

DRAFT ONLY #1



Association of Alberta Dental Assistants  
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May 31, 2020

The Right Honorable Tyler Shandro  
Minister of Health  
Government of Alberta  
423 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6  
[health.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:health.minister@gov.ab.ca)

Sent by email

Dear Minister Shandro,

The Association of Alberta Dental Assistants is an incorporated society that serves to advocate for and protect the interests of Registered Dental Assistants in this province since 2012. We act as the provincial voice for our professional members to bring issues of concern to the attention of government, to the oral health profession Colleges in Alberta and to other organizations that our profession may be impacted by.

Albertans have been working together during the SARS CoV-2 pandemic since March of 2020 to mitigate the impact of this virus on our population.

As the Alberta government prepares for a return to work for all sectors within a plan to lift restrictions in data driven stages, they have delegated the task of developing guidelines for return to practice for health professionals to their respective Colleges.

Oral health professionals in Alberta have a total of 5 Colleges that regulate their registrants with each of those Colleges independently preparing and distributing guidelines for return to work. As Alberta moves through each of the planned stages for return to work each College is updating their guidelines and advising their registrants to follow the new iteration as they are released. In addition, the Chief Medical Officer of Health is making orders and revising those orders frequently throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of the public as they move through each stage of the government plan.

Over the past several weeks as these directives have been distributed there has been a great deal of confusion created by the fact that many of the oral health professions work together in the same work environment and must work together to provide dental services to the public. The sheer number of documents and iterations of those documents over a relatively short period of time has caused uncertainty and in our opinion, is putting the public and oral health professionals at risk.

All but one of the oral health professions are allowed to be independent service providers and provide oral health services directly to the public. Registered Dental Assistants must be employed by a Dentist, Dental Hygienist or Denturist in order to provide their services to the public. This puts our professional members in the position of not being sure which guidelines to follow when they are not exactly the same for all those who are in a position of working in the same workplace. Our members are also in the position of fearing job loss if they do not comply with their employers' demands to provide services that are not allowed during specific stages of the provincial return to work plan.

Our recommendation and request to you Mr. Shandro, is that the Alberta government require the oral health profession Colleges to work together to prepare a single set of guidelines that all of the five oral health professions will follow. This will ensure public protection and the safety of oral health professionals when working together to provide patient care in the same workplace. This will also place more oversight on the professions with each of the five having input and providing their registrants with clarity and uniformity as they navigate through this Covid-19 pandemic.

The Association of Alberta Dental Assistants urges the Alberta Government to act quickly to enforce the requirement for a single set of guidelines on return to work for oral health professionals to provide the citizens of this province with confidence in the safe provision of oral healthcare in Alberta.

We look forward to your timely response to our recommendation.

Sincerely,

Maeghan Heck RDA  
AADA Board Chair

Dianne Hennig OSTJ RDA MFR  
AADA Corporate Agent