

**Volunteer Opportunities**  
by SCCDS Staff- pg 13

**Clinical Photography Tips**  
by Mario F. Romero, DDS and Courtney S. Babb, DMD- pg 32

**Branding Tips for Dentists**  
by Erich Larsen- pg 20

the dentist's  
**mentor**

A resource for new members of the Santa Clara County Dental Society

2018 - 2019 Edition



**We're Glad You're Here.**

*Welcome to your new Dental Society. Whether you're new to organized dentistry or just new to Santa Clara County, you probably have a few questions. Don't worry. We've got you covered.*



2018- 2019 Edition



Ned L. Nix, DDS, MA  
President



Robert Shorey, DDS  
Editor

**Editorial Board**

Stephen L. Beveridge, DDS • Steven L. Cohen, DDS  
R. Peter Griffith, DDS • Sara J. Hamed, DDS  
Jon Hatakeyama, DDS • Sripriya Jayaraman, DDS  
Nima S. Massoomi, DMD, MD • Ned L. Nix, DDS, MA  
John M. Pisacane, DMD • Robert D. Shorey, DDS  
Ben S. Stein, DDS • Shyama Subhadarsini, DDS  
Louis Tieu, DDS, MD • Amy N. Tran, DDS  
Kenneth G. Wallis, DDS • Monica H. Wu, DDS  
Bexter M. Yang, DDS, MS • Niloofar Zarkesh, DDS

*Affiliated with the  
American Association of Dental Editors*



2017 Platinum Pencil Award Winner

*for use of graphics*

2016 Special Citation Award Winner

*for unusual concept, presentation or other distinctive quality*



SCCDS Main Office  
1485 Park Ave., San Jose, California 95126  
T: 408.289.1480 F: 408.289.1483

sccds.org





## Section 1

# Your Society

Thanks for Joining Us!.....	4
General Membership Meetings .....	6
SCCDS Staff: Supporting You and Your Practice.....	8
SCCDS Website: A User's Guide.....	10
SCCDS Volunteer Opportunities.....	13
SCCDS Committees .....	14

# Thanks for Joining Us!

You're in good company.

By: Ned L. Nix, DDS, MA, 2018 President



I have always been a huge advocate for mentoring. As a professor in my MA program, Dr. Paula O'Neil, said, "One should have a constellation of mentors. They are like all the bright stars in the sky. One cannot have too many."

The practice of dentistry is challenging. We have all passed the tests, passed the clinical board exams and we possess a California Dental License. We worked very hard to achieve the status of health care professional. We are proud to be dentists! I am fortunate to be a fellow of the American College of Dentists. Our mission is to advance excellence, ethics, professionalism and leadership in dentistry. My hope is that all of our SCCDS members are striving toward the same goals.

Our patients have the highest expectations, and they expect clinically acceptable outcomes. We will make mistakes, but we go into every dental treatment prepared to do no harm. The practice of dentistry is a huge responsibility, and to be successful in dental practice, we must collaborate with others. Dentistry is a people business. If we are empathetic, understand what people are thinking and feeling, and are compassionate, care about what people are thinking and feeling, we will thrive in our practices. We must be lifetime learners. As we develop as professionals, the challenges are different. They are no longer academic, based on clinical evaluation or based on criteria leading to a degree. To be successful in dental practice requires a skill set that includes those of trusted doctor, manager of staff, financial manager,

technician, surgeon and leader. Establishing mentors in all of these critical areas will get us to the top of the learning curve faster.

An empathetic and compassionate doctor will comfort patient fears and deliver clinically acceptable treatment plans that treat dental disease and satisfy patients' wants and needs. This person will be a problem solver and will always strive for clinical excellence. He/she will collaborate with professional colleagues working toward the best treatment for that individual patient's needs. A keen understanding of medicine and human physiology is necessary in today's dental practice. Treating children presents behavior and physiologic challenges above and beyond the basic practice of dentistry as does treating the elderly. This doctor must be able to think critically, integrating didactic knowledge with clinical knowledge. A mentor who is a respected doctor in the community can help us through the pitfalls that might delay our professional development.

