



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RICHMOND

IBRAHEEM S. SAMIRAH
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HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20172
EIGHTY-SIXTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:

HEALTH, WELFARE, & INSTITUTIONS

COUNTIES, CITIES, & TOWNS

COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY, & INNOVATION

May 28, 2020

RE: Urgent PPE Request for Virginia Dentists

FR: Senator Todd E. Pillion & Delegate Ibraheem Samirah

Dear Governor Northam:

As practicing dentists in Virginia and members of the General Assembly, we ask you to consider quickly providing resources in the form of PPE assistance to Virginia dentists to ensure they are able to safely continue seeing patients – in every corner of the Commonwealth. We understand the Virginia Dental Association has also reached out regarding looming PPE shortages in the last 10 days.

In the early days of this public health crisis, Virginia dentists donated tens of thousands of gowns, masks, gloves and other PPE supplies to hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities experiencing shortages. As these dental offices prepared to reopen for elective procedures, many of them, therefore, found themselves unable to adequately replenish their protective equipment through their traditional supply chains.

The ADA has issued [interim guidelines](#) recommending the use of PPE that hasn't been traditionally sourced for dental offices, leaving many dentists struggling to get access to necessary protective equipment and faced with paying 2-3 times or more what this equipment cost before the pandemic – and that's when they can find it.

A [survey](#) from the ADA's Health Policy Institute found that in states that have reopened, access to PPE was the top reason that some dental offices haven't yet resumed elective procedures. That

same survey found that 69% of dental practices in Virginia have less than a 14 day supply of N95/KN95 masks and 70% had less than a 14 day supply of gowns.

We have seen some encouraging signs recently with regards to the global supply chain for some equipment, however, dentists remain concerned that there will be short-term shortages in protective equipment that will leave them unable to safely provide emergency or elective health care services for their patients.

These challenges aren't unique to Virginia. Recognizing this short-term need for assistance, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper provided 150,000 KN95 to dentists in the Tar Heel State to help ensure they were able to continue safely seeing patients. West Virginia has similarly provided PPE to dental offices.

Mass procurement from state governments, federal agencies and other large players in the market, ironically, is one of the reasons that dental offices, most of which are small businesses, are having difficulty finding PPE on their own and are being forced to pay exorbitant prices when they can find it.

Access to PPE is the primary reason that more than 10 percent of dental offices in Virginia remain closed, and many more may run out of PPE in the coming days, forcing them to further delay already postponed treatment for both emergency and non-emergency procedures.

We understand there are many considerations for where and how to deploy PPE but the situation is urgent for many dentists; and therefore, we ask your administration to consider quickly making PPE available to dental offices to ensure Virginians can continue to get access to needed oral health services.

Respectfully,



Senator Todd E. Pillion, DDS
DMD



Delegate Ibraheem S. Samirah,

CC: Chief of Staff, Clark Mercer
Secretary of Health & Human Resources, Dan Carey
Deputy Secretary of Health & Human Services, Venessa Walker Harris
Secretary of Commerce & Trade, Brian Ball
Deputy Secretary of Commerce & Trade, Angela Navarro
Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Carlos Hopkins
Director of Policy & Legislative Affairs, Matt Mansell
Legislative Director, Marvin Figueroa