prevent, mitigate, and control the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The CDC has put forth guidance for clinical care, infection control, and personal protective equipment (PPE) usage, all of which has been implemented by dentists and oral surgeons in the Commonwealth.

Our association works closely with government and health care partners to develop mitigation techniques and implement screening procedures daily. Layering additional documentation and reporting requirements on top of extensive measures that have been instituted already would be overly burdensome and unnecessary.

Accordingly, we respectfully request an exemption from complying with such emergency standards and regulations.

Sincerely,

Ryan Dunn
Executive Director
Virginia Dental Association

Elizabeth C. Reynolds, DDS
President
Virginia Dental Association