Emotional intelligence is essential when managing staff at a dental office. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions while recognizing, understanding and managing the emotions of others. Being respectful of employees and empowering them to do important tasks makes their job self-actualizing and fun. The doctor must be responsible for all treatment delivered to patients, but educating and training assistants and staff to contribute to patient care within the parameters of their license and qualifications can make daily office

procedures more efficient. A professional, who is an educator at a dental assisting training program, or a member of a Council on Allied Dental Health Professionals, could help mentor us on staff management issues.

Financial challenges present themselves every day in dental practice. We would all prefer to be involved in patient care the majority of the time, but without keen financial knowledge, a dental practice will fail. Clinically acceptable treatment plans must be accepted by patients. Treatment revenue must outweigh employee costs and supply expenses. Understanding the balance between accounts receivable and accounts payable is paramount. We need to understand the cost of loans, capital equipment, debt management and how to service this debt. There are potential mentors who have had this experience and can offer guidance, like a former treasurer of a dental society or a member of a local banking board.

A successful dental practitioner must be a technician. The understanding of plumbing, electrical, architecture, dental materials and dental instrumentation are all technical skills that can be learned in the lifetime of a dental practitioner. Investment in new technology such as the electronic dental record, digital radiography and modern equipment necessary to keep up with the standard of care are all necessary to thrive. I have called on skilled technicians many times to help me solve technical challenges in my practice. This would be an area where I may have needed the most guidance.

The dentist is both a physician and surgeon. It has been said that dental graduates are safe beginners. We develop clinical excellence and practice success from experience. We must be lifetime learners and I encourage all of us to attend more than the Dental Board continuing education required coursework. It would be nice to keep a relationship with a dental educator, physician colleague, or trusted specialist as we rise up the learning curve mountain. One might volunteer as an educator at a local dental school, dental assisting program or hygiene program to keep up with the modern modalities of dental treatment. Having an understanding of the scholarship of teaching and learning will help us train dental assistants and supervise associates as we learn the modern practice of dentistry.


Leadership can be your pathway to lifetime learning. Sign up for a committee assignment, volunteer for a community function, join a board of directors or just attend a function that includes your professional colleagues. Being involved in leadership will provide you with the opportunity to learn, beginning as a committee member and advancing to committee chair, for example.

Leaders are always moving forward, and in a fast-paced community like Silicon Valley, we must continue to move forward or the practice of dentistry will pass us by. The people you will encounter will be a source for collaborators and mentors. Approach an experienced leader with the request for them to be a mentor. Mentoring goes both ways. The mentor often benefits as much as the mentee from the relationship.

I do have a constellation of mentors! Sometimes I think I have a mentor to consult upon for every important endeavor in which I am involved. Management author Steven Soundering said, "Mentoring extends beyond teaching in that it relies on establishing a long-term relationship that revolves around sharing and mutual respect." My two most influential mentors would be my dad and Dr. Arthur Dugoni. My dad is the hardest working person I have ever known; he is kind, empathetic and compassionate. I am a "leadership junkie," as you can tell, as I fulfill my role as President of the SCCDS. I have enjoyed this leadership journey and I have tried to model my leadership career after Dr. Dugoni. He has effectively gathered

followers, trusted colleagues and collaborators, and developed future leaders. He has inspired so many. He was my dean, teacher and he is my friend!

I challenge all of our members to take a chance on a mentoring relationship. I would encourage you all to develop your own constellation of mentors, and also to establish a relationship where you are the mentor. Be a coach. Be a teacher. Advise a pre-dental student. As you rise to the top of the learning curve, be thankful for those mentors who have guided you along the way. Inspire others and gather followers. I have never done anything of value in professional life without the help of others.



Ned L. Nix, DDS, MA  
2018 President  
Santa Clara County Dental Society

## introducing the sccds mentor program

Fostering real and meaningful mentor/mentee relationships is the goal of the new SCCDS Mentor Program, an evolving program to meet the needs of mentors and mentees alike.

