

# new dentist news

"We may be uncomfortable, but your safety and the observance of the status of your personal well-being is of the utmost importance."



All ready: Dr. Manny Chopra sports personal protective equipment while treating a patient at his Ohio office during the pandemic.

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Is it possible to get a business loan — even during a pandemic?

## Improving PPE comfort **WHILE PROTECTING PATIENTS, DENTAL TEAM**

BY DAVID BURGER

*Long Beach, Calif.* — Amir Kazim, D.D.S., joked that having the appropriate personal protective equipment allowed him to save money on his astronaut costume this past Halloween.

Then the Californian turned serious.

"The impact of proper PPE for dentists allows us, the providers, to effectively ensure proper oral health care to our patients," said the new dentist. "By wearing longer lab coats, ensuring eye protection, and masks that limit droplet transfers, we can deliver the best quality treatment to our patients in a safe manner."

While protecting the safety of patients during treatment is paramount, ensuring the health

of dentists and their staff members is also vitally important.

Manny Chopra, D.D.S., a member of the ADA Council on Dental Practice and chair of the council's Dentist Wellness Advisory Committee, pointed out an ADA Health Policy Institute survey conducted in August 2020 that recorded minor and major discomforts caused by wearing PPE.

According to the survey data, the most frequent complaints by member dentists relating to PPE were:

- **General discomfort (42.8%).**
- **Heat stress (37.5%).**
- **Exhaustion (36.9%).**

*Continued on Page 4.*

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# Finding a job DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

BY MARY BETH VERSACI

In March 2020, as the U.S. was in the early throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kai Huang, D.M.D., began the difficult task of looking for a job amid the uncertainties of a global health emergency. Five months later, he found one.

"It was a very difficult time," said Dr. Huang, who graduated in May 2020 from the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry and previously served as vice president of the American Student Dental Association. "There were very limited to no dental job openings due to the shutdown.

Many dental offices and corporations were waiting for the reopening to evaluate their needs of hiring, and at the time, it was scarily unknown when things were going to open back up."

Dr. Huang had his first interview in May 2020, shortly after the reopening in Florida, where he hoped to find a job.

"I wanted to be close to home, which is Orlando, Florida," he said. "However, I had to broaden my search to nearly the entire state."

**There were very limited to no dental job openings due to the shutdown. Many dental offices and corporations were waiting for the reopening to evaluate their needs of hiring.**

He traveled as far as Panama City, Florida, for an interview but then realized it was too far from home.

Dr. Huang ultimately found a job as an associate at McGee Family Dentistry in Orlando, Florida, after owner Donald McGee, D.M.D., saw an ad Dr. Huang posted with the Dental Society of Greater Orlando that included his CV and contact information.

Although finding the right opportunity took longer than Dr. Huang expected, he did not want

to make compromises that would impact his career down the line.

"I never wanted to compromise my work ethic and personal beliefs and change the type of dentistry that I wanted to practice. Especially the small habits and things that I pick up in the first few years of my career will carry on with me for the rest of my lifelong career," he said. "I've always wanted to practice in a private office. It took me five

months of searching to find the right place, and now I am happily practicing dentistry and building lifelong relationships with my patients." ■



Kai Huang, D.M.D.

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# Protecting patients AND THE DENTAL TEAM

(continued from cover)



Manny Chopra, D.D.S.



Amir Kazim, D.D.S.

“Personally, I have had a greater occurrence of headaches, increased sweating, increased thirst and neck pain due to the awkward positions I need to adjust to from the daily use of a face shield and gowns,” Dr. Chopra said.

Dr. Chopra recommended some “hacks,” or ways to improve the comfort or reduce the risks of injury when wearing necessary PPE. He said the simplest hacks include adjusting the operatory chair higher or lower for proper visibility; adjusting the patient chair by tipping the patient back further; lowering the office temperature; spacing out appointments; and adjusting office hours for a less stressful work day.

