



American Dental Association  
www.ada.org

### **ADA Statement on Dentist Health and Wellness**

To preserve the quality of their performance and advance the welfare of patients, dentists are encouraged to maintain their health and wellness, construed broadly as preventing or treating acute or chronic diseases, including mental illness, addictive disorders, disabilities and occupational stress. When health or wellness is compromised, so may be the safety and effectiveness of the dental care provided. When failing physical or mental health reaches the point of interfering with a dentist's ability to engage safely in professional activities, the dentist is said to be impaired.

In addition to maintaining healthy lifestyle habits, every dentist is encouraged to have a personal physician whose objectivity is not compromised. Impaired dentists whose health or wellness is compromised are urged to take measures to mitigate the problem, seek appropriate help as necessary and engage in an honest self-assessment of their ability to continue practicing.

Dentists are encouraged to participate in the ADA's Health Screening Program when they attend annual session, both to assist them in monitoring key indicators of personal health and to contribute to the body of knowledge about dentist health and well-being.

Dentists are strongly encouraged to have adequate disability and overhead protection insurance coverage which they review on a regular basis.

The ADA and/or its constituent and component societies, as appropriate, are encouraged to assist their members in being able to provide safe and effective care by:

- promoting health and wellness among dentists
- supporting peers in identifying dentists in need of help
- intervening promptly when the health or wellness of a colleague appears to have become compromised, including the offer of encouragement, coverage or referral to a dentist well-being program
- encouraging the development of mutual aid agreements among dentists, for practice coverage in the event of serious illness
- establishing or cooperating with dentist (or multidisciplinary) well-being programs that provide a supportive environment to maintain and restore health and wellness
- establishing mechanisms to assure that impaired dentists promptly cease practice
- reporting impaired dentists who continue to practice, despite reasonable offers of assistance, to appropriate bodies as required by law and/or ethical obligations
- supporting recovered colleagues when they resume patient care