

August 7, 2017

The Honorable Joe Manchin, III  
United States Senate  
306 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Senator:

It was a pleasure speaking with you last week. We are pleased to share several resources and initiatives the ADA is involved in to keep prescription opioid pain medications from affecting the health and well-being of our communities.

Opioid pain medications—such as hydrocodone (Vicodin®) and oxycodone (OxyContin® and Percocet®)—have become a leading source of drug abuse among teens and young adults. As prescribers of these pain medications, dentists certainly have a role in preventing their abuse, misuse, and diversion.

Enclosed you will find a summary of what the ADA has been doing to help keep opioid pain medications from becoming a source of harm in our communities. Please note that in 2010, dentists were the third most frequent prescribers of opioid pain medications.<sup>1</sup> By 2012, dentists had fallen to fifth— behind family practitioners, internists, general practitioners, and surgeons.<sup>2</sup> This is a testament to what dentistry has been doing to address this issue.

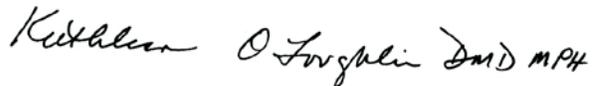
We can all play a role in identifying and preventing nonmedical use of prescription drugs. For our part, the ADA will continue raising professional awareness about prescription opioid abuse, encouraging dentists to complete training in model opioid prescribing, and urging every dentist to register with his or her state prescription drug monitoring program.

We appreciate your interest in how the dental profession is addressing this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Alison Bramhall at 312.440.2622 or [bramhalla@ada.org](mailto:bramhalla@ada.org). Information is also available at [ADA.org/opioids](http://ADA.org/opioids).

Sincerely,



Gary L. Roberts, D.D.S.  
President



Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.  
Executive Director

GLR:KTO:  
Enclosure

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<sup>1</sup> SDI: Vector One® National, Total number of prescriptions dispensed in the U.S. by top 10 prescribing specialties for immediate-release opioids, Year 2009, Extracted June 2010.

<sup>2</sup> IMS Health, National Prescription Audit, United States, 2012.

## **Activities to Enlist Dentists to Address Opioid Misuse, Abuse, and Diversion**

August 4, 2017

Ever since the *Journal of the American Dental Association* published a cover story in 2011 about the dentist's role in preventing prescription opioid abuse, the ADA has worked on the issue, beginning in earnest that same year when approached by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Since that time, the Association has taken a number of steps to ensure that its members are aware of the potential for opioid addiction and that they have the tools to prevent it.

### **Key Legislation**

Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)

In July 2016, the ADA, along with several other healthcare organizations urged the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). The ADA believed CARA represented a first step by the United States Congress in attacking the opioid epidemic. As providers, the ADA appreciated the comprehensive framework of prevention, treatment, and recovery support that CARA's provisions provided.

### **Policy and Guidelines**

- In October 2016, the ADA House of Delegates approved the revised Statement on the Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Dental Pain to include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory analgesics as the first-line of therapy for acute pain management.
- In May 2015, the ADA published an easy-to-use reference manual, "Practical Guide to Substance Use Disorders and Safe Prescribing," that includes techniques dentists can use to identify and respond to suspicious drug-seeking behaviors, including after-hours requests for prescription drugs.
- The ADA Council on Scientific Affairs (CSA) conducted a rapid review of the efficacy of opioids and non-opioids for acute dental pain. The report, "Rapid Review of the Relative Safety and Efficacy of Oral Opioid and Non-Opioid Analgesics for the Management of Acute Postoperative Dental Pain Following Extractions" is currently being used to inform other ADA agencies. The report provides the current best evidence regarding the established analgesic efficacy of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and the incidence of adverse effects when compared to opioid agents. The CSA will publish the manuscript, which will be sent to your office upon completion of the peer review process.

### **Campaigns and Initiatives**

The ADA participates in several activities in conjunction with other professional associations and government agencies.

- **AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse.** The ADA joined the American Medical Association Opioid Task Force in 2015. The mission of this coalition of health professional organizations is to reverse the nation's opioid epidemic.

The coalition's initial goals are to improve the design and operation of prescription drug monitoring programs, increase the number of prescribers registered with those programs, and increase the number of health professionals who complete training in model opioid prescribing practices.

- **ADA President Call to Action.** In July 2016, an Association-wide messaging campaign to raise professional awareness about prescription opioid abuse, provide guidance about what dentists can do to address it, and showcase for policy makers what the ADA is doing on the prescribing and misuse prevention issue.
- **Turn the Tide Campaign.** In August 2016 the ADA joined the US Surgeon General in promoting the Turn the Tide campaign. This national campaign complemented our ongoing efforts to increase professional awareness about the widespread abuse of opioid pain medications and mobilize prescribers to take action.
- **Medicine Abuse Project.** The ADA has been a member of the Medicine Abuse Project since 2015. This initiative of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America raises awareness of prescription drug abuse and enlists dentists in the fight against it.
- **National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative.** The ADA began promoting the Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative in 2012. The Association has used the campaign to remind dentists to counsel patients on how to safely secure and dispose of unused medications at home, and encourage patients to attend local Take-Back events.
- **National Recovery Month.** The ADA has been a proponent of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Recovery Month since 2004. The ADA uses the campaign to help its members to identify their community's substance abuse treatment resources and learn how to make referrals when indicated.
- **White House Partnership to Address Prescription Drug Abuse.** In 2015, The ADA entered a strategic partnership with the White House to help prevent opioid drug-related overdoses and deaths. The Association pledged to seek an increase to the number of dentists completing its CERP-recognized continuing education webinars on responsible opioid prescribing. The ADA also pledged to seek an increase in the number of dentists who are registered with their state's prescription drug monitoring program (where available).

### **Continuing Education**

For years, the ADA has offered in-person and online continuing education courses on using opioids to manage dental pain in the context of modern drug-seeking behavior. Since at least 2012, there has been an increasing demand for such training.

- Every two years, the Association hosts a Conference on Dentist Health and Wellness that includes continuing education on opioids.
- Opioid prescribing courses are offered during Association's annual dental meeting. A grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has helped the ADA to offer free continuing education webinars covering the latest techniques for recognizing when a patient may be seeking opioids for non-medical purposes, and how to briefly counsel and refer those patients for appropriate substance abuse treatment. Four webinars a year have been offered since 2012, and are available to members and non-members alike.

### **Publications**

*The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA)* and ADA News are the two most widely read publications in the dental profession.

- More than 20 articles related to the opioid issue have been published in *ADA News* since 2012.
- Seven opioid-related articles have been published in *JADA* since 2007.

### **Website**

- ADA.org/opioids, an online web page is available to make it easier for members to find ADA resources on opioid abuse (e.g., practical guides, CE courses, etc.). The web page is also intended to showcase, for policy makers and the press, what the ADA is doing on the issue.

### **Patient Tools**

- On our consumer website, MouthHealthy.org, the ADA dedicated a web page for consumers to learn about the risks of using opioid pain medications for non-medical purposes. Patients can learn how to take opioid analgesics safely and effectively—and learn how to safely secure and dispose of their unused medications at home—by visiting [www.MouthHealthy.org/meds](http://www.MouthHealthy.org/meds) .

The ADA has been leveraging these and other programs to raise professional awareness about prescription opioid abuse, encourage dentists to complete professionally recognized training in model opioid prescribing, and urge every dentist to register with his or her state prescription drug monitoring program.

Please visit [www.ADA.org/opioids](http://www.ADA.org/opioids) for more information.