



Publication of the Stanislaus Dental Society



July, 2025

Need to De-escalate Your Stress?

Seek within!



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Stanislaus Dental Society**

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publication may be directed to:**

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Your contributions in the form of articles, photos and/or ideas are greatly appreciated. The APEX editorial staff is interested in articles of general membership interest. This can include an accomplishment, interesting hobbies, innovative ideas, volunteer efforts, etc. Please feel free to submit an article or call for an interview. All articles are subject to editorial review.



Presidential Pondering

Facing the Future: The Role of Local Dental Components in Supporting the Profession

Dr. Filipe Lima, SDS President

Organized dentistry is facing a period of significant transition. From the rise of corporate dental groups to the growing burden of student loan debt and increased regulatory pressures, dentists are navigating a landscape that looks very different from the one of just a decade ago. As reimbursement models change and overhead costs rise, independent practitioners especially are feeling the squeeze. At the same time, younger generations of dentists are questioning the value of organized dentistry and are less likely to join professional associations unless they see clear, tangible benefits.

These challenges call for a renewed focus on how local dental societies can support their members. Local components are uniquely positioned to provide relevant, grassroots-level resources that directly address member needs. By offering targeted continuing education, local networking opportunities, and guidance on business and practice management, dental societies can help dentists strengthen both their clinical skills and business acumen. We will continue to work closely with our state and national dental associations to align efforts on advocacy, regulatory updates, and best practices—ensuring every member has a unified voice at every level. Local advocacy can also address region-specific legislative issues that affect daily practice, such as scope of practice regulations and insurance reforms.

In addition to supporting dentists, the Stanislaus Dental Society is proud to be actively involved in strengthening the broader dental team. One key initiative is our support of the new Registered Dental Assistant program at Modesto Junior College. By investing in local dental education, we are helping to ensure a well-trained workforce that can meet the needs of practices throughout our region. This partnership reflects our commitment to elevating the entire dental profession and providing opportunities for the next generation of dental professionals.

The Stanislaus Dental Society remains dedicated to your professional growth and financial success. Whether you're seeking mentorship on practice management, guidance through evolving regulations, or simply a forum to share ideas with your peers, your local society is here to help.

We encourage all members to reach out to current leadership with any questions, suggestions, or concerns. Your feedback is invaluable as we strive to serve you better—please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

Filipe Lima, DDS

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Maximizing Patient Care

Andrew Smith, DDS
SDS Editor



What dental school didn't teach me was how emotionally draining dentistry can be. The academic environment prepared me for procedures, diagnosis, and treatment planning, but it didn't fully capture what it feels like to carry the weight of patient anxiety, staff dynamics, and the unspoken expectation to be perfect every day. Early in practice, I found myself going home emotionally exhausted—not from the dentistry itself, but from the invisible pressures surrounding it. Recognizing that emotional resilience is a skill, not a trait, was a turning point. No one told us that protecting your mental well-being is just as important as protecting your crown margins.

Another lesson dental school skimmed over was the art of patient communication. I learned quickly that clinical excellence alone does not build trust or retain patients. It's how you explain options, how you listen without rushing, and how you acknowledge fear without judgment. I once thought technical skill would be enough to grow my practice, but it was soft skills that created the loyalty. This subtle shift—viewing the appointment as a relationship rather than a transaction—completely changed how patients responded to treatment and how fulfilled I felt at the end of the day.

For fellow dentists, especially those early in their careers, these realizations can be liberating. We often feel inadequate when real-world challenges don't align with our academic training. But recognizing that some of the most critical skills—empathy, leadership, emotional regulation—are learned after graduation can reframe your struggles as growth, not failure. Sharing these perspectives within our dental community helps normalize the idea that being a great dentist is about more than hand skills—it's about evolving as a whole person. That's the kind of mindset that keeps you grounded, resilient, and connected to your purpose in dentistry.

Reference and Future Readings:

Moro JDS, Soares JP, Massignan C, Oliveira LB, Ribeiro DM, Cardoso M, Canto GL, Bolan M. *Burnout syndrome among dentists: a systematic review and meta-analysis*. J Evid Based Dent Pract. 2022 Sep;22(3):101724.

Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6828933/>

Andrew Smith, DDS
SDS Editor



Robin's Relevant Remarks

Stress Relief for the Dental Team



In a world currently filled with uncertainty, it's so easy to layer that stress on top of a workday that can bring additional challenges. Join the team; just don't plan on taking root there.

Even with packed schedules and complex cases, small strategies can make a big difference.

Try these quick de-escalation tips to bring more calm into your practice:

- *Take three deep breaths between patients* to reset your focus and calm your nervous system.
- *Use simple checklists* to reduce decision fatigue and keep the day flowing smoothly.
- *Start each day with a quick team huddle* to share wins, concerns, or reminders—it builds connection and eases tension before it builds. Your teammates can be your grounding point throughout the day.
- *Create an end-of-day ritual* to transition out of work mode. Whether it's a walk, your favorite podcast, or silent reflection, make it part of your routine.

I sometimes find myself taking lunch (pb& j, thankyouverymuch) in front of my computer and pulling up this [YouTube video](#) to give myself a little respite, a piece of tranquility, and it seems to slow the passage of time for a bit.

A moment of pause doesn't slow you down—it sets the tone for steadiness, compassion, and resilience.

Let's keep caring, calmly.

Robin Brown / Executive Director

So proud to be a part of...

...SDS members (and team) preserving the dental health of the earth's population, one patient at a time!

The objective of the Stanislaus Dental Society shall be:

To encourage the improvement of the oral health of the public,
To promote the art and science of dentistry,
To encourage the maintenance of high standards of
professional competence and practice,
And to represent the interests of the members of the
dental profession and the public which it serves.