He also mentioned the consideration of a different style of face shield, especially if the dentist or hygienist needs to accommodate space for loupes and lights. In addition, he said anti-fog sprays or simply a soapy wash of eyeglasses helps to prevent fogging. The use of mask extender clips or surgical caps with buttons helps to ease the pressure on ears from tight-fitting masks, he said. Some dentists have tried cooling vests to prevent overheating during long procedures.

The future is unknowable, but there are guidelines to provide assurance that everyone is taking the right precautions if followed, Dr. Chopra said.

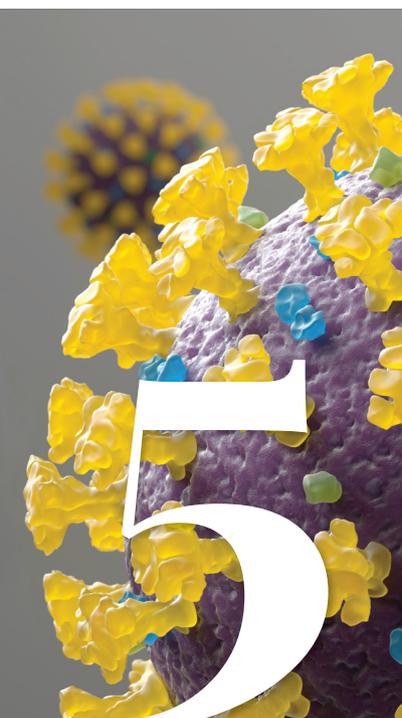
The CDC and the ADA have worked to provide dentists with guidance that should protect them during routine dental procedures, he said.

“The proper use of masks, face shields, gowns and such is now the required uniform for the near future. We may be uncomfortable, but your safety and the observance of the status of your personal well-being is of the utmost importance during this pandemic.”

Dr. Kazim said that there is much more added pressure on dentists and team members in providing a warm, caring environment while maintaining proper health precautions through PPE.

But he’s up to the task.

“Effective PPE allows the dentist and dental team members to conduct their vital and essential work in keeping America smiling,” Dr. Kazim said. ■



## professional challenges DURING COVID-19

The *New Dentist News* asked new dentists about their biggest professional challenges during COVID-19:

### One of the biggest challenges has to be the rise of cancellations, which disrupts patient flow at our clinic.

The extra down time waiting for patients or in between patients doesn’t really help make you feel as productive as you could be.

— Mel-Anizi Bersaba, D.D.S.

### Not being able to see patients when dentists were considered nonessential.

I had so many patients who were in the middle of treatment, and I also make nasoalveolar molding appliances for babies with cleft lip and palate. When babies were born during this time, I was unable to provide this service. Many patients were not able to receive care when they needed it.

— Jessica Canallatos, D.D.S.

### At the onset, it was tough to know what this would mean for my long-term career and the profession.

Would patients feel comfortable? And if not, how will I continue to pay off my student loans? Will there be enough personal protective equipment? Is wearing an N95 mask every day for eight to

10 hours sustainable? Having colleagues to commiserate with, troubleshoot amongst, and be reminded of all of the amazing ways we can serve our patients through dentistry have energized me.

— Abby Halpern, D.M.D.

### The limited access to engaging, quality continuing education programs.

It is difficult to recreate the atmosphere of an in-person educational experience over the internet. As a hands-on learner, I have difficulty focusing and retaining information at home in the same capacity that I would in person. I am looking forward to attending live courses in the future.

— Rachel Malterud, D.M.D.

