

**To: All General Medical Practitioners and
Community Pharmacists**

BY EMAIL

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Dear Colleague

Re: Advice for patients with an Urgent Dental Need

I am writing to clarify the advice to be given to patients attending your service with an urgent dental need, which is not life threatening, during the ongoing COVID response.

- **Patients who are registered with a dental practice**

Patients should be advised to contact their dentist for advice. Dental practices have arrangements in place for triage during specific hours seven days a week including bank holidays.

- **Patients who are not currently registered with a dental practice**

Patients should be advised to contact any dentist in their area. Dentists have agreed, under the terms of their financial support scheme, to treat unregistered patients in need of urgent care during the COVID pandemic. It is recognised that some practices may have reduced capacity reflecting the COVID restrictions and may not be able to accommodate unregistered patients on every occasion. Hence, patients should be advised that they may need to contact a number of practices in their area in order to secure an urgent dental appointment. Practice triage hours will vary and patients should be advised to contact practices early in the day to increase the likelihood of their urgent dental need being addressed promptly. A list of dental practices in their area can be viewed by accessing the following link:

<http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2477.htm>

Urgent dental care centre referral pathways are in place for both registered and unregistered patients after initial triage at a dental practice. These arrangements will remain in place until further notice.

I hope this information is helpful and that you will share it widely within your teams.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Donaldson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

**Michael Donaldson
Head of Dental Services, HSCB**

Copy:

Dr Margaret O'Brien, Assistant Director of Integrated Care (GMS), HSCB

Joe Brogan, Assistant Director of Integrated Care, Head of Pharmacy & Medicines Management, HSCB