General Membership Meeting-February

Labor Law Updates



Board member/Editor Dr. Andrew Smith and SDS Board Component Representative Dr. Matt Swatman
Attending CDA's Leadership Workshop

**Modesto Junior College Dental Assisting Program:
Clinical Education Partnership Updates**

by Joy Brack, RDA, Lead Instructor



Excitingly, our 2024-2025 MJC DA students of two cohorts (23 & 26) are nearing the end of their program! Our student program retention is at 88% with only two drops and one dismissal. Our student's completion date is 7/10/25. The students will have two weeks of vacation and then will be preparing for the California RDA Examination to complete their goals of DA to licensure. This course will also be open to the community to register and attend the "Live" Online Zoom Course to prepare in the weighted areas of the RDA Exam. The deadline to register is July 21st!!! I have attached our flyer for registering information. I am actively placing employment opportunities on our board in the classroom for students seeking employment after completion of our program. If an office is looking for a DA position, please send me the information to post to my students to reach out with resume and interview opportunities. If an externship site has held on to our student's resume for potential employment, feel free to reach out to the student.

MJC is currently completing the application and interview process for the next cohort start scheduled for August 11th for the DA Program 2025-2026. This year, MJC was not granted the same funds as last year which has decreased the amount of seats we are able to offer for this cohort. Once we have confirmed our accepted students, I will update you with our new cohort numbers.

Thank you to the dental staff and practices that have hosted our students for clinical experience throughout the year! We truly appreciate all the experience you have shown to our students throughout the 12 months and 4 rotations!

Sincerely

(Joy) Rejoice Brack, RDA, Instructor

Brackr@yosemite.edu

.....



Alert: Changes to Fingerprinting Process

Applicants must obtain approval from the Dental Board of California (Board) to fingerprint before fingerprints are submitted. Once the applicant has applied for a license or permit, the Board will review the application and send a Live Scan Form to the applicants that have been authorized to fingerprint..

All Live Scan Forms have been removed from the Board's website and will only be provided if the requestor has been authorized to fingerprint.

Please Take Notice: If an applicant fingerprints prior to being notified by the Board to do so, the applicant will be required to fingerprint again and pay any related fees to do so.

New Application Requirements for Registered Dental Assistants (RDA)

Effective July 1, 2025

The Dental Board of California (Board) Sunset Bill, SB 1453 (Ashby, Chapter 483, Statutes of 2024), made several changes to the requirements for Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) applicants. We suggest all educators, applicants, and stakeholders review the bill and prepare to comply with these changes. The changes include:

Three New Pathways Established to Qualify for RDA licensure

- Certified Dental Assistant Pathway
- The Alternative Dental Assisting Program Pathway
- The Preceptorship in Dental Assisting Pathway



With the establishment of these new pathways, there will be new forms added to our website on July 1, 2025.

Please Note: The Board will be eliminating the Certification of Board Approved Registered Dental Assisting Program Completion (RDA2) Form, effective July 1, 2025. Instead, applicants will need to submit a copy of their RDA Program certificate.

Pit and Fissure Sealants Certificate Required with Application

As of July 1, 2025, all applicants will be required to submit a copy of their completion certificate for a Board-approved pit and fissure sealants course with the Registered Dental Assisting Examination and Licensure Application.

Expiration Dates Applied to Course Certificates

For those applying for RDA licensure, Orthodontic Assistant (OA) permits, and Dental Sedation Assistant (DSA) permits, there are new expiration dates assigned to course completion certificates. They are as follows:

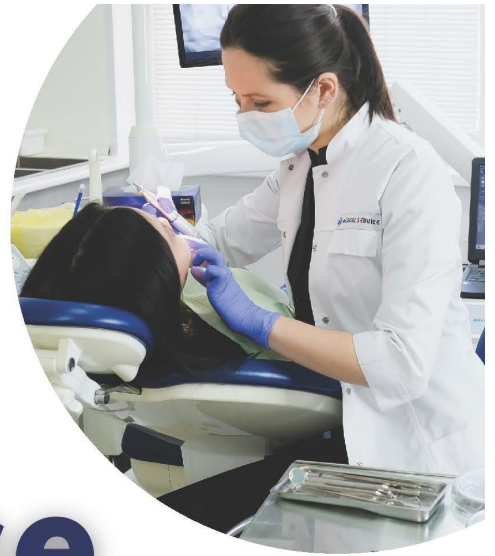
- The Dental Practice Act and Infection Control course certificates must indicate the course was completed within 2 years of the application date.
- Coronal Polishing, pit and fissure sealants, and ultrasonic scaling certificates must indicate the course was completed within 5 years of the application date.
- Radiation Safety certificates must indicate the course was completed within 10 years of the application date.

Please Note: The expiration date listed above do not apply to unlicensed dental assistants, only those that are pursuing a license or permit.

New Content Required on Student Certificates of Completion

As of January 1, 2025, student certificates of completion are required to include the following:

- The participant's name.
- The name of the course or program completed.
- The name of the course or program provider.
- The Board-issued approval number.
- The date or date range of completion of the course or program.



RDA Exam Prep Course

Live Online RDA Certification Exam Bootcamp

Enhance your career by becoming a registered dental professional. Learn to perform expanded duties, boost your career opportunities, and increase your earning potential.

July 28 – October 20, 2025
Mondays 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

- 🦷 Join live online class sessions to prepare for the RDA exam.
- 🦷 Required book: California RDA General Written and Law Examination by Colleen Kirby
- 🦷 Have your study materials ready to stay focused and get the most out of class
- 🦷 Review the DBC website and complete RDA application documents.

