



## WSSO President's Message

January 2021

Greetings WSSO colleagues and happy new year to all. I hope 2021 will be a healthy, safe, and productive year for all of you. I know that I am happy to put the many challenges of 2020 behind us and I am casting a hopeful eye to the year ahead of us.

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### COVID-19 Vaccination

The challenge of practicing during the COVID-19 pandemic continues. As you may be aware, the resolution of the pandemic will hinge on the widespread vaccination of the public, starting with individuals at risk. **Washington state authorities have revised their COVID-19 vaccine allocation guidance to include dental care workers** in Phase 1A, tier 2 of the vaccine rollout. This means that all of you and your staff should be eligible now or very soon after high-risk health care workers, first responders, and the eligible elderly are vaccinated in tier 1.

The state has just released a **web-based tool** to help you determine your eligibility to receive the vaccine. [Click here](#) to access it. Once you complete the web form and are determined to be eligible, a link to vaccine providers will be given. You can continue to check the **Washington state vaccine page for updates** [here](#).

Our colleagues at the **WSDA** stay on top of this emerging situation and may also have valuable information on [their blog](#).

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### Legislative Updates

The rules governing the practice of dentistry have been amended and the **new rules will be effective January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021**. The amended rules bring the state infection control requirements more in line with the CDC recommendations including

1. Written policies and procedures on infection control
2. Annual infection control training for providers and staff with documentation
3. Signage for respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette with tissue availability
4. Sterilization and bagging of low-speed handpiece motors (effective 8/31/2022)
5. Bagging/wrapping of instruments and cassettes to ensure sterility before use; inspection & maintenance of the integrity of the bag/wrap until point of use
6. Discard single-use and disposable items after use-do not reprocess (exception made for items tested for size like bands or SS crowns)
7. Use of high-volume evacuation whenever possible during aerosol-producing

procedures

8. Waterline testing for each dental unit is required quarterly and after repair/changes in plumbing—all waterlines from one unit can be pooled (effective 12/1/2021)

These new rules could have a significant impact on the practice of orthodontics. We were fortunate to have the several dedicated members of our WSSO leadership (including Bryan Williams, Corwyn Hopke, and Michelle Neal) help to improve the final language accepted into the new rules. **Read the complete rule revision [here](#).**

Many of you began offering telehealth visits as part of your practice during the pandemic. The Legislature has mandated that starting with the turn of the new year, **all telehealth providers must complete training in telehealth by June 30, 2021.** Telehealth does not include communication by audio-only phone, email, or fax. **The Washington State Telehealth Collaborative webpage offers free trainings [here](#)** (you must enroll and create a Canvas account).

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I am disappointed we will not meet for our WSSO annual session this year, but **a great meeting is being planned by Michael Picard and Amrit Burn for January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022**, with the hope we can all see each other in person and reconnect.

The board continues to meet in virtual meetings, and **we will plan a virtual state-wide business meeting in the late Spring or early Summer** so that we can elect our next slate of officers and conduct other business requiring a membership vote. Until we see each other again, I wish you the best of health and happiness for the new year, and thank you for your support and membership in the WSSO.

Sincerely,

#### **WSSO Board 2020-2021**

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**President Elect- Michael Picard**

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**Chairperson Membership- Patra Alatsis**

**Chairperson Peer Review- Rod Dubois**

**Members at Large- Nadia Farjo, Sepi Torkan, Corwyn Hopke**

**Executive Administrative Assistant- Sally Gee**

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Washington State Society of Orthodontics

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