



OREGON SOCIETY OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEONS

December 3, 2020

The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
900 Court Street, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Dear Governor Brown,

I serve as the current President of the Oregon Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (OSOMS) and am a practicing oral and maxillofacial surgeon (OMS) in the surgical specialty of dentistry. Throughout this pandemic our society has been diligently treating oral and facial pathology, many times treating patients with urgent and emergent needs – doing all we can to lessen the burden on our hospital emergency rooms.

During the work restrictions earlier this year, established to preserve PPE, we embraced new comprehensive precautions and remained available to treat ongoing urgent and emergent dental needs as first-line providers of emergent dental treatment. We developed a plan to divert and treat ongoing dental and facial emergencies in the various geographic regions of Oregon in the event that our hospitals become pushed beyond their capacity. We also worked with the Oregon Dental Association to collect and deliver PPE to our colleagues in need. In order to facilitate our continued efforts to provide relief for the people of Oregon, I would implore you to recognize OMSs as critical first responders and include us in the first wave of healthcare practitioners granted access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

As OMSs we are typically operating in the oral cavity, and the nature of our procedures can generate aerosols, creating a high-risk environment for COVID-19 exposure for us and our staff. We have also discovered during this pandemic that many manufacturers and distributors often misunderstand the nature of our work and our need for PPE, considering us as a low priority for access to critical supplies, based on our role as dentists and a subspecialty within the profession. First wave access to the vaccine will be a valuable step toward helping us, and our patients.

We have remained vigilant over the last ten months, and we will fastidiously persist in our efforts to reduce the deleterious effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our patients and medical colleagues. With early vaccinations, we can more safely continue to provide essential care to patients in need and lessen the strain on our overburdened healthcare system.

We are very grateful for your leadership during this exceptionally difficult time. Thank you for considering these concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "TK", followed by a horizontal line.

Thomas A. Kolodge, DDS, MD
OSOMS President

Cc: Jamie Hinsz, Government Relations Director

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