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Dear Colleague:

Since the last ADA Update, you've received three e-Grams on ADA activities in response to **Hurricane Katrina**. As time passes, our level of hurricane relief activity has diminished somewhat, but we're still very engaged in relief and probably will be for some time. The number-one value in the ADA Staff Core Precepts reads, "Members are the Purpose of Our Work," and that's taken very seriously. Please see [ADA.org](#) for information on disaster relief grants and other hurricane-related news. The ADA Foundation has raised an amazing \$1.3 million for hurricane relief so far, and disaster assistance grants totaling \$1 million already have been disbursed. We thank all dental team members who have generously supported our involvement in relief activities, whether financially, as volunteers or otherwise.

Don't forget registration for **Give Kids A Smile®** 2006 opened Oct. 1 on [ADA.org](#). Sixty programs have already registered! Registrants also can request free product. Crest Healthy Smiles again will offer product samples (beginning Oct. 6), and Sullivan-Schein will provide large packages of professional products for participating programs. Products can be requested until Dec. 1. Next year's event is Feb. 3.

Connecticut's top environmental official ruled last month that dentists can continue to use **amalgam**. Anti-amalgamists had argued that a 2002 mercury reduction law effectively banned amalgam, and a Zogby public opinion poll found a large majority of residents favored a ban. Environmental groups

intend to challenge the ruling. The ADA and the Connecticut State Dental Society worked together to protect dentists' right to use amalgam, and we will continue to be vigilant in Connecticut and also work with state dental societies in other states where similar anti-amalgam advocacy strategies might be used in 2006.

Consumers for Dental Choice, a group working to **ban dental amalgam**, is organizing a "National Mercury Amalgam Awareness Week" Oct. 3–10, coinciding with the ADA Annual Session. The group plans two large events, one in Philadelphia Oct. 7 and another in Washington, DC, Oct. 6. ADA staff, with the Pennsylvania Dental Assn. and DC Dental Society, will have press materials for reporters if the event draws media attention. We've also taken steps to increase security at Session, although we expect this to be a quiet protest.

The American Assn. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons last month announced research on whether **retained wisdom teeth** increase the risk of other health problems. The ADA reviewed the information and while this preliminary research suggests those who keep their wisdom teeth might be more likely to develop periodontal disease in that area of the mouth, it's premature to speculate that the periodontal disease might lead to other health problems. The ADA believes the issue needs more study and agrees with AAOMS that no changes in practice recommendations on wisdom teeth are called for at this time. Our press statement is on [ADA.org](http://ADA.org), and for more information you can visit the [AAOMS Web site](http://AAOMS Web site). The announcement drew good media coverage, and the [Washington Post's](http://Washington Post's) is online. We've also posted information in our new "Science in the News" section on [ADA.org](http://ADA.org) to help members address the issue if patients ask about it.

The ADA recently approved guidelines on **amalgam accumulations** in dental office plumbing. These complement existing ADA [BMPs](http://ADA.org) for amalgam waste. Less than 1% of mercury released into the environment comes from amalgam, and even this amount isn't methylmercury, the form of particular environmental concern. Nevertheless, dentists have found it prudent to limit release of any dental amalgam waste to the environment when feasible. When there's a need for plumbing work or other activities that might disturb amalgam waste adhering to the inside of pipes, these guidelines offer simple steps to address potential health or environmental issues. The plumbing guidelines are posted on [ADA.org](http://ADA.org).

A group of unions representing some EPA employees has asked the agency to curtail **community water fluoridation**, and we've strongly objected. The unions rely on a single, unpublished doctoral thesis to support claims to a link between fluoridation and a rare form of cancer. The ADA wrote EPA's Assistant Administrator for Water and cited the full range of scientific studies supporting the safety and efficacy of fluoridation. Our letter asks EPA to make clear to the public that the unions' position doesn't reflect EPA policy. A copy of the letter is on [ADA.org](http://ADA.org). The letter has already been helpful in one local community's effort to address concerns raised by anti-fluoridationists, and we encourage you to read it, and the other fluoridation resources on [ADA.org](http://ADA.org) that will be helpful in addressing concerns raised by your patients, community leaders and others.

