

ADA News

ADA New Dentist News

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Getting to Know You



Dr. Brianna Hillier, a general dentist in Elfrida, Arizona, and her husband Ryan Catlett pose for a photo at the Grand Canyon National Park.

Why dentistry?

I knew I wanted to be a health care provider from a young age. Dentistry offers the opportunity to interact with multiple disciplines, flexible schedules and several types of people and patients. It doesn't matter what you do in life as long as you do it with passion.

Why are you an ADA member?

Organized dentistry is a major means of having our dental voices heard. The networking opportunities are invaluable; in just three years, I have met dentists both new and experienced and have established lifelong friendships.

What has been the best time of your career so far?

Working in a federally qualified health center in southeastern Arizona has expanded my exposure to so much more than I feel private practice could. The ability to provide health care should not be based on a financial incentive, and to see some of these people struggling and experiencing setbacks I'll never know ... Putting a smile on their faces is all the motivation I need to show up to work each day.

When I'm not practicing, I'm:

Spending time outdoors, camping, hiking and skiing. I'm also a crossword-aholic.

One fun fact about me:

I love visiting our national parks and monuments. I bring my national parks passport with me on every vacation and hope to see all of them throughout my lifetime. #nerdalert

Buyer beware: Gray market product checklist

In light of concerns about the effectiveness and safety of dental products sold on the gray market, it's imperative dentists and their team members be cognizant of what they are purchasing and from whom.

The term "gray market" is a generic term that primarily refers to products that are traded or sold outside of the manufacturer's authorized distribution channels. It's different than the black market, where products are illegally manufactured or illegally sold.

Selling or purchasing products on the gray market isn't necessarily illegal, but purchasers may not be getting what they paid for. For example, a supplier may buy products

intended for a foreign market and then sell the product in the U.S., where it may or may not comply with U.S. laws or regulations.

Here's a checklist of what to keep in mind before purchasing a product:

- **Be cost conscious** but keep in mind that cheaper is not always better. If a product is half the price than what a legitimate dealer is selling it for, that may be a red flag that it's a gray market product.
- **Call the manufacturer.** They will provide information about the batch number you have in your hands and clarify any concerns.
- **Go online.** See what others are saying about the product and

read Internet reviews. Google the company to see if there have been or are any pending lawsuits against it. Try to find customer complaints through the Better Business Bureau or another online forum.

- **Talk to your peers** and other respected dental suppliers. Ask what they use and if they're satisfied.
- **Look to endorsements** from your local or state dental society or the ADA. They've already done the homework for you and sometimes offer preferred pricing for members.
- **See if the product has the ADA Seal of Acceptance.** Products with the ADA Seal have gone through a rigorous, independent, scientific

