

American Dental Association

**ADACommons**

---

[ADA News Releases](#)

[ADA Archives](#)

---

2016

## Statement on Enlisting Dentists to Address Opioid Misuse, Abuse and Diversion

American Dental Association

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.ada.org/newsreleases>



Part of the [Business and Corporate Communications Commons](#), [Dentistry Commons](#), and the [History of Science, Technology, and Medicine Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

American Dental Association, "Statement on Enlisting Dentists to Address Opioid Misuse, Abuse and Diversion" (2016). *ADA News Releases*. 86.

<https://commons.ada.org/newsreleases/86>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the ADA Archives at ADACommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in ADA News Releases by an authorized administrator of ADACommons. For more information, please contact [commons@ada.org](mailto:commons@ada.org).

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Robert Raible  
[raibler@ada.org](mailto:raibler@ada.org)  
202-789-5166

**Statement on Enlisting Dentists to Address Opioid Misuse, Abuse and Diversion**

Washington, D.C., May 12, 2016—The American Dental Association applauds Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) for joining the fight against the over-prescription and abuse of opioid painkillers. The ADA agrees with Sen. Durbin that health care professional organizations have a special role to play in addressing the problem.

In fact, ever since the *Journal of the American Dental Association* published a [cover story](#) in 2011 about the dentist's role in preventing prescription opioid abuse, the ADA has worked on the issue, beginning in earnest that same year when approached by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Since that time, the Association has taken a number of steps to ensure that its members are aware of the potential for opioid addiction and that they have the tools to prevent it.

- **Continuing education.** For years, the ADA has offered in-person and online continuing education courses to help dentists better recognize signs of opioid abuse. The courses address how to briefly counsel and refer patients who may be abusing opioids for appropriate treatment.

Every dentist that attended the Association's 2015 Conference on Dentist Health and Wellness completed a continuing education course on opioid prescribing. And the opioid prescribing courses offered the Association's 2015 annual dental meeting completely sold out.

The ADA is finalizing the content for its next round of online courses, which are planned for August and September.

- **Guidelines.** In May 2015, the ADA published an easy-to-use reference manual, "Practical Guide to Substance Use Disorders and Safe Prescribing," that includes techniques dentists can use to identify and respond to suspicious drug-seeking behaviors, including after-hours requests for prescription drugs.

In addition, the Association is updating its *Guideline on the Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Dental Pain*. The guideline will help dentists establish a more appropriate balance between the need to use opioids for effective pain management and their abuse potential. It will also help dental schools develop curriculum for drug abuse prevention, and help state dental societies and state boards of dentistry as they establish position papers.

- **AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse.** The ADA joined the American Medical Association Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse last year. The mission of this coalition of health professional organizations is to reverse the nation's opioid epidemic.

The coalition's initial goals are to improve the design and operation of prescription drug monitoring programs, increase the number of prescribers registered with those programs, and increase the number of health professionals who complete training in model opioid prescribing practices.

- **Medicine Abuse Project.** The ADA has been a member of the Medicine Abuse Project since 2015. This initiative of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America raises awareness of prescription drug abuse and enlists dentists in the fight against it.
- **National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative.** The ADA began promoting the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative in 2012. The Association has used the campaign to remind dentists to counsel patients on how to safely secure and dispose of unused medications at home, and encourage patients to attend local Take-Back events.
- **National Recovery Month.** The ADA has been a proponent of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Recovery Month since 2004. The ADA uses the campaign to help its members to identify their community's substance abuse treatment resources and learn how to make referrals when indicated.
- **White House Partnership to Address Prescription Drug Abuse.** The ADA last year entered a strategic partnership with the White House to help prevent opioid drug-related overdoses and deaths. The Association pledged to seek an increase in the number of dentists completing its continuing education webinars (certified by the ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program) on responsible opioid prescribing. The ADA also pledged to seek an increase in the number of dentists who are registered with their state's prescription drug monitoring program (where available).

For years, the ADA has leveraged all of these programs and campaigns to encourage dentists to refresh their knowledge about how to safely prescribe opioid pain medication. In addition, the ADA has worked hard to ensure that its members are aware of modern drug-seeking behavior and to help those patients who may be addicted to opioid painkillers.

Find out more at [ADA.org/opioids](http://ADA.org/opioids).

###

#### **About the American Dental Association**

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 159,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association* (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [www.MouthHealthy.org](http://www.MouthHealthy.org).