



## Memorandum

Date: September 14, 2020

To: Licensed Dentists  
Licensed Dental Hygienists

From: Dawn B. Crim, Secretary-designee

RE: Emergency Rule and New DHS Guidance

As you know, Wisconsin continues to deal with COVID-19, and we are experiencing high levels of disease activity in nearly all 72 counties. This ongoing, pervasive presence of disease has prompted some limits on mass gatherings, such as testing events, and has discouraged, delayed, or prevented examinations that cannot be conducted with masks or while maintaining physical distance between individuals. These delays in exams are preventing recent graduates from entering practice and may be creating difficulties for patients seeking dental care in some communities.

In an effort to expand access to care and practice, the Dental Examining Board passed an [emergency rule](#), which was signed by the governor on July 17, 2020, allowing recent graduates to obtain a temporary license. Please review the rule for exact details, such as eligibility and application process, on Wisconsin temporary licenses for dentists and dental hygienists.

Also, as the pandemic persists, we also continue to learn more about the virus and how it spreads. Given current conditions and the availability of new scientific evidence, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has issued revised interim guidance for dental offices so that they can make informed decisions about safety precautions that can help protect patients and staff.

This new guidance, which is available on the [DHS website](#), covers a range of issues related to the provision of dental health care. It includes recommendation on staff health screening, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), patient pre-screening, patient registration and reception, on-site patient screening, modifications to the provision of care, exposure management, engineering controls (e.g. HVAC systems), environmental infection control (e.g. cleaning and disinfection), and more.

The document also contains extensive links to source material from a variety of governmental bodies and professional organizations, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the American Dental Association, the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention, and others. We strongly encourage you to review the new guidance and make any necessary adjustments to your practice.