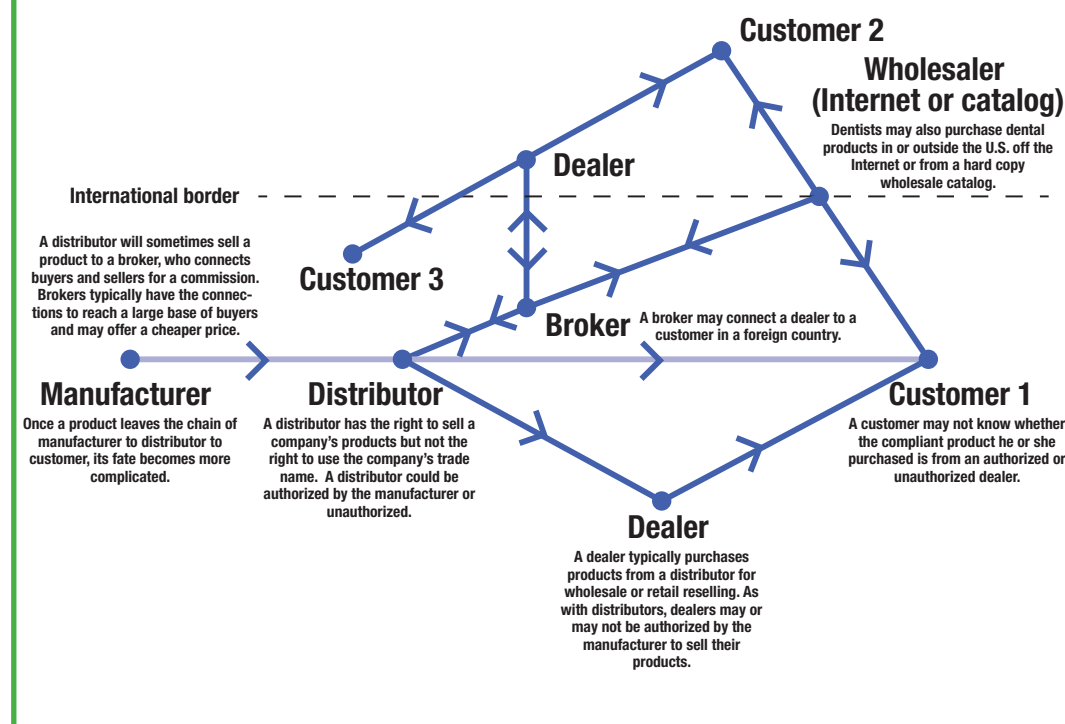
review by the ADA Council on Scientific Affairs to ensure the products are safe and effective for their intended use.

- **Purchase from a well-known, authorized distributor over a third-party.** The Dental Trade Alliance recommends dentists ask the distributor if they are an authorized distributor for any particular manufacturer and their brand.

- **Purchase products that have met the safety regulations** set forth by the Food and Drug Administration.

- **Check out the ADA Professional Product Review** to see if the product has been evaluated. Visit ADA.org/ppr for more information.

Potential gray market pathways



The path a dental product takes from the manufacturer to the customer should ideally be a straight line. But when third or fourth or even fifth parties get involved, the products the customers receive may not be what they thought they were purchasing. At the very least, the lines are blurred as to whether a customer is receiving the exact product ordered. Dentists may purchase products from dealers, brokers, distributors, off the Internet and even overseas. Not every product purchased through these avenues is a noncompliant one but they're all possible pathways for gray market items.

Life as a new dentist – let's talk about it

Want to know more about life as an associate? Curious about a particular GPR program? Check out the blog *New Dentist Now*.

Brought to you by the New Dentist Committee of the American Dental Association, the blog features resources for new dentists and dental students.

New Dentist Now

Visit newdentistblog.ADA.org.

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How to fight fraud in your dental office

As a new dentist, there are plenty of issues to worry about.

But one is a thing you might not expect.

Fraud.

"I never thought much about it," said Dr. Andrea Fallon, a new dentist who is a partner in a practice in a suburb of Springfield, Massachusetts.

But it took an instance shortly after she started practicing when she realized the reality. Dr. Fallon was an associate when a dental assistant at her practice was fired after the head dentist learned that the assistant had been daily padding her hours on her time sheet.

"To be honest, I am quite a trusting person," Dr. Fallon said. "So it was really hard for me to believe that someone would do it. When it did happen, although I was not an owner of the practice, I was involved, and it infuriated me. This one instance has caused me to be a little more diligent in keeping track of things."

As a dentist, it is natural that you want to focus on dentistry, rather than managing the day-to-day financial details. You would prefer to leave these duties to your staff.

But it is important to always pay close attention to the business side of your practice.

Smart hiring practices can help to minimize the possibility for



fraud. The ADA, in its manual "Protecting Your Dental Office From Fraud and Embezzlement," recommends the following be considered once your staff is in place:

- **Separate duties** so that no one person handles both patient payments and bank deposits. If possible, have the dentist make all bank deposits.
- **Do daily audits** by looking at every check, explanation of benefits and patient visit. Review every posted transaction on the day sheet. Run a check register daily and compare it to the daily deposit slip.
- **Set a good example.**
- **Create a climate of accountability.**
- **Prosecute if you are defrauded.** Prevent this person from moving on to another office.