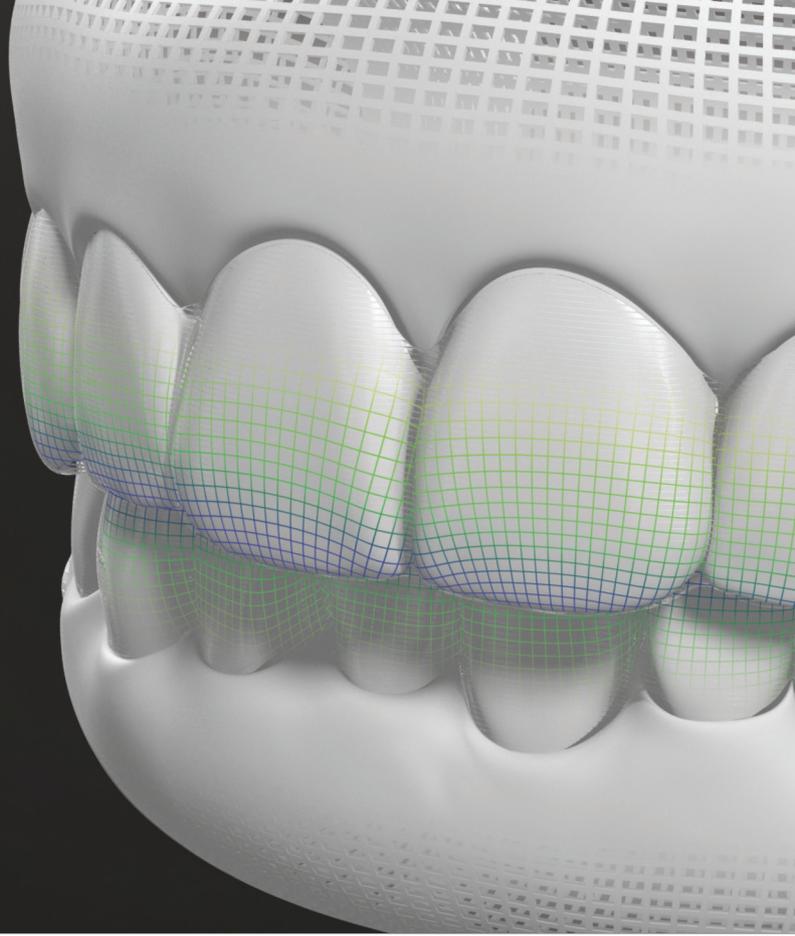
**Managing team members.** There is a major loss of employees in the marketplace, and scheduling has become difficult. As a result, people are working double and triple shifts and we are all covering for each other. But that’s what teamwork is all about.

— Amrita Patel, D.D.S.

Photo: Andriy Onufriyenko / Moment / Getty Images

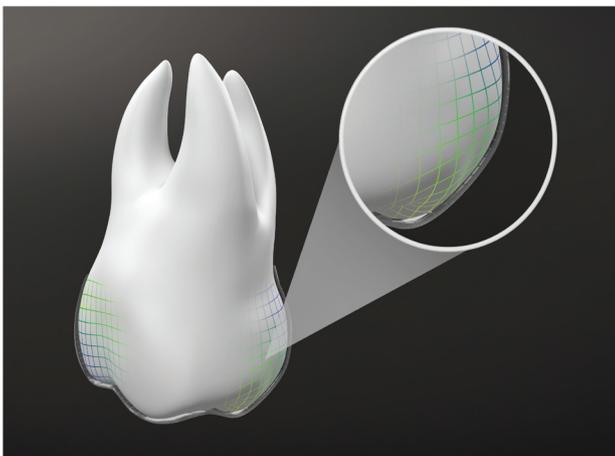
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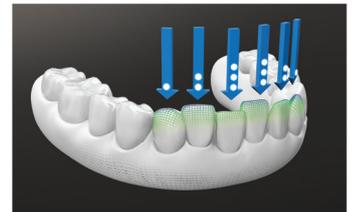
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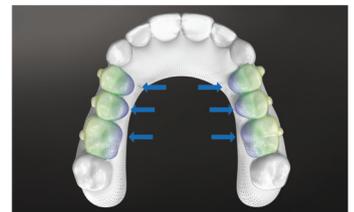