**Mentees** can find answers about practice management, patient treatment approaches or advice on work-life balance. Tough business decisions can be worked through more effectively. Outcomes can benefit from varied perspectives.

**Mentors** frequently find themselves learning unexpected lessons from their mentees and adopting fresh approaches or new technologies. Not only does sharing professional experience validate past choices, but it also feels good.

If you are interested in being either a mentee or mentor, we encourage you to participate in this exciting new program. Please contact our office at 408.289.1480 for more information.



# general membership meetings

It's 6 pm on the second Thursday of the month. You enter an unassuming building at 35 South Second Street in downtown Campbell and climb a short flight of stairs. There, behind a reception table draped in a vivid purple cloth, you see several SCCDS staff members ready to greet you. You receive your name tag and event packet and enter the meeting hall.

Once inside, you see several of your colleagues having a drink at the bar. Some are enjoying light appetizers as they make their way down a row featuring tables of sponsors offering the latest services and supplies. Still more of your fellows are seated at tables reserved for new members, chatting with one of our many committee leaders. In the background, a slideshow highlights some interesting events you may want to attend in the near future.

As the room fills and members take their seats, an excited buzz fills the room. At 7 pm, dinner is served. Waiters work quickly, moving through the room to place hot, freshly prepared meals before their hungry guests.

Recent meals have included everything from prime steaks to mouthwatering chicken or light, flavorful pasta. Of course, vegetarian options are always available.

As you're finishing your dinner, the President of the Society takes to the podium to call the meeting to order. The agenda for the evening calls for event announcements, news of Society-sponsored programs and activities, special guests and more. This portion of the meeting usually takes less than 30 minutes but includes highly valuable information for members. You notice many experienced members paying close attention as the President and his guests conclude their remarks.

This is also the time that the Society traditionally welcomes its newest members and gives them an opportunity to introduce themselves. The President calls each member to the stage by name and encourages them to speak for a moment about themselves and their goals. You notice that some of these new members take advantage of this moment to announce that they're looking for an

associateship or a job. Following the introduction, the new members pause for a quick photograph and return to their seats.

Finally, the lights dim and the main presentation for the evening is introduced. SCCDS General Membership Meetings are known to feature a stellar lineup of the profession's most exciting, interesting and respected speakers. Thought-leaders, scholars and cutting-edge practitioners from around the world share their work with our members. Recent speakers have included Dr. Sean Carlson, Dr. Yoshihiro Goto and Dr. Anthony Pogrel. What's more, these incredible sessions provide 2 continuing education units!

Around 9:00 pm, the speaker concludes and members head for the door. You take a minute to thank the speaker for their presentation and maybe login to the website on your phone to enter the keyword for your CE units. Leaving the building, you say farewell to a few new friends who say "See you next month!" After a short stroll to your car, you can't help but think that this was a great way to spend a Thursday night.





# 2018/2019 schedule

October 11, 2018

**Implant Prosthetics in the Aesthetic Zone: Science, Protocol and Technique**

*with Dr. Todd Schoenbaum*

November 8, 2018

**Endodontic Post and Core Reconstruction**

*with Dr. Patrick Roetzer*

December 13, 2018

**Diagnostic Centric, Highly Preventive, Minimally Invasive Dentistry**

*with Dr. Joel White*

February 14, 2019

**Management of Cleft Lip and Palate in Children**

*with Dr. Snehlata Oberoi*

March 14, 2019

**The Puzzle of Non-Odontogenic Pain - How to Account for Pain When You Can't See a Cause**

*with Dr. Richard Hirschinger*

April 11, 2019

**Adhesive Dentistry – Maximizing the Placement of Anterior and Posterior Composites**

*with Dr. Marc Geissberger*

May 9, 2019

**Orofacial Pain**

*with Dr. Andrew Young*

Join us on the **second Thursday** of the month!\*

## Villa Ragusa

35 S. 2nd Street, Campbell

6 pm: Cocktails

7 pm: Dinner

7:30 pm: Presentation

SCCDS general membership meetings are prepaid dinner meetings for the membership.

