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MDA at Your Service: How Can I Choose the Right Associate Position?

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By MDA Staff with Kristin Johnson, DDS
Chair, MDA Committee on Membership

How Can I Choose the Right Associate Position?

Question: I've been offered two associate positions and want to make sure I'm making the right choice. What does the MDA recommend? Is

there an attorney who can review the contracts for me?

Answer: Great question. The MDA encourages members to have employment contracts reviewed by an attorney familiar with dentistry and health care law to ensure they're receiving the most accurate and honest view of the contract. As an MDA member, you're eligible for a 10% discount with Kerr-Russell Attorneys and Counselors. Contact Dan Schulte at 313-961-0200, or visit kerr-russell.com to learn more. Additionally, the ADA has a set of associate contract guidelines that can assist you in your review. If you'd like a copy of the guidelines you can contact the ADA or email membership@michigandental.org.

Question: My office manager mentioned I should let the MDA know about some recent practice/life changes I've experienced. What do I need to report to the MDA?

Answer: It is helpful to update the MDA of any address changes, both home or practice, as well as if you've hired an associate or sold your practice. If you have a new preferred email address, let the MDA know as well. The information you provide can help the MDA assist you. The MDA and ADA share the same membership database, so you only have to update the information once. Email membership@michigandental.org with updates or questions.

Question: I'm launching a new practice website and need the MDA logo to show that I'm a member. How can I get a file with the logo?

Answer: The logo is available for download by filling out a simple agreement on the MDA website, located at www.michigandental.org/Member-Logo/. The MDA also offers social media content and resources you can use to promote your practice. Visit michigandental.org/Care-and-Share.

Question: I searched for my name on the MDA's Find a Dentist page at smilemichigan.com and can't find my profile! How can I get my profile to show up?

Answer: Profile information is pulled directly from the ADA's Find-a-Dentist tool and your ADA profile. To create or update your profile, visit ada.org/UpdateNow or call the ADA Member Service Center at 800-621-8099. The MDA's Find A Dentist search page receives more than 10,000 visitors per month. If you're updating your profile, make sure to complete as much information as possible to help patients select you as their dentist. And don't forget your photo: Profiles with photos receive 11 times more clicks than profiles without photos.

Question: I have a patient who is very difficult to deal with. He is rude to my employees and does not always follow my treatment recommendations. How do I end my relationship with him?

Answer: Once a dentist-patient relationship is established, a dentist is under both an ethical and legal obligation to provide services until the relationship is properly ended. The relationship may be ended by consent of the patient and dentist; revoked by the patient by changing or dismissing the dentist; ended in the event the dentist's services are no longer needed; or the dentist may unilaterally terminate the relationship.

The best advice is to be proactive. If you have decided to terminate a problem patient, do it before the patient needs a filling, a crown, is having pain needing to be diagnosed, or some other issue. Once the problem patient comes to you with an emergency or you undertake a course of treatment, you will be at risk of an abandonment claim if you do not respond to the emergency or complete the course of treatment. The best time to terminate the dentist-patient relationship is when no services are needed, or the only services needed are routine dental care.

More information about terminating the dentist-patient relationship can be found on the MDA website at michigandental.org/Legal-Services. ●