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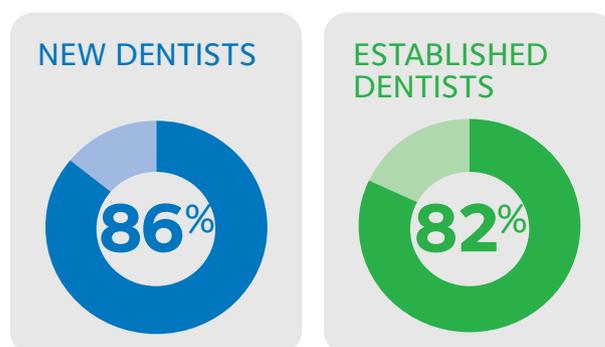
# COVID-19 economic impact ON NEW DENTISTS' PRACTICES

Back in March 2020, the ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI) initiated a tracking poll of U.S. dentists to quantify the impact of COVID-19 on dental practices over time. Results of the latest wave of the poll, conducted the week of Feb. 15, reveal slightly better outcomes for new dentists when compared to more established dentists.

- While more than half of new dentists (52%) indicate their practice is “open and business as usual,” the share of established dentists indicating so was 10 percentage points lower.
- In terms of patient volume, on average, new dentists' practices were at 86% of pre-COVID-19 levels compared to 82% for established dentists.

For more detailed results from HPI's COVID-19 economic impact poll or to sign up for the monthly research panel, visit [ADA.org/HPI](https://ADA.org/HPI). ■

**AVERAGE PATIENT VOLUME** in private practices of new and established dentists as a percentage of pre-COVID-19 levels for the week of Feb. 15:



## Ask the Expert:

### IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET A BUSINESS LOAN — EVEN DURING A PANDEMIC?

BY CHRISTINE OLMSTEAD LOPEZ, CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL, BMO HARRIS BANK

**Dear Christine:** *I've been in practice for three years and I'm looking for financial support to remodel my floorplan and expand on my personal protective equipment to ensure my clients and staff feel safe during appointments. I'm considering applying for a loan, but I'm concerned that I may not get approved because I've heard from other dentist friends that business loans have become more difficult to obtain due to the pandemic. I'm wondering if you have any tips on how to help my chances of securing financing.* — *Borrowing Advice*

**Dear Borrowing Advice:** First off, the good news. Banks are still issuing business loans, and being in dentistry, I can tell you that you are an attractive prospect. But there are some things you can do to help your application shine. Whether you need a loan to start your own practice, purchase additional PPE or expand your practice during a pandemic, applying for a loan can feel overwhelming. Here are a few tips for you to consider before you apply:

#### 1. Do your research

Talk with a few lenders to find the best fit for your practice and make sure you know the costs, terms and conditions

of loans available to you. The earlier you include a lender in the process, the easier it will be to secure what you need.

#### 2. Review your credit

You want to ensure you can score the best interest rate possible. Your credit history and credit score help lenders decide how creditworthy you are.

#### 3. Understand your business finances

Lenders will consider capital, debt, personal income and business income. Banks determine the loan amount you qualify for, so be prepared by ensuring you have your business finances organized and documented.

#### 4. Prepare your documents

You'll be asked to provide documentation as part of the application process. Here are some things you might need on hand: Personal and business identification documentation; proof of practice revenue and financial projections; articles of incorporation; tax returns; collateral information (equipment, insurance policies, etc.) ■

*A commercial banker since 2006, Ms. Olmstead Lopez advises mid- to large-size practices, leveraging her background in commercial credit underwriting and structuring, and providing industry-specific expertise and local market insight.*

*Editor's note: This article is provided by BMO Harris Bank, the ADA Member Advantage-endorsed provider for practice financing. Call 1-833-276-6017 or visit [bmoharris.com/dentists](https://bmoharris.com/dentists) for more information.*



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