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March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, US Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader, House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
S-221, US Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Republican Leader McCarthy, and Democratic Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) and the nation's more than 185,000 dental hygienists, I want to thank you for your leadership in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, and applaud you for your ongoing work to provide the American people and economy with support and relief during these uncertain and unprecedented times.

Dental hygienists are licensed primary care oral health professionals and members of the oral health care team who focus on preventing oral disease and identifying and treating oral disease. Dental hygienists administer a range of oral health services including prophylaxis, sealants, fluoride treatments, oral health education, oral cancer screenings, and oral health education, among other services.

On March 18, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued recommendations on elective surgery and procedures; these recommendations are particularly strong with respect to dental procedures. Indeed, dental procedures are afforded particular emphasis. The CMS recommendations caution that: ***"Dental procedures use PPE [personal protective equipment] and have one of the highest risks of transmission due to the close proximity of the healthcare provider to the patient. To reduce the risk of spread and to preserve PPE, we are recommending that all non-essential dental exams and procedures be postponed until further notice."***

If dental practices adhere to these recommendations—and ADHA believes they should—then dental hygienists will not be working during the period these recommendations are in effect, and dental hygienists will be in need of the employee benefits Congress and the President are providing to employees adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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ADHA urges you to ensure that employees who are unable to work because they provide services that the government has recommended be “postponed until further notice” be compensated for the time they are unable to work. We do not support efforts to eliminate the possibility of that relief, such as the blanket exemption for dental practices from new paid leave requirements that organized dentistry is asking be provided *automatically* to *all* dental practices employing fewer than 50 people.

Thank you for your consideration of ADHA’s views, and again for the important leadership role you are playing during this crisis. We would be pleased to provide additional information or answer questions regarding ADHA’s position. Do not hesitate to contact ADHA Director of Education and Professional Advocacy Ann Lynch (annl@adha.net) or ADHA Washington Counsel Karen Sealander (ksealander@mwe.com) at McDermott Will & Emery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Crespin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH
President

CC: Ann Battrell, MSDH, ADHA Chief Executive Officer