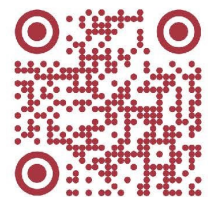
Contact: MJC Dental Assisting Program | perezhernandezl@mjc.edu | 209-575-6063

COURSE INFORMATION

Class fee: \$170.00 (book required but not included)

Registration Deadline: July 21, 2025

Scan to register or
visit mjc4life.org



All Hands on Deck!

Anterior comp/ Class IV + Anterior comp/ Class IV + Diastema Closure
w/ Dr. Troy Schmedding—April 2025



The following sponsors provide financial support to the Stanislaus Dental Society's continuing education course program which helps us bring quality speakers for your knowledge enrichment. Please support their generosity by asking them about what they can do to help your practice!



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Top 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Investigation Questions

When you see shortfalls in a particular goal, there are several questions you can ask and different ways you can think about root causes. Examples of these questions are listed in this guide for each of the top 10 KPIs. Review the section(s) you need and apply questions to your circumstances. See if you can determine the possible root cause for any shortfall you see in your reporting. Start the process by asking “Why” when a goal is missed.

- **KPI #1: Production**
- **KPI #2: Collections**
- **KPI #3 and #4: Profit and Overhead**
- **KPI #5: Dental Benefit Production vs. Fee-for-Service Production**
- **KPI #6: Case Acceptance**
- **KPI #7: Dentist Production vs. Hygiene Production**
- **KPI #8: Percentage of hygiene/recall patients scheduled**
- **KPI #9: New Patient**
- **KPI #10: Cancellation and No-Show Rates**

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Member Mixer + 1 at Verona's!



Establishing and maintaining effective patient communication protocols provides your patients with the best possible patient experience in your practice and increases case acceptance. Thoughtful communication helps patients understand all aspects of their appointment and treatment plan, builds trust with the dental team and motivates them to complete the treatment needed to improve their overall health.

Our experts recommend the following patient communication protocols to help you create consistency in your dental practice and a trusting environment for patients. Please note that these protocols are suggestions only; please adapt the protocol as needed to your own unique practice needs, dental team staffing and patient demographics.

Intake Call and Check-In (front office team)

- Answer the phone within 2-3 rings with a pleasant tone of voice. Always be friendly and professional, even when you're busy or having a challenging day.
- Ask the patient if they have any areas of concern the doctor should know about.
- Note any patient concerns on the appointment schedule, during the morning huddle and on the routing slip.

Helpful Tool: Use our [Call Evaluation Form](#) to train your team.

Dental Imaging and Seating (dental assistant)

- Obtain quality images of the area(s) bothering the patient along with any other areas the doctor may have noted on previous appointments.
- Show the patient the area of concern in the images and confirm by asking, *"Is this area bothering you?"*
- Before the doctor enters the examining room, relay to them all areas of concern provided by the patient and the front office team.

Examination (dentist)

- The patient deserves your undivided attention. Be sure to actively listen and respond to their concerns.
 - **Active listening** is a mental process that requires intake and understanding; **hearing** someone is strictly a physical task.
- Explain the best course of treatment for all areas of concern, including the treatment plan and risk/benefits.
- Use language and available tools (images, materials, etc.) to educate the patient on clinical need.
- Ask the patient what concerns they have. This could be anything from fear, anxiety, finances or time constraints.
- Be sure to address the patient's specific concern. Dig in, if needed.

Helpful Tool: Use our [Informed Consent Form](#).

Answering Patient Questions (dental assistant)

If you're alone in the exam room with the patient, be prepared to answer frequently asked questions such as:

- *Do I really need this?*
 - **Sample script:** *"Doctor Who has been doing this a long time and our patients are very happy with how well the doctor identifies and corrects concerns before they become bigger issues."*
- *How long can I put off getting this fixed?*
 - **Sample script:** *"That's a very good question, and I can bring the doctor back in to answer. But the advice I usually hear Dr. Who gives is once decay is identified, the tooth won't get better on its own. Would you like me to bring the doctor in to discuss this?"*

(cont. Page 15)

- *Will it hurt?*
 - **Sample script:** *“Doctor Who has done this treatment many times and takes every precaution to make sure you’re as comfortable as possible. They often get compliments on how gentle they are. If you feel any discomfort for any reason, you can slowly raise your left hand, and the doctor will stop immediately.”*

Treatment Coordination – Introduction (dentist and treatment coordinator)

- **Dentist:** Before leaving the patient, call in the treatment coordinator and explain the recommended treatment plan, addressing the patient’s specific concern and any other critical notes.
 - This allows the patient to hear the treatment plan again in a format that helps them further understand and digest the diagnosis mentally and emotionally.
 - **Sample script:** *“Mr. Frodo, this is my treatment coordinator, Samwise. Samwise is an expert in your dental Insurance. Samwise, Mr. Frodo needs a crown on #3 but is concerned about the cost due to the upcoming ring ceremony he is planning. Please be sure to maximize his insurance coverage, so he can complete the treatment he needs and still plan a wonderful event.”*
- **Treatment coordinator:** Tell the patient you will pull their dental benefit plan information and work on coordinating a cost estimate. Ask the patient if they have questions.

Treatment Coordination (treatment coordinator)

Move the patient to a consultation room for the financial discussion about proposed treatment. If a consult room is not available, find a position more comfortable for the patient – not reclined in a treatment chair.

