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# How MDA Advocacy Saves You Money — and More



By Michelle C. Dziurgot, DDS  
Editor-in-chief

**W**hat is advocacy? It is public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy. And here's a question we often hear from members: How does the dental advocacy our MDA puts into motion year-in and year-out affect our dental office environment? And how does it affect how we will practice for years to come?

Well, here are some answers. For example, last month a bill was introduced in the Michigan House that requires an insurance company to offer one form of payment ensuring that a dentist gets 100% of the allowable amount for a service. Our members have complained that they receive virtual credit cards that charge a fee when they cash the card. This legislation would fix this growing problem (see Dr. Danny Miller's article on Page 42 of this issue for more about this bill). This legislation will save you money.

And then there's the issue of network leasing. In 2023 the MDA secured passage of a new law that requires insurance companies that lease networks to inform a dentist when their network is leased. The new law also allows the dentist not to participate with the new insurance company. This prevents the dentist from potentially getting stuck with a lower fee schedule that is different from what they originally accepted. Again, this could save you money.

Need more examples? Here are some other pocket-book issues that the MDA advocacy team has tackled on your behalf:

- The MDA was successful in eliminating a state tax on dental prosthetics — a tax that would have cost the average dental office about \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year! Be glad you do not have to pay that!

- During the COVID-19 pandemic the dental profession was hit hard. We all know that. But did you know that the MDA worked with state government to get dental offices reopened sooner than some in government wanted? Yes, *sooner*. This was done in a safe manner and saved dentists from losing even more production. Then,

the MDA was successful in getting dental professionals to the top of the list for COVID-19 vaccinations. In many other states, dentists were not able to get vaccinated until much later.

- Also, the MDA got a law passed that regulated mobile dental operations. The problem this addressed was mobile operators who went into areas and cherry-picked patients with good insurance, had the patient use the benefit, and then moved on. The patient would then go to a local dentist for follow-up care, but the dental benefits were used up. This MDA-supported law changed that.

- The MDA is constantly on the watch for regulations that could negatively impact dental offices. An example of this is when the MDA stopped a rule from going into effect that would have eliminated "assignment" under delegation of duties. If this had happened, there would have been no procedures that could be performed without a dentist being physically present in the office.

- A more-recent example is the change in the requirements to replace sharps containers. Now, instead of containers needing to be replaced every 90 days, whether they are full or not, the new law allows a sharps container to remain in place up to 18 months as long as it is less than three-quarters full (see last month's *Journal*, Page 6, for details).

The bottom line? *You* benefit from MDA advocacy. It affects how you practice every day. It saves you money. It assists your daily life as a dentist in many ways. Without it, your practice environment would be much different.

MDA advocacy is worth supporting. Please read the articles in this issue, become familiar with the issues before us, and support MDA advocacy with your involvement and with a donation to MDA Dental PAC. And if you have not done so already, sign up for MDA Legislative Text Alerts. Text MDA to 52886.

Let's all support our team — the MDA advocacy team! ●