- **Listen carefully** to patient complaints.

"If your staff feels appreciated and rewarded for good work, they won't want to take from your practice," Dr. Fallon said. "Keep them happy, because if they are happy you will be too — with a lot less stress. I guess it all boils down to whom you hire, so make sure that every person on the team is pulling in the same direction. Set goals with rewards for your team to keep them engaged and feeling like if the practice thrives, they thrive too."

To order the free-for-members manual "Protecting Your Dental Office From Fraud and Embezzlement," visit ebusiness.ADA.org and type "avoiding fraud" in the search engine.



Practice success guidelines look at keeping patients happy

What factors into a patient's decision to return to the same practice? What makes a dental visit a positive experience, even if treatment or care involves discomfort?

To help answer these questions and others dentists may have as they navigate practice management challenges, the ADA Center for Professional Success in 2015 launched its Guidelines for Practice Success.

This online, members-only benefit features ethically-based, voluntary practice management guidelines that can help dentists and their practices succeed.

The first module, highlighting patient management, includes information about where dentists can learn how to handle a patient's first visit; tips on designing a reception area and decorating an office; and how to create cancellation policies and handle specialty referrals.

Future modules, with anticipated launches later this year and in 2017, are expected to cover finances, the dental team, marketing, regulatory environment and technology.

The ADA Council on Dental Practice, with input from dental practice management consultants and experts, developed these guidelines.

Members can access this resource using their member login at Success.ADA.org/GPS.

Taking medical leave

The balance between work and home can sometimes be challenging. And perhaps no time is more challenging than when you need to take medical leave.

Five years ago, Dr. Jean Bainbridge, a general dentist from Dallas, needed to put her practice on hold briefly after undergoing a total knee replacement. To get the office ready, she made sure to keep her staff and patients on the same page.

"I openly communicated with my patients that I would be out of the office but if they needed me I would see them or refer them to another exceptional practitioner," said Dr. Bainbridge, who also personally contacted all the specialists and general practitioners the office would be working with in her absence.

"We want to make sure the doctors we would be referring to would be available and knew I would be out of the office," Dr. Bainbridge said. "I had a comprehensive list for my staff with all relevant info on the doctors we were referring to and then had my staff make the appointments for our patients as they usually would."

After taking three weeks off to recover, Dr. Bainbridge then returned to work on an as-needed basis.

"I was slower than normal but it was great to be back being productive and having something other than my surgery to focus on," she said. "I also attended an out-of-town meeting four weeks [after surgery] by using some airport assistance and an extra chair to elevate my legs during the meeting."

In addition to letting her "talented staff" take the reins, Dr. Bainbridge credited her involvement with organized dentistry for helping her leave go smoothly.



Dr. Nguyen

"I've had the opportunity to get to know most of the outstanding practitioners in the area and build strong relationships with them, which is invaluable when taking time off whether for medical reasons or your family vacation," she said. "Dentistry is a great profession which allows you the latitude to take time off if you have a great team, open communication with your patients and solid relationships with your fellow practitioners."

Pregnancy is another time when dentists need to make accommodations for medical leave.

Dr. Robin Nguyen, an endodontist who works in a group practice setting in Central Florida, said when she became pregnant she made arrangements with her practice's owner to let him know her good news and to share how long she



Dr. Lohmann

"Arranging time for leave was not difficult because I have a very understanding boss, and I am sure it was helpful being in a group practice where there are other doctors that could share the necessary workload," she said.

Her advice to new dentists who are thinking about starting a family? Don't be shy about what you think is most important for you and the health of your baby.

"It may be intimidating to discuss or negotiate with your boss, especially if you just joined the practice and being a new dentist, but you would be surprised at how accommodating they can be."

During her pregnancy, Dr. Layla Chafi Lohmann of Dallas, had her leave all planned out — until some health issues forced her to deliver a month early. Even though she hired a dentist to fill in during her leave and talked to her patients, it was a stressful time. Her son was born with complications and required follow-up surgeries.