- Why should you have a consultation room?
 - Allows more privacy to help the patient feel comfortable asking questions.
 - Helps the doctor and team focus on the patient.
 - Limits distractions.
 - Levels the playing field and gives the patient time to change gears.
 - Best chance to obtain financial commitment.
 - Frees up chair time.
- Focus only on the patient and their health.
- Pay attention to the patient and mirror their demeanor.
 - If they need more time for questions, take the time. If they need more detailed explanations, provide them. If they seem surprised or worried, provide empathy.
- Watch body language. Is the patient open and understanding or closed off and concerned?
- Don’t rush.
 - Patients can feel when you’re rushed and are not providing an adequate amount of time to address their questions.
- Ask questions along the way to help the patient think cognitively.
- Learn how to manage objections.
- Help the patient understand “doctor talk.”
- Be prepared to discuss their dental benefit plan, co-pay and finances.
- Be as accurate as possible. Use our dental benefit breakdown form to ensure accuracy.
- Provide the patient with a printed copy of the financial agreement with estimated co-pays or percentages.

Helpful Tools: Check out our easy-to-use [Financial Agreement and Consent Form](#) and [Dental Benefit Breakdown Form](#).

Dental Cleanings (hygienist)

- Note the area diagnosed by the doctor and reiterate to the patient the importance of completing the treatment.
 - For many patients, hearing it a third time cements the importance of completing the treatment.

□ [Communication Protocols: Improve Patient Experience and Increase Case Acceptance](#)

Think your complex restorative
procedures can't be simplified?
Think again.



The new iTero Lumina™ scanner, powered by iTero Multi-Direct Capture™ technology, is designed to quickly¹ and accurately² capture a wide range of restorative procedures in a single pass.

Discover how you can unlock
outstanding simplicity,
visit iTero.com to learn more

¹The iTero Lumina intraoral scanner is designed to enable an easier scanning experience with previous iTero™ intraoral scanners, compared to two separate imaging systems with tolerance. Available on operating at a working distance from 0-30 mm. Data on file at Align Technology, as of November 18, 2020.

²Based on custom testing conducted using ADA/ISO 13320 standard's width simulating ring distance accuracy (ring size measurement) in July 2020. Methods: a comprehensive test to evaluate full arch accuracy (good accuracy, repeatability and reproducibility of intraoral scanners as described in ADA standard ring picking, sample selection, a operators performed 10 repetitive scans with each tested scanner, sample size: 10 (good) scans for each scanner tested, tested scanners: iTero Lumina, Trios 3, Ceres 3 and NextD. Also also, results: the accuracy of iTero Lumina is significantly higher than that of all competitors, with a reduction of total error ranging from 0.1mm to 0.4mm. Accuracy was defined as the accumulated average error + and of all measurements specified in the standard. Data on file at Align Technology as of August 18, 2020.

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iTero lumina



Stanislaus Dental Society



"A Potpourri of Dentistry Pearls of the Practice"



Friday, August 22

Ron Champion, DDS

SDS Member

An Overview of Orthodontics

8:30am – 1:30pm

Papapolloni Bistro

2501 McHenry Ave.

5 CEUs

8:00am

Registration/
Full breakfast

Clarke Filippi, DDS

SDS Member

*Implant Complications and
How to Treat Them*

Christina Lee Zertuche, DDS

SDS Member

*Myofascial pain and the
Endodontic connection*



Shofu Dental Corporation



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Merrill Lynch
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Jacob Barber, DDS

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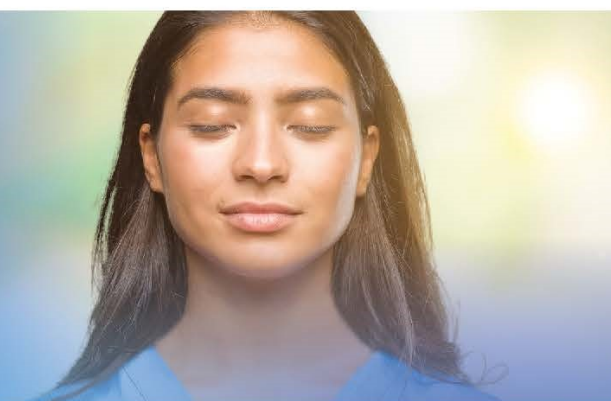
*Everyday Oral Surgery: Tips,
Tricks, and When to Refer*

Registration form, www.stanislausdental.org





WELLNESS RESOURCES FROM THE COUNCIL ON DENTAL PRACTICE



Explore **ADA.org/Wellness** for articles, courses, videos and other resources across these health and well-being areas: mental health, physical health, opioid prescribing, and pregnancy.



Well-Being Index (WBI) [ADA.org/Well-BeingIndex](https://ada.org/Well-BeingIndex)

Your health matters. The ADA licensed the Dental Well-Being Index (WBI) — the validated risk assessment tool invented by the Mayo Clinic and used by hundreds of health care organizations — for every Member. Log into your ADA account first. Then, set-up your WBI account. The WBI takes one minute to complete and you will see your own personal dashboard and resources. You can track your well-being over time.



ADA Dentist Well-Being Program Directory (updated in 2023) [ADA.org/WellnessDirectory](https://ada.org/WellnessDirectory)

This Well-Being Program Directory provides a list of healthcare professionals in each state who will serve as a point of contact and offer support during a time of need. This is part of the ADA mission to enhance the personal and professional lives of our members for the betterment of the dental team and the patients they serve.



After a Suicide Postvention Toolkit [ADA.org/Postvention](https://ada.org/Postvention)

September is national suicide prevention awareness month. *After a Suicide: A Guide for Dental Workplaces* was developed in 2023 by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the American Dental Association (ADA). This resource reflects learnings in responding to a suicide death for professional dental settings.



ADA Ergonomic Stretches [ADA.org/Stretch](https://ada.org/Stretch)

Better ergonomics can improve your practice — daily stretching and exercise, can help dental practitioners and their team enjoy long, healthy careers. Download the ADA Ergonomics Stretches infographic today, including 25 quick stretches, to keep you and your dental team healthy.



