



### **SALUT À TOUS – HELLO EVERYONE!**

I hope that you enjoyed the long weekend and were able to engage in your favourite summer pastime!

You will know from my previous messages that the Oral Health Profession Regulators have been engaged in conversation regarding evolving practice in the ongoing presence of COVID-19. Recently, we have had more in-depth discussions regarding the **use of fallow time and closed operatories**. These evidence- and expert-informed conversations have led to another (yes, another!) revision of our COVID-19 IPAC Guidance.

At the outset of the pandemic in 2020, we were not entirely aware of the characteristics of the threat with which we were dealing. Consequently, we engaged in a whole menu of risk mitigation strategies, some of which went by the wayside as our knowledge became more refined (remember wiping down your groceries?). Some of our approaches to managing COVID-19 Infection Risk in the Oral Health care setting at the beginning of the pandemic were based on current opinion and a strict application of the precautionary principle. For some of those approaches, we now have more evidence that can be brought to bear.

We have monitored evidence that became available to us in the published literature and from data provided to us by our Oral Health colleagues in other jurisdictions. Recently, the CDHO has joined with our Oral Health Profession regulatory partners (RCDSO, CDO, CDTO), infectious disease experts, Oral Health subject matter experts, and academic program administrators to examine our existing COVID-19 IPAC guidance through the lens of evolving, evidence-informed best practices that support the safety of patients/clients and Oral Health Professionals.

As a result of these discussions and the information we have before us, we have updated our common guidance. These changes are reflected in the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) Revised IPAC Guidance: COVID-19 Document linked here: [\(English\)](#) | [\(French\)](#)

The key changes in this updated document include:

- **All requirements for fallow times have been rescinded.**
- **Enclosed operatories are ONLY required for the treatment of patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.**
- **Given the continuing fluctuation in COVID-19 dynamics, the continuing presentation of new variants of concern, as well as the potential for future pandemics, continuing capacity for enclosed operatories is strongly recommended, even in facilities where care is not currently provided to COVID-19 positive patients. Such capacity can be achieved by maintaining existing enclosed operatories or by ensuring that temporary barriers can be reconstructed.**

These changes reflect our efforts to ensure that precautions are evidence-based and do not impede access to Oral Health care. They were reached in consideration of many factors; most important was the observation that the many jurisdictions which do not require fallow time or enclosed operatories for patients who have screened or tested negative for COVID-19 do not demonstrate an increased incidence of transmission of COVID-19 associated with Oral Health care. Please note that these are changes to the minimum standard for care. Oral Health Professionals can exceed this guidance if they so wish.

Please note that the following provisions **remain**:

- **Enclosed operatories are required for any treatment of patients who are suspected or confirmed COVID-19 Positive.**
- **Existing requirements for the use of PPE remain.**

With these changes, Oral Health Profession Regulators will continue to monitor COVID-19 Pandemic dynamics, ICU admissions, and direction from Public Health Ontario.

Thanks for your attention to this. More importantly though, thanks for showing up, day after day, week after week, to provide the people of Ontario with the safe, competent, ethical Oral Hygiene care that directly helps them live a more healthful and happy life.

As always, please feel free to get in touch. The College's Practice Advisors, Carolle Lepage and Tasneem Pirani, can assist you if you have ANY questions or are having difficulty finding the answer(s) to your question(s). Carolle and Tasneem are very informed and helpful!

They can be reached via email at [advice@cdho.org](mailto:advice@cdho.org) or telephone at 416-961-6234 or 1-800-268-2346 **Ext. 226** (Carolle) or **Ext. 266** (Tasneem).

Best wishes to everyone!

**Dr. Glenn Pettifer**  
**Registrar/CEO**

