As part of our commitment to keep you informed, we are sharing recent actions from the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) and the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) that address the impact of COVID-19 on dental hygiene and dental education.

These actions are aligned with those ADHA took just a few days ago, with our campaign to the nation’s governors. Thank you to all who participated — more than 11,650 supporting messages were sent!

The campaign has prompted much discussion and some confusion. As state leaders, we know you may have also received many questions. Stay tuned for an update to follow with a summary of facts that may help you understand and reply to any inquiries related to the misinformation about our current campaigns.

April 2020 Advocacy Highlights

- On April 9, ADHA launched an advocacy campaign directed to the nation’s governors focusing on “eliminating live patient exams during the pandemic for the health and safety of students, patients and examiners.”

- Also on April 9, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) sent a letter to the National Governors Association, “urging all governors to suspend or modify state laws that prevent qualified dental and allied dental graduates from becoming licensed professionals.”

- On April 14, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) released guidance to dental hygiene education programs for temporary flexibility in Accreditation Standards to Address Interruption of Education Reporting Requirements Resulting from COVID-19 for the Class of 2020.
Workplace Safety Update

There continue to be many unanswered questions about how to safely return to work, and the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

It’s critical that we gather clear data to inform evidence-based guidance on these decisions. ADHA is in continued discussions with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General, The Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP), the American Dental Association and others on these issues.

Dental Hygiene Education Programs

CODA’s temporary flexibility guidance includes:

- The Commission reminds each educational program that it has an obligation and responsibility to ensure that its graduates of the Class of 2020 are competent and that the program complies with CODA’s Accreditation Standards.

- Programs are reminded that they are responsible for determining whether each Class of 2020 student/resident/fellow is eligible for graduation.

- The Commission recognizes that the educational impact of COVID-19 reaches beyond the Class of 2020, which has an immediate urgency related to graduation. As such, the Commission will further study this topic and may issue additional guidance at a later date to address each program’s additional adjustments to maintain the quality of dental education for students, residents, and fellows in accordance with CODA’s Accreditation Standards, policies and procedures.

- Students should direct any questions to their respective program. Faculty should direct any questions to CODA.

Annual Conference

The ADHA Board of Trustees will be meeting on April 24. We will have further information available regarding the Annual Conference following our meeting.

COVID-19 Information

We are working to bring you the most current information available. ADHA continues to provide regular updates on the ADHA COVID-19 Resource page at: https://www.adha.org/covid19. COVID-19 specific questions may be submitted to ADHA at: rdhcovidinfo@adha.net.

Be well.

Matt Crespin, MPH, RDH
ADHA President

DISCLAIMER: ADHA makes no warranty, guarantee, or representation as to the accuracy or sufficiency of the information posted herein, and ADHA assumes no responsibility or liability regarding the use or misuse of such information. Links or pointers on ADHA Online to other Internet sites are provided as a courtesy only. ADHA assumes no responsibility or liability for their content, accuracy, or compliance with applicable laws.