ADA Wellness Videos [ADA.org/WellnessVideos](https://ada.org/WellnessVideos)

Visit ADA's Wellness Playlist on our YouTube channel to watch new, short promotional videos on:

- ADA Dentist Well-Being Program Directory
- 2-part Resilience Webinar courses in ADA CE Online
- ADA Opioid Prescribing Resources





Member Community Spotlight

MoRo Modesto Rotary Club

Rotarian Spotlight: Bruce Valentine

With over 52 years as a dedicated Modesto Rotarian, Bruce Valentine has been a steadfast force for service, leadership, and community impact. Inspired by influential Rotarians from his youth, Bruce has spent decades contributing to both local and global initiatives—from building playgrounds in Modesto to supporting maternal health in Brazil. His Rotary journey is a testament to the power of service, fellowship, and lifelong commitment to making the world a better place.

Interview with Longtime Rotarian Bruce Valentine

1. How long have you been a Rotarian, and what first inspired you to join Rotary?
 - 52 plus years! I was inspired by the men I grew up around who were Modesto Rotarians—my second dad, Leonard Bartlett; my first boss at Valley Sporting Goods, Trevor Griffith; my pediatrician and friend, Dr. Ed (Dr. Denny) Denenholz; Mr. William (Bill) Eakin, and many others who had a lasting influence on me as I transitioned to adulthood.
2. What's one memorable project or experience with Rotary that stands out to you?
 - Internationally: A Maternal Health and Mother's Milk Bank Clinic in Monte Carlos, Brazil, and the ongoing effort to eliminate Polio from this Earth.
 - Locally: The construction of playground equipment at the YMCA, Salvation Army, Mellis Park, and Oregon Park.
3. How has being part of Rotary impacted your personal or professional life?
 - Rotary has instilled in me an outstanding Code of Ethics—The Four-Way Test and the Rotarian Code of Conduct!
4. What's something you'd say to someone considering joining Rotary?
 - It's a great opportunity to meet and work with others outside of your profession or social circle while dedicating yourself to making Modesto—and the world—a better place!
5. If you could describe Rotary in just three words, what would they be?
 - Learn. Fellowship. Service.

Rotary is about more than meetings—it's about meaningful action. If you're looking for a way to make a lasting impact while forming incredible friendships, join us in serving our community and the world!



RDA Exam Prep Course

Live Online RDA Certification Exam Bootcamp

Enhance your career by becoming a registered dental professional. Learn to perform expanded duties, boost your career opportunities, and increase your earning potential.

July 28 – October 20, 2025
Mondays 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

- 🦷 Join live online class sessions to prepare for the RDA exam.
- 🦷 Required book: California RDA General Written and Law Examination by Colleen Kirby
- 🦷 Have your study materials ready to stay focused and get the most out of class
- 🦷 Review the DBC website and complete RDA application documents.

Contact: MJC Dental Assisting Program | perezhernandezl@mjc.edu | 209-575-6063

COURSE INFORMATION

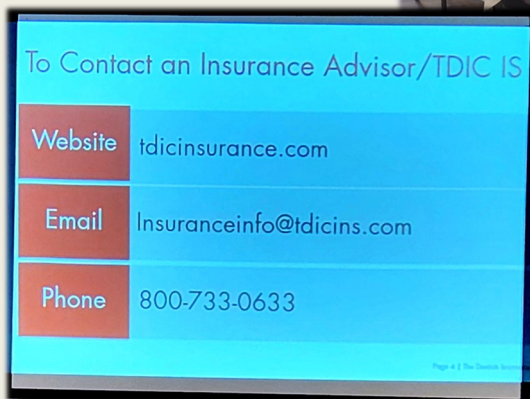
Location: Modesto Junior College, West Campus
Class fee: \$170.00 (book required but not included)
Registration Deadline: July 21, 2025

Scan to register or
visit mjc4life.org



General Membership Meeting-May

Risk Management: Essential Concepts



Keeping your team safe: How to de-escalate encounters with aggressive patients

by Mary Beth Versaci

ADA**News**

During her 25 years of practice as a periodontist, Ann Blue, D.D.S., has encountered fearful and upset patients, but she and her staff are trained to de-escalate these situations to resolve them in a calm manner.

“Managing these patients and keeping my team and other patients in the practice safe is definitely an important skill to develop,” said Dr. Blue, a member of the ADA Council on Communications.

Recent violence against dentists, including the fatal shooting of a California dentist by a former patient in February, underscores the dangers dentists may face in their workplace.

Survey data from the 2024 ADA Council on Communications Trend Report found more than half of responding ADA member dentists sometimes or often encounter aggressive patients.

The survey was conducted this spring and included responses from about 560 member dentists who are part of the Advisory Circle research panel. Generally representative of overall ADA membership, the panel is made up of members who participate in surveys typically focused on practice-related topics. The report will be published this fall.

Encounters with aggressive patients were more common among dentists younger than 35 and dentists working at federally qualified health centers and dental school clinics, according to the survey. About 30% of respondents reported they have felt their safety threatened by a patient. These instances were more common among female dentists, dentists working at FQHCs and dentists working as employees or associates at dental support organizations.

While health care workers make up 10% of the workforce, they experience 48% of nonfatal injuries caused by workplace violence, according to 2023 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The most common perpetrators of this violence against health care workers are patients, patients’ family members, visitors, colleagues and supervisors, according to the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#). Health care workers may also experience violence from someone they know personally, such as an intimate partner or family member.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act’s General Duty Clause requires employers to provide their workers with a workplace free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm. OSHA also requires employers to establish an [emergency action plan](#) for workplace emergencies such as workplace violence, natural disasters, fires and more.

For employers with more than 10 employees, the plan must be in writing, kept in the workplace and available to employees for review. An employer with 10 or fewer employees may communicate the plan orally to employees. The plan must include emergency escape procedures and route assignments, such as floor plans, workplace maps and refuge areas.