The federal government now reimburses participating Medicare physicians, dentists and other qualified providers for **smoking cessation counseling**. But the program isn't simple and appropriate training is required. Medicare beneficiaries who smoke need to be diagnosed with a disease or adverse health effect linked to tobacco use, and different levels of counseling and billing codes are involved. For details see the [HHS website](http://HHS website).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently has released its 2005 **National Compensation Survey**, which contains a lot of interesting information on benefits and wages, some broken down by profession. A recent article on the survey on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* reported on the survey and included a chart showing wage gains and losses (adjusted for inflation) over the past five years for 22 professions. Of the four losing professions highlighted, dental hygienists are shown having a 7.5% real wage loss. The ADA Survey Center notes that the survey highlights salaries and doesn't take into account that dental hygienists are frequently paid using a combination of salary and commission. Based on our analysis of wage data, we believe dental hygienists' real income is rising, not falling.

An ADA video, "**Effective Infection Control**," has won the prestigious 2005 Freddie Award first prize from the International Health & Medical Media Awards in the Dentistry category. Our entry went through a rigorous multi-level judging process, competing against many high-quality entries, including national and TV health programs. The award will be presented for broadcast at a ceremony Nov. 4 in New York City. The video is a comprehensive 60-minute program for training staff in infection control procedures. The video or DVD, both with workbook, can be ordered from the [ADA Product Catalog](#). The package includes self-assessment checklists, goal setting worksheets and unit review questions for eight hours of CE credit.

Slightly more than half of dentists believe there's not an adequate supply of **dental hygienists** in their area according to a new survey published by the ADA Health Policy Resources Center. According to the *Workforce Needs Assessment Survey* report, 51.9% of responding dentists thought there wasn't an adequate supply of hygienists in their area, with 75.9% of dentists in the New England states reaching that conclusion. The report provides state-by-state analysis of information on hygienists, including work hours, current openings for hygienists, benefits offered to hygienists and reasons for a shortage. The report (catalog number 5WNH) can be ordered from the Survey Center (2568) for \$50 for members, \$75 for nonmembers and \$150 for commercial firms plus shipping and handling.

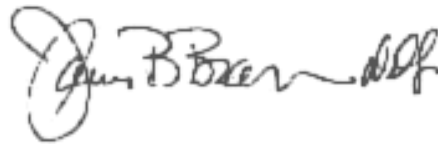
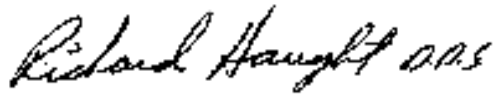
The ADA Foundation is looking for innovative ideas to strengthen our **dental education system** and will award up to \$25,000 in unrestricted grants up to a total of \$150,000. Dental schools and nonprofit or publicly funded organizations applying should outline their ideas for projects and programs addressing new teacher training models, new faculty practice models, incentives or recognition for teachers, reformed business or curriculum structure, innovative faculty recruitment, reformed business infrastructures that enhance delivery of care, pooling of various resources among schools or other institutions and addressing financial problems of renewed capital for schools and high student indebtedness. Limited to 10 pages, applications should describe ideas for projects or programs, challenges addressed and resources needed to implement ideas. Grants are unrestricted so organizations with winning submissions may use the grant money as they see fit. Deadline for all submissions is Nov. 1. For more information and a grant application, visit [ADA.org](#).

The current issue of the ADA **Legal Adviser** is available on [ADA.org](#). This issue includes articles on piercing the corporate veil, health care directives, embezzlement from dental offices and HIPAA developments. In addition, Legal Briefs reviews some recent court decisions.

ADA Member Advantage has launched a new endorsement of staff apparel from **Lands' End Business Outfitters**. Lands' End logo'd clothing can help ADA members create a professional image among their staff and increase consumer brand awareness for dental practices. Lands' End representatives will help dentists create a unique embroidery logo. Members save 10% on products, logo application fees and gift cards. Gift cards can be used as incentives and to purchase Lands' End

consumer merchandise. For more information call 800-990-5407 or visit <http://ada.landsend.com>.

Sincerely,



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president

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**ADA**. Update

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