Suddenly, her plan to return after six weeks went out the door. The compassion she's received from her patients has helped in the five months since her baby was born.

"My patients have been great — no one has left," said Dr. Lohmann, a general dentist who graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry in 2011. "They understand."

For now, she's working about 80 percent of her previous schedule and plans to return to full-time in August after her son's surgeries are completed. She also plans to return to teaching part-time at Baylor University.

If she had to do it all again, Dr. Lohmann said she'd make sure she hired her maternity doctor earlier so that the fill-in doctor could have more time to observe the practice in motion.

"Ask them if they're comfortable doing half a day two times a week to see how they work. That's the best advice I can give."

anticipated being out.

"There was no set time for me to come back but I felt comfortable coming back to work part time, one day a week, four weeks post-partum, then returning full time two to three weeks after that," said Dr. Nguyen, who graduated from dental school in 2009 and completed her residency in 2011.

Dr. Nguyen, who had her baby in August 2015, said she felt comfortable discussing leave and making the necessary changes to her schedule.

What's the law?

Wondering how federal, state and local laws affect medical leave? Many of these laws only apply if a business has a certain number of employees. For instance, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the federal law that requires employers to provide employees job-protected and unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons, including the birth or adoption of a child, is applicable only to businesses with 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius. Under the employment provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act, an employee of a dental office with

15 or more employees cannot be disqualified from a position based on a disability (for example, using a wheelchair) as long as the employee can perform the job duties with or without reasonable accommodations. A normal pregnancy typically does not constitute a disability, however.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 made it illegal to discriminate against or harass an individual because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or pregnancy. This act also protects the employees of a dental office from discrimination in the terms and conditions of their employment if

they have 20 or more employees. Keep in mind that some states have their own family and medical leave laws and discrimination statutes, which may expand the coverage of such laws to smaller employers. Be sure to check out which laws apply to your practice or state.

Remember: If you find yourself in a situation where you need to take leave, the best thing you can do is talk to your employer and communicate with your patients. For additional information about laws that can affect dentistry, visit ADA.org.

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Free and discounted online CE courses

New dentists can access a range of online continuing education courses, including in-depth video course series, live-patient dental procedures and case study examples, as part of ADA CE Online, at ADACEonline.org. Topics range from clinical dentistry to implantology to practice management. New dentist members can receive a 50 percent discount when they use promo code 482153. Also, some of the courses are offered at no cost for members.

Get advice with ADA Ethics Hotline

The ADA Ethics hotline is designed to assist new dentists with managing ethical challenges that may arise in day-to-day dental practice. Callers will be matched with a member of the ADA Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs who will arrange to call the member at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the issue. This is not a legal resource; rather it is meant to help dentists resolve ethical dilemmas. To reach the ADA Ethics Hotline, call the ADA Member Service Center at 1-800-621-8099 and ask to be connected to the hotline.

Practice, learn and live with Center for Professional Success



Looking for a job? Need continuing education credit? How about ergonomic advice? The ADA Center

for Professional Success informs and helps dentists with resources and articles on everything from frequently asked questions about dental codes to tips to reduce hand or upper back pain. To learn more and search for articles relevant to your needs, visit Success.ADA.org.

ADA launches new dentist Web portal

The ADA launched in February a new Web portal, ADA.org/newdentist, designed to provide a one-stop shop for new dentists seeking information, ranging from finding a job and managing finances to better understanding employment agreements and compensation.

The portal provides new dentists easy access to a variety of new dentist-specific ADA resources and benefits, including the ADA job board, reduced dues program, details on the New Dentist Conference, and the New Dentist News and New Dentist Now blog.

The Web page will be regularly updated with new and noteworthy information and resources. For more information, visit ADA.org/newdentist or contact the ADA New Dentist Committee at newdentist@ada.org.

5 things to know about emailing patients



There's always a certain level of risk when sending information electronically, but the stakes are higher for health care providers who send patient information.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which protects patients' privacy at covered dental practices, imposes hefty fines — ranging from \$100 to \$1.5 million — for violations of HIPAA requirements.