OSHA’s [Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers](#) call upon employers to establish a workplace violence prevention program as part of their overall safety and health program. The violence prevention program should have clear goals and objectives for preventing workplace violence, be suitable for the size and complexity of operations, and be adaptable to specific situations and facilities, according to the guidelines.

The guidelines encourage employers to conduct surveys to determine if employees feel threatened, solicit employee input to reduce the threat of violence, make structural and procedural changes that protect employees from enraged clients or customers, and provide training and education in the early warnings and prevention of workplace violence as part of their violence prevention program.



Dr. Blue



Dr. Dornfeld

(cont. Page 24)

OSHA is considering establishing a standard for the prevention of workplace violence in the health care and social assistance sector that would include requirements rather than guidelines for employers. A May 2023 [report](#) on the proposed standard by the Small Business Advocacy Review Panel — which includes representatives from OSHA and other federal agencies — identified dentists and dental hygienists as direct care occupations that are at risk of workplace violence.

“Sadly, our reality as dental professionals is that what should be a safe place at our office is no longer the case,” said Kami Dornfeld, D.D.S., chair of the ADA Council on Dental Practice’s Dental Team Wellness Advisory Committee. “We must pivot and provide our teams with de-escalation techniques to safely manage aggressive or upset patients and prevent workplace violence. Training on these techniques could keep the entire dental team prepared to defuse aggressive behavior through proven communication methods or other safety and security measures.”

At her practice, Dr. Blue and her team regularly practice patient management skills, including communication and conflict resolution. She offers the following advice for dealing with upset patients:

- 1. De-escalation:** Employ active listening, maintain a calm demeanor, use nonconfrontational language and acknowledge the patient’s feelings. It is important to maintain empathy and avoid reacting defensively when a patient may be accusatory.
- 2. Maintain communication:** As a team, attempt to explain diagnoses, treatment recommendations, alternative options and potential negative outcomes as clearly as possible in layman’s terms. A well-informed patient who understands what is being recommended and the possible side effects of treatment will be less likely to be upset when a negative outcome does occur.
- 3. Be observant for signs of patient agitation:** Dentists and their teams need to be able to recognize the early signs of agitation or aggression in patients. These signs may include frustrated facial expressions and demeanor, snide comments, raised voice volume, clenched fists, pacing, or threatening body language. By identifying these signs early, dental teams can attempt to intervene before the situation escalates.
- 4. Establishment of boundaries:** It is important for dental practices to have clear policies for proper professional behavior. Teams should show respect for patients and their concerns while also establishing boundaries for patients and encouraging them to maintain acceptable behavior and avoid offensive remarks.
- 5. Team collaboration:** Team members need to work together to solve problems to avoid escalation. If a situation escalates, a colleague should be nearby to help, including by contacting on-site security or law enforcement if needed. Role-playing potential conflicts can help to develop team members’ confidence in dealing with patient concerns and disruptive behavior and avoid escalation to violence.
- 6. Ability to seek assistance:** Ensure team members know it is always acceptable to ask for help if they feel overwhelmed or unsafe. Calling law enforcement may be necessary if they believe they are in danger.

“Following these steps and continuously refining your communication and conflict resolution skills will help you manage upset or aggressive patients in your practice and keep you, your team and your patients safe,” Dr. Blue said.

Reprinted from ADANews



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Breathe in, stress out: The power of diaphragmatic breathing in dentistry

By ADA [New Dentist blog](#) | April 2, 2025

Stress in dentistry is inevitable. New procedures, anxious patients and the mental load of making split-second clinical decisions can take a toll. Stress accumulates throughout the day, and without an outlet, it leads to exhaustion.

Fitness watches remind users to stand and move every hour. We need a similar system for mental health resilience. Try my solution. It is simple, effective and backed by science: diaphragmatic breathing.

This one trick can instantly reduce anxiety

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing, engages the diaphragm to take deeper, slower breaths. It directly influences the autonomic nervous system. When patients — and dentists — are anxious, the sympathetic nervous system (remember “fight, flight or freeze”) goes into overdrive, triggering shallow breathing, increased heart rate and muscle tension.

Deep breathing shifts the body toward the parasympathetic nervous system. Activating the vagus nerve lowers cortisol levels, slows the heart rate and reduces blood pressure. The downstream effects include better oxygenation, relaxed muscles and a greater sense of control over discomfort.

The mind-mouth-body connection plays a crucial role for our patients. Stress and anxiety manifest physically, even as increased pain perception. I walk each of my patients through a few deep breaths each time I administer anesthetic. Teaching patients to breathe deeply not only eases injections but also triggers positive downstream effects.

Building a habit: Breathe before you inject

The best way to build a habit is to anchor it to an existing one. Before administering an injection, I take a deep breath with my patient. This small moment of mindfulness benefits both of us. I feel calmer, and they feel more in control. Pro tip: For a double dose, you can also try a breathing break when waiting for the curing light to beep.

How to teach patients in less than 30 seconds

Walking a patient through diaphragmatic breathing is simple and requires no extra time in the schedule. As I put on my personal protective equipment and adjust the chair, I guide them through the following steps:

1. **“Get comfy and wiggle in the chair.”** Loosening up relieves tension.
2. **“Your job today is to focus on your breath. Take a big breath in, pause, then breathe out.”** Give them something simple to focus on.
3. **“This time, even slower.”** Slower breathing enhances relaxation.

By the time I am ready to begin the procedure, my patient is noticeably calmer. I feel calmer too.

Science proves this works

Diaphragmatic breathing is a proven method for reducing stress and anxiety. A quick PubMed search will reveal overwhelming evidence supporting its ability to lower cortisol levels, reduce depression and even aid in conditions like GERD and COPD. It is all connected — the mind, mouth and body.

