



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Kavanagh & Senate Colleagues Say: Allow Dental Offices to Reopen along with Other Basic Healthcare Services

BRIAN KAVANAGH May 26, 2020

| ISSUE: **HEALTH CARE SERVICES, COVID-19, REOPENING NEW YORK, DENTISTS, HEALTH AND SAFETY**



On May 26, 2020, Senator Kavanagh and 13 of his Senate colleagues wrote to Governor Andrew Cuomo to urge that dental practices be permitted to reopen in the same timeframe as other basic healthcare services. The full text of the Senators' letter is below; the original version is available at the link above.

May 26, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

First off, we'd like to thank you and your staff for their leadership and responsiveness during this global pandemic. We write to you to respectfully request that New York dental practices be authorized to reopen and fully treat patients as soon as possible, while adhering to the strict, evidence-based COVID-19 infection control guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Dentists in our districts have reached out to us with concerns that while they are currently able to provide the most challenging emergency and urgent dental services pursuant to Executive Order #202.8, they are unable to provide the full range dental services. As you are no doubt aware, the American Dental Association has issued a comprehensive toolkit for dental offices to safely reopen to provide full services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the New York State Department of Health, in collaboration with the New York State Dental Association, is developing its own guidelines to facilitate the return of public access to full dental services. Because dental offices are already open for emergency service, and because those dental offices are already adhering to recommended infection control guidelines for COVID-19, it makes sense that dental offices should be recognized for immediate full reopening rather than waiting for phases and regional reopening.

Additionally, as you are aware, many dental offices are also small businesses that employ

thousands throughout the state. Several offices have had to furlough or lay off employees due to the inability to provide full services to patients. Reopening dental offices will allow our dentists and their staff to get back to work, while allowing patients to receive the care they need.

Surrounding states like New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and others with which New York has been coordinating COVID-19 responses, are all reopening dental offices on an expedited basis for their residents in recognition of the safety protocols adhered to by dental practices and the need for full dental care. Lack of such comprehensive care is leading only to more and more emergency cases that are being treated under more difficult conditions.

Dental services are essential to the health and well-being of our residents and we would like to encourage the immediate reopening of dental offices in New York, so that our dentists can resume practice and patients can receive comprehensive care. Thank you for your consideration of our request and if we can answer any further questions, please let us know.

Respectfully yours,

Andrew S. Gounardes, Member of Senate

Liz Krueger, Member of the Senate

Rachel May, Member of the Senate

Monica Martinez, Member of Senate

Brad Hoylman, Member of the Senate

Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Member of the Senate

Leroy Comrie, Member of the Senate

James Skoufis, Member of the Senate

Gustavo Rivera, Member of the Senate

Brian Kavanaugh, Member of the Senate

Peter Harckham, Member of the Senate

Roxeanne Persaud, Member of the Senate

Robert G. Ortt, Member of the Senate

Simcha Felder, Member of the Senate