From emailing clinical findings and a patient's digital information to radiographic images, dentists who send patient information through unencrypted email may risk exposing the information in a data breach and may be in violation of HIPAA.

Here are five things dental practices can do to help protect patient health information when using email:

1. Do a written risk assessment: The HIPAA risk assessment must take into account all of the dental practice's electronic patient information, such as electronic dental records, digital radiographs and email. The dental practice must assess where the information is vulnerable, the threats to the information and the likelihood and severity of the risk of compromise. The dental practice must then implement safeguards to reduce risks and vulnerabilities to a reasonable and appropriate level and also document compliance with the HIPAA security standards and specs.

2. Have reasonable safeguards: Examples of reasonable safeguards for emailing

patient information may include checking the email address for accuracy before sending or limiting the amount or type of information that may be sent in an unencrypted email.

3. Train office staff: Covered dental practices must train staff on HIPAA policies and procedures. For example, dentists who use email, secure messaging services or health information exchanges must train their office staff on proper use. Some concepts may include giving recipients the courtesy of a heads-up phone call or text message before sending encrypted patient information and providing the decryption password, code or key separately from the encrypted email, such as a telephone call.

4. Send breach notification if patient information is compromised: If patient information is compromised, a dental practice must send breach notification. For example, if a dental practice sent an email containing unencrypted information about a patient to the wrong email address, the dental practice would likely have to notify the patient of the breach, and include information about the incident in the breach log of small breaches that it submits annually to the federal Office for Civil Rights (breaches affecting more than 500 individuals must be reported when the individuals are notified).

5. Honor certain patient requests for unencrypted email: HIPAA requires a dental practice to honor patient requests to communicate by alternative means or at alternative locations if the request

is reasonable; for example, if a patient asks the dental practice to communicate with him or her via email (or not to communicate via email) and the practice determines that the request is reasonable. However, if a patient requests the dental practice to send his or her patient information via unencrypted email, and the dental practice has briefly warned the patient that there is some level of risk that the information could be read or otherwise accessed by a third party while in transit but the patient still prefers unencrypted email, then the dental practice must send the information that way.

For more information about HIPAA training and compliance, members can order the ADA Complete HIPAA Compliance Kit for \$300 by calling 1-800-947-4746 or visiting ADAcatalog.org and searching for product J598. A 20 percent discount is offered on all ADA Catalog HIPAA and OSHA products when promo code 16418E is used before April 8.

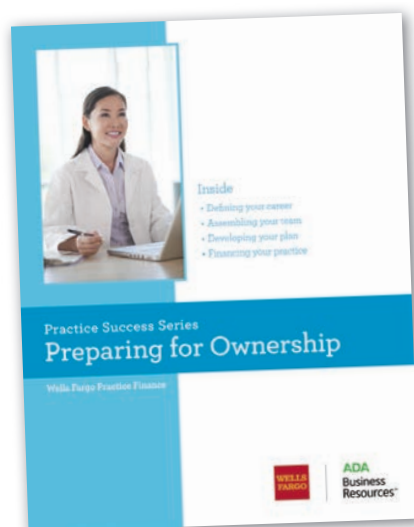
ADA Business Resources endorses PBHS Inc. as HIPAA-secure email and collaboration system provider for members. This HIPAA-compliant email solution starts at \$10 per month or purchase an upgraded package that uses the even higher standards of direct messaging. For more information, contact PBHS at 1-855-WEB-4ADA or visit pbhs.com/securemail.

In addition, the ADA's Standards Committee on Dental Informatics developed a technical report published in January to set the standard for dentists to securely exchange sensitive health information over the Internet. The report recommends the use of direct addresses issued by a certificate authority intended for use in health care only. Technical Report No. 1085, Implementation Guidelines for the Secure Transmission of Protected Health Information in Dentistry, is available at no cost for member dentists in the ADA Catalog.

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