Think fewer mental errors, improved focus and a more relaxed state of mind throughout the day.

Make this a habit and watch your stress levels drop

Some days, I struggle to find time to sip water. But there is never a day when I do not inject a patient. This technique requires no extra time and no expensive equipment. It is free, easy and immediately effective. Try it before your next procedure. You might be surprised at the results.

Find health and wellness resources at [ADA.org/wellness](https://ada.org/wellness).

Cybersecurity toolkit just for dental practices addresses major issues and trends

May 29, 2025



Reprinted with permission from California Dental Association

CDA members can use the new guidance, checklists and incident response plan to mitigate risk

Dental practice owners may assume that cyber criminals focus on larger corporate targets in finance and manufacturing. The numbers, however, tell a different story. Currently, the health care sector accounts for 32% of all recorded data breaches, which is almost double the number of breaches occurring in the financial and manufacturing sectors, according to a [2024 report](#) issued by IBM and the Ponemon Institute.

And cyber incidents are not only happening more frequently but are also becoming more expensive. Reports of health care data breaches increased by 89% between 2019 and 2023 — with the average cost of a health care data breach reaching \$9.8 million in 2024.

"It doesn't matter how large or small your dental practice is," said Teresa Pichay, CDA's regulatory compliance analyst. "If you have a vulnerability in your system and the bad actors find it, whether it's a human or technical vulnerability, they will take advantage of it."

Pichay has answered CDA members' questions about HIPAA, cyber incident response and other regulatory compliance matters for more than 29 years. She and CDA's team of expert analysts also create content and educational programs specifically for dentists based on dentistry news and trends and their conversations with member dentists.

The [Cybersecurity Toolkit](#), published May 14, is the newest resource.

Cybersecurity toolkit for dental practices: Prepare, respond, recover

"Cybersecurity isn't often the first thing on a dentist's mind when running a practice, but ignoring it can lead to HIPAA violations, ransomware attacks, losing access to patient records and other serious problems," Pichay said. "The good news is that you don't need to be a security expert to protect your practice."

The Cybersecurity Toolkit includes the following practical checklists, response plans and step-by-step guidance to help safeguard patient data and keep the dental practice up and running:

- Top 5 Cybersecurity Mistakes Small Dental Practices Make (and How to Fix Them)
- Are Your Vendors Putting Your Practice at Risk?
- How to Choose a Cybersecurity-Savvy IT Provider for Your Dental Practice
- Cyber Incident Response Steps
- What To Do After a Cyber Incident

Ask vendors and potential IT partners the right questions

Are Your Vendors Putting Your Practice at Risk? provides a checklist of questions dentists should ask their IT providers, billing services and other vendors to evaluate the potential risks they pose.

"Although you can't prevent every risk, you can ask smart questions, set clear expectations and choose vendors that take your patients' data as seriously as you do," Pichay stressed.

Similarly, when choosing an IT partner, dentists can ask the right questions to ensure the provider understands the dental practice's unique cybersecurity needs. CDA's resource provides examples of what a good answer might sound like.

Cyber Incident Response Steps includes a response plan that practice owners can copy and distribute to their team members, and What To Do After a Cyber Incident comes with a recovery checklist.

CDA member-dentists can sign into their accounts to start using the [Cybersecurity Toolkit](#).

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Calendar 2025

August

22
Friday
CE—Pearls of the Practice
Papapolloni Bistro—8:00am-1:30pm

September

1
Monday
Labor Day
Office closed

9
Tuesday
SDS Board of Directors Meeting
SMS board room—6:00pm

October

13
Monday
Columbus Day
Office closed

17
Friday
CE-TBA
Papapolloni Bistro—8:00am-1:30pm

November

4
Tuesday
SDS Board of Directors Meeting
Location TBD—6:00pm

11
Tuesday
Veterans Day
Office closed

13
Thursday
General Membership/Member Mixer+1
Skewers—6:00pm-9:00pm

20-22
Thurs-Sat
House of Delegates
Sacramento—office closed

27-28
Thurs-Fri
Thanksgiving
Office closed

December

24-Jan. 2
Winter Holiday—(office closed)



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Help is one call away.

When you need an advocate for your physical, mental or emotional health, confidential assistance and peer-to-peer support are available 24/7.

CDA's Wellness Program is a member benefit that supports and advocates for the mental, emotional, and physical wellness of dental professionals and their families. The Wellness Program is led by compassionate volunteer members and recovering dentists with the assistance of dental society staff and allied health professionals.

This trusted resource extends help in a variety of ways, offering support to family members of impaired individuals and providing assistance following diagnosis and/or treatment.

Whether your wellness challenge is anxiety, depression, mental illness, physical illness or substance dependence, our volunteer members are available around the clock to offer confidential peer-to-peer support while you navigate your wellness journey.

As a dentist, you likely balance many roles: healthcare provider, team leader, employer and colleague. Work-related stress can result in burnout, putting you at risk for depression. Some signs that you may need support to regain balance are:

- Weight loss or gain
- Social isolation
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide

For more information regarding the Wellness Program or for a confidential referral, please contact your local dental society or a Wellness Committee near you:

Visit cda.org/wellness-program to learn more.

Northern California
530.898.0821

San Francisco/Bay Area
209.601.4410

Central California
916.947.5676

Southern California
310.487.5040

San Diego
562.832.2489

California Dental Association
1201 K Street, 14th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
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Resources for Managing the Dental Team

Guidelines for Practice Success



We have compiled online resources for Guidelines for Practice Success, Managing the Dental Team to make it easier for you to locate the additional information, samples, and resources discussed throughout the module.

