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## ADA, White House Partner on Opioid Abuse Prevention

American Dental Association

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# News Releases

## ADA, White House Partner on Opioid Abuse Prevention Initiative

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**Washington, D.C.** —The American Dental Association today announced it is entering a strategic partnership with the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services to help prevent opioid drug-related overdoses and deaths. The partnership will complement the work of the American Medical Association Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse, which the ADA joined in August.

The strategic partnership will bring executive branch resources to the task force, whose first priority is to increase the number of health care providers registered with their state-based prescription drug monitoring programs.

When taken as prescribed for short periods of time under the care of a medical professional, opioids are safe to use. Unfortunately, opioid pain medications, such as hydrocodone and oxycodone, have become a leading source of drug abuse among teens and young adults. As the fifth largest health care specialty group prescribing these painkilling medications, dentists have a role to play in preventing their diversion, misuse, and abuse.

Organized dentistry works to ensure that both patients and dentists are aware of the potential drawbacks of opioid use.

As part of its responsibility in combating the dangers of opioid misuse, the ADA has pledged to continue engaging in the following activities:

- Prescriber education and training. The ADA encourages dentists—members and nonmembers alike—to take advantage of its free continuing education webinars on model opioid prescribing. The training modules include helping dentists recognize when a patient may be seeking opioids for non-medical purposes, and knowing how to approach and refer them for appropriate treatment. Other

coursework is also available. Further, the ADA believes that dental schools should include appropriate education in addictive disease and pain management as part of the core curricula.

- Prescription drug monitoring. The ADA asks dentists to register with their state prescription drug monitoring program, if available. Dentists can leverage these programs to assess whether a patient may be “doctor shopping.” The ADA also encourages dentists who prescribe opioids for treatment of dental pain to periodically review their compliance with Drug Enforcement Administration recommendations and regulations.
- Professional and patient awareness. The ADA will continue to use its various member outreach tools to raise awareness about the problems associated with opioid abuse, and to share actions dentists can take to help. The Association also works with federal officials in alerting patients about the proper disposal of opioid drugs no longer needed.

Dentists who practice in good faith and who use professional judgment regarding the prescription of opioids for the treatment of pain should not be held responsible for the willful and deceptive behavior of patients who successfully obtain opioids for non-dental purposes.

More information about prescribed opioid use in dentistry is available at [ADA.org/rxabuse](http://ADA.org/rxabuse).

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## About the ADA

*The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 158,000 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 [ADA.org](http://ADA.org). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](http://MouthHealthy.org)*

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