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APR 29 2020
Secretary of State
Tre Hargett

STATE OF TENNESSEE

EXECUTIVE ORDER

BY THE GOVERNOR

No. 31

AN ORDER TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 BY LIMITING NON-EMERGENCY DENTAL PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, in response to the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Tennessee, I have issued numerous Executive Orders to reduce unnecessary person-to-person interactions and to preserve the ability of Tennessee's healthcare system to respond to the rapidly increasing volume of COVID-19 patients; and

WHEREAS, since declaring a state of emergency, I issued Executive Order Nos. 18 and 25 limiting non-emergency and non-essential dental and medical procedures in order to preserve personal protective equipment and to maintain adequate hospital bed capacity for the treatment of COVID-19 patients, as well as to reduce community spread by limiting unnecessary person-to-person interactions; and

WHEREAS, despite an improvement in conditions, the spread of COVID-19 remains a serious threat, and an essential element of allowing many Tennesseans to return to work is ensuring that Tennessee's healthcare system maintains the ability to treat COVID-19 patients and prevent the community spread of COVID-19, which requires measures to preserve adequate supplies of personal protective equipment and measures to limit unnecessary person-to-person interactions; and

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2020, the American Dental Association (ADA) presented its Return to Work Interim Guidance Toolkit containing guidance for the short-term management of dental practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, which aligns with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) that dental service providers should use the highest level of personal protective equipment available when treating patients; and

WHEREAS, in light of only recent recommendations by the ADA and the CDC regarding safe dental practice, the Tennessee Board of Dentistry, the Tennessee Dental Association, and the Tennessee Dental Hygienists' Association are still working to develop appropriate guidelines to resume non-emergency dental practices safely in Tennessee.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Tennessee Constitution and other applicable law, in light of the continuing state of emergency to facilitate the response to COVID-19, do hereby order the following statewide:

1. Dental service providers in the State of Tennessee, including but not limited to dentists, pediatric dentists, orthodontists, oral surgeons, periodontists, prosthodontists, and endodontists, shall not perform any non-emergency dental or oral procedures. Non-emergency dental or oral procedures include hygiene visits, cosmetic procedures, and other elective procedures. Emergency procedures for patients with acute dental or oral needs may still be performed, including treatment for pain, swelling, trauma, or an abscess.

2. In order to conserve personal protective equipment, dental service providers and facilities in Tennessee must limit attendance to essential personnel in the rooms where surgeries and invasive procedures are being performed.

3. Any state or local law, order, rule, or regulation that would limit the application of this Order is hereby suspended.

4. This Order shall take effect at 12:01 a.m., Central Daylight Time, on April 30, 2020, and shall remain in effect until 12:01 a.m., Central Daylight Time, on May 6, 2020, at which time the suspension of any state laws and rules and the other provisions of this Order shall cease and be of no further force or effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my signature and caused the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed this 29th day of April, 2020.

Bill Lee
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

Tre Hargett
SECRETARY OF STATE