[Background checks](#) [PDF]

[Benefits primer](#) [PDF]

[Checklist policy manual](#) [PDF]

[Checklist retention schedule](#) [PDF]

[Compensation analysis](#) [PDF]

[Dental assistant](#) [PDF]

[Dental hygienist](#) [PDF]

[Job analysis worksheet](#) [PDF]

[Maternity leave](#) [PDF]

[New hire checklist](#) [PDF]

[New hire checklist 2](#) [PDF]

[Office manager](#) [PDF]

[Professional personal references](#) [PDF]

[Reference form](#) [PDF]

[Salary reviews](#) [PDF]

[Staff training topics](#) [PDF]

[Telephone screening](#) [PDF]

[Tips manage all employees](#) [PDF]

[Tips manage new employees](#) [PDF]

[Waiver background check](#) [PDF]

View the full content of the [Guidelines for Practice Success](#)

Practice Support Team

When you need support navigating the business side of dentistry, CDA's experienced analysts can answer your questions about practice management, dental benefit plans, employment practices and regulatory compliance. Meet the team who have created a full library of online resources, speak on timely topics and provide one-on-one guidance by email and phone.



Ann Milar—*Director, Practice Support* ann.milar@cda.org [916.554.7324](tel:916.554.7324)

Ann provides strategic direction for Practice Support's resources and initiatives while leading the team of expert analysts. She is also responsible for identifying and analyzing emerging issues for policy development and implementation on behalf of CDA's 27,000 member dentists. Ann has worked with CDA for more than 15 years and her health care experience spans 20 years of working with associations, health plans and advocacy organizations.



Jenell Bell—*Associate Analyst* Jenell.bell@cda.org [916.554.4986](tel:916.554.4986)

Jenell has worked in the dental industry for over nine years, which has included managing multiple practices. Jenell uses her experience and passion for customer service to assist CDA members in the areas of compliance and employment.



Katie Fornelli—*Senior Practice Management Analyst* katie.fornelli@cda.org [916.554.5308](tel:916.554.5308)

Katie specializes in dental practice management and marketing. For more than 18 years, she's worked with dentists and their teams in areas such as scheduling, collections, front office systems, case presentation, patient management, practice transitions, and dental practice marketing.



Lisa Greer, *Dental Benefits Analyst* lisa.greer@cda.org [916.554.5953](tel:916.554.5953)

Lisa specializes in several aspects of dentistry, including working with dental benefit plans, dental billing, accounts receivable, community marketing, human resources, practice management and regulatory compliance. As a Practice Analyst, she brings more than 20 years of dental industry experience to CDA, including having served as a regional collections specialist for a dental support organization that supported 70-plus California offices.



Matthew Nelson, *Practice Analyst* matthew.nelson@cda.org [916.554.4940](tel:916.554.4940)

With over seven years of experience as an office manager, dental consultant and CDA analyst, Matt specializes in all areas of practice management, including leadership, practice systems, dental billing, human resources and practice transitions.



Michelle Coker, PHR, PHRca, *Employment Practices Analyst* michelle.coker@cda.org [916.554.4968](tel:916.554.4968)

As a certified employment law expert, Michelle specializes in assisting members with employment practices, including employee management, policy development and employment law compliance. Her time spent in private practice as an office manager gives her a unique view into the dynamics of a dental practice. Since joining CDA in 2006, Michelle has utilized over three decades of dental experience to support dentists and their practices.



Miguel Mariona, *Analyst, Dental Benefits and Practice Management* miguel.mariona@cda.org [916.554.4936](tel:916.554.4936)

Miguel has over 10 years of dental experience from working with dental benefit plans in various roles, including customer service and provider relations, as well as managing a dental practice. Miguel's passion for providing exceptional service is evident in his commitment to CDA members when addressing their dental benefit and practice management challenges.



Teresa Pichay, CHPC, *Senior Regulatory Compliance Analyst* teresa.pichay@cda.org [916.554.5990](tel:916.554.5990)

Teresa specializes in regulatory compliance, including information verification, documentation strategies and referral to legal references. For more than 26 years, she's worked with CDA members in the areas of occupational and environmental safety and health, HIPAA, California Dental Practice Act and other business regulations.




Tiffany Glass, *Project Resource Coordinator* tiffany.glass@cda.org [916.554.4914](tel:916.554.4914)

As the project resource coordinator, Tiffany brings a positive and optimistic attitude while delivering and maintaining a high level of service and support to CDA members and CDA member-clients through Practice Support and its supporting website. She has over 10 years of experience working in marketing, specializing in customer care.

Welcome New Members!



Unatti Doshi, DDS General Dentist No practice address UOP S.F. '06	Ivan Georgese, DDS General Dentist Practice located in Stockton Universidad De La Salle '24	Wilfred Gharoonjenizeh, DMD General Dentist No practice address UT- Roseman Uvsty'25
Ruchi Goyal, DDS General Dentist No practice address Temple Uvsty School of Dentistry '20	Syed Hyder, DDS General Dentist Family & Kids Dental 1207 14th St.—Modesto Universidad De La Salle '16	Janice Kaeley, DDS General Dentist Returning dentist 1065 Colorado Ave Ste B Turlock Indiana University '11
Merlyn Molina Falco, DDS General Dentist No practice address Univ del Bajio A C '24	Muhammad Mumtax, DDS General Dentist No practice address Universidad De La Salle '25	

SDS Members by the Number

Total: 276

Market Share: 84.6%

(Total # of dentists in Stanislaus County who are members of the tripartite (ADA, CDA, SDS))

Active – 183

(Recent graduate-Reduced dues members)

RD1 – 8 / RD2 – 6 / RD3 – 11 / Post-Grad - 1

Life Active – 23 / Life Retired – 36

Retired – 2 / Permanently disabled - 1

Non-members in county - 49