

California Dental Association applauds emergency scope-of-practice waiver allowing dentists to administer COVID-19 vaccine

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Contact: Alicia Malaby

916.554.5372

alicia.malaby@cda.org

Sacramento, Calif. — In a move to address the state's shortage of health care providers eligible to administer COVID-19 vaccines, the Department of Consumer Affairs today approved a [public health emergency waiver](#) that will allow the state's 36,000 dentists to administer COVID-19 vaccines to people age 16 and older. This would most likely occur at hospital settings, clinics and vaccination sites that are expected to be set up to meet the demand for the vaccine.

During declared emergencies, such as the pandemic, every available resource must be deployed to save lives and mitigate suffering. Dentists and other untapped health care professionals have the potential to be invaluable to not only increase the health care worker surge capacity but also help immunize Californians as quickly as possible. Currently, California has only administered 28% of its allotment of vaccine doses received (source: [Bloomberg](#)).

"Dentists are ready, willing and able to help administer COVID-19 vaccinations to the public," said CDA President Judee Tippet-Whyte, DDS. "We can help with surge capacity at clinics and vaccinations sites – wherever we're needed to quickly administer vaccinations and save lives."

Dentists are in a unique position to administer vaccines because they receive extensive training in anatomy, pathology, pharmacology and autoimmune response as part of their dental education. Additionally, dentists are already trained to provide injections in objectively more complex areas of the mouth that commonly have gag reflexes, major blood vessels, nerves and a moving tongue. Dentists already have the ability to practice outside of their traditional scope of practice during declared states of emergency under the implied or express direction of government entities. The DCA waiver establishes the necessary training dentists must complete through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that is specific to vaccine administration, contraindications and adverse reactions.

In addition to administering vaccines, it is imperative that dentists are vaccinated themselves. Currently, dentists have been placed in Phase 1a, which acknowledges that dental care is essential health care, however, inclusion in Tier 3 is a concern because of



dentists' direct patient contact. CDA urges counties to consider dentistry a partner in ongoing vaccination efforts and to elevate dentists and their teams to higher tiers that provide more similar levels of direct patient care.

About the California Dental Association

The California Dental Association is the nonprofit organization representing organized dentistry in California. Founded in 1870, CDA is committed to the success of our members in service to their patients and the public. CDA also contributes to the oral health of Californians through various comprehensive programs and advocacy. CDA's membership consists of more than 27,000 dentists, making it the largest constituent of the American Dental Association. For more information, visit cda.org.

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