

GEORGIA BOARD OF DENTISTRY
Emergency Conference Call
2 Peachtree St., N.W., 6th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
March 17, 2020
2:15 p.m.

The following Board members were present:

Dr. Greg Goggans, President
Dr. Tracy Gay, Vice-President
Dr. Richard Bennett
Dr. Glenn Maron
Dr. Michael Knight
Dr. Brent Stiehl
Dr. Bert Yeargan

Staff present:

Tanja Battle, Executive Director
Eric Lacefield, Deputy Executive Director
Max Changus, Assistant Attorney General
Kimberly Emm, Attorney
Brandi Howell, Business Support Analyst I

Open Session

Dr. Goggans established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 2:16 p.m.

Dr. Goggans shared the latest press release on COVID-19. He stated that there are many dentists reaching out to him saying their offices are closed and now the Board need to make everyone else close. He stated that the Board does not have the authority to mandate that other than recommend it. Dr. Goggans stated that the ADA came out with their recommendations. He stated that he would like for the Board issue a statement regarding this matter.

Dr. Maron stated that he has been in close contact with the GDA's President, Dr. Evis Babo, who stated that she has been receiving numerous calls from dentists saying that if they have to close down their office, it would kill them economically and put them out of business. Dr. Maron shared data on the latest number of positive COVID-19 cases. He stated that he understands that there is more testing now and the numbers were expected to go up. He stated that the President has said as of this afternoon, dentist offices should not be seeing cases that are not emergent patients. Dr. Maron suggested the Board issue a statement saying that the Board is not mandating office closures because it does not want to burden hospitals or doctor's offices with toothache pain, but dentists do need to cancel all elective procedures for two weeks. He added that dental offices should be open and available to treat emergency dental pain, but not elective procedures. Dr. Bennett asked how does a broken tooth qualify? Or a lost filling? Dr. Maron responded that a broken tooth, lost filling with pain would qualify as an emergency. He stated that fractured into the coronal portion of bicuspid with no pain would not qualify. Dr. Bennett stated there should be a lot of discretion as far as the provider that knows the history of the patient. Dr. Maron stated that currently, the dentists in the State of Georgia are not taking this matter seriously. He stated that it is clear in some of the postings that dentists are putting online that their office is open for business. He further stated that people do not realize the masks worn in the dentist office does not protect against COVID-19.

After further discussion was held, Dr. Goggans stated that he will put a statement together and the Board would reconvene at 4:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 4:31 p.m.

Dr. Goggans shared the statement with the members and thanked Dr. Maron and Dr. Bennett for their assistance. Dr. Goggans asked if there were any comments. Dr. Stiehl stated his biggest concern was staff. He stated that dental hygienists are covered as they are non-essential and with the way the statement is worded, they would not be forced to be in the office. With no further discussion, Dr. Bennett made a motion to adopt the following statement:

The Georgia Board of Dentistry wishes to express its grave concern for the continuing threat of COVID-19. While it is not mandatory, many dental associations, including the American Dental Association, are making recommendations that dentists voluntarily suspend all elective, non-urgent or non-emergency dental care for a period of time ranging from two to three weeks. The decision of whether a particular procedure may be necessary for a patient should be made on a case-by-case basis by the treating dentist based on his or her professional judgment. Generally, elective procedures are those that are beneficial but not essential. The Board urges everyone to acknowledge the extreme danger of this public health crisis.

Dr. Yeargan seconded and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1(3), the Board declares that special circumstances exist warranting the holding of this meeting on less than 24 hours' notice, those circumstances being the COVID-19 pandemic.

With no further business, the Board meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Georgia Board of Dentistry will be held via conference call on Friday, April 3, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Community Health's office located at 2 Peachtree Street, N.W., 6th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30303.

Minutes recorded by Brandi Howell, Business Support Analyst I
Minutes edited by Tanja D. Battle, Executive Director