



**Virginia Dental**  
ASSOCIATION



Virginia

Dental Hygienists' Association

January 11, 2021

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia  
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor  
1111 East Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Northam,

We write to you on behalf of associations representing thousands of Virginia's dentists and dental hygienists to offer our continued help in the Commonwealth's pandemic response. As Virginia moves beyond the initial priority phase of vaccination, we can anticipate the likelihood of a need for an expanded healthcare workforce to administer vaccines.

On January 4, 2021, California approved a [public health emergency waiver](#) that will allow dentists to help with the state's vaccination efforts. Dentists were involved in the H1N1 vaccine response throughout the country and have extensive experience with injections. The ADA Practice Institute Senior Vice President Dave Preble, D.D.S., urging state leaders to grant dentists the authority to administer the vaccine has rightly noted that, "dentists give more injections than probably any other medical provider in the entire world." Dentists work in a variety of settings, including federally qualified health centers, where storage of the vaccine is available."

Dental hygienists, similarly, have extensive training and expertise in local anesthesia/injections, medical emergencies, basic life support, and infection control and can fill roles in our Commonwealth's vaccination efforts.

The Virginia Department of Health commissioner already has the authority under the existing state of emergency to call on "non-traditional vaccinators," a group that could include dentists and dental hygienists. We ask that the state go ahead and exercise that authority, so that this group can be incorporated into the necessary planning for vaccine rollouts throughout the Commonwealth.

In anticipation of being able to administer the vaccine, many dentists are already accessing the online trainings available from the vaccine manufacturers, e.g., Pfizer.

We can all appreciate that any delay in the rollout of the vaccine could have grave public health consequences. And we have already seen in this initial rollout of the vaccine that different health districts have different needs, and the clear potential need for a reserve force to assist as our

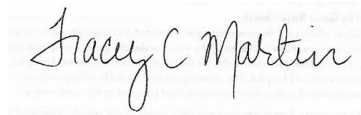
healthcare workforce is stretched thin. Dentists and hygienists understand what is at stake and are standing ready to assist. We have encouraged our members to register and update their information with the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps.

As heads of our associations, we stand ready to help in any way we can with coordination of the vaccination effort, in disseminating information and ensuring that the vaccine is distributed efficiently and safely to Virginians.

Sincerely,



Dr. Frank Iuorno, DDS  
President  
Virginia Dental Association



Tracey Martin, RDH, BSDH  
President  
Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association

CC:

Dr. M. Norman Oliver, Virginia Department of Health Commissioner  
Mr. Marvin Figueroa, Commonwealth of Virginia Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources  
Dr. Danny Avula, Director of the Richmond City and Henrico County Health Departments