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December 29, 2020

Governor Charlie Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street
Office of the Governor
Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

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Dear Governor Baker,

I am sending you this letter on behalf of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS), which represents nearly 80% of the dentists in the state. I am requesting additional information on the distribution plan and timeline for COVID-19 vaccination of dental professionals.

While we appreciate that dental providers are included in Phase 1, and that two dentists serve on the state's Provider Advisory Committee, the state has not been forthcoming with additional details regarding when and where the dental team will receive the vaccine. Dental professionals have continued to treat their patients throughout the pandemic, and remain at high risk for contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of our work. We continue to be vigilant protectors of the safety of our patients, but the best way for us to protect our patients, our staff, ourselves, and our families is to receive the vaccination.

The MDS recognizes that this is an enormous undertaking for the Commonwealth and is willing to assist with the administration of the vaccine and to be the point organization for registering dental professionals. Please let me know how the MDS can assist the state and forward the related information on when dental professionals will be vaccinated and how the process will be implemented. It is also important for us to know where we will receive the vaccine. Local media has mentioned that our vaccinations may take place at local pharmacy chains that—are part of the Federal Pharmacy Program—or at community health care clinics, but there has been no confirmation of these plans from the Department of Public Health.

It is a known fact that many individuals visit their dentist more frequently than their physician. Oral health is integral to overall health, and dentists are in a unique position to both educate and encourage our patients to receive the vaccine in a timely fashion.

As dentists, we are used to either knowing the answer or being able to find an answer, and being able to solve problems in a straightforward manner. Dental colleagues in neighboring states have begun to get vaccinated and/or are in the process of scheduling their vaccines. Speed is of the essence during this pandemic, and we are anxious to implement this vital tool here in Massachusetts. At the very least, we hope to be able to relay information regarding your timeline for distribution to our dental teams immediately.

Sincerely,

MaryJane Hanlon, DMD
President
Massachusetts Dental Society