Registration and check-in are required for entry. Registration deadline is the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

Keyword verification is required for continuing education credit.

Non-CDA member DDS: \$90  
Retired/Life Members: \$35  
Non-DDS: \$45

\*Meetings are held September through December and February through May.

CLOSEST PARKING FILLS QUICKLY.  
ARRIVE EARLY TO SECURE YOUR SPOT.

Register at [sccds.org](http://sccds.org) or call 408.289.1480  
no later than the Tuesday before.

# supporting you and your practice sccds staff



**Candace Roney**  
Executive Director  
candacer@sccds.org

I joined SCCDS in June 2013 after a very rewarding career managing marketing and media relations for several local hospital systems and more recently, creating and directing the community benefits programs at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Stanford and at O'Connor Hospital.

My responsibilities as Executive Director are to guide our board, members and staff toward realizing our strategic plans for member services and visibility for the dental profession in the community, making sure we remain financially viable so we can do all of this good work, and being the "face" of the dentistry profession in this community. I really enjoy using all of the experience and skills I gained in my previous careers to make our local dental society one of the best in the country. I love meeting new members, learning of their hopes for their dental careers and how we can help, and encouraging them to become involved in our organization. I also double as Executive Director for our Santa Clara County Dental Foundation and am enjoying helping to grow that organization.

I grew up in Santa Rosa, CA but moved to San Jose to attend San Jose State University, earned both BA and MPA degrees there, and never left. I live in San Jose with my husband, Gerry, an attorney who semi-retired to do reading tutoring in elementary schools, a dog and a cat. We enjoy travel to off-the-beaten tracks destinations. We've been out in the Aleutian Islands and up to Prudhoe Bay in

Alaska; have circumnavigated Iceland; drove to Haida Gwaii off the coast of British Columbia; sea kayaked in the Channel Islands, Alaska and British Columbia; and ventured as far north as Ny-Alesund, Svalbard, Norway, just 1231 km south of the North Pole, which is the location from which Roald Amundsen launched his successful first flight over the North Pole. Next up: Greenland!



**Megan Duncan**  
Operations Manager  
megand@sccds.org

My job, as it relates to all of you, is to plan and coordinate all educational programs sponsored by SCCDS, develop relationships with advertisers and vendors who provide services to the Society, manage the daily "many little things" involved with keeping our office open and owning our own building and being the "go to" person for member questions.

The best part about this job is you. I've never had a better working relationship than the one I have with all the members. You are a tightly knit and friendly group of professionals and I was overwhelmed with welcome on day one, way back in August of 2001 (yes, 17 years ago!). I look forward to helping you become the best dentist you can be!



**Katie Lam**  
Financial Coordinator  
katiel@sccds.org

I work closely with the Executive Director to make sure that the Society's finances

flow smoothly and that we are adhering to our financial policies. It's a big job, as we are a \$1 million-a-year operation and own our own beautiful building.

Along with all the office staff, I am here to answer the phones and help you with any questions you may have or may need in your day-to-day practice.

Before joining SCCDS in 2012, I worked part-time in finance as I was raising two boys and am happy to be able to continue to work part-time so I can be involved in my boys' daily activities.

I grew up in the Bay Area and settled in San Jose, with my husband, Benjamin, an SJPD police officer, two boys, a dog, a cat and a parrot. Outside of work, I enjoy biking, hiking, any outdoor activities and spending time with family and friends.



**Sherry Williams**  
Peer Review, Ethics and  
Membership Coordinator  
sherryw@sccds.org

I am the administrative support for the Peer Review and Ethics Committees and enjoy supporting the committee chairs and members. I work closely with the CDA Council on Peer Review on the cases that are reviewed by our component committee, setting up meetings, etc. I am available to the parties involved - dentist and patient - to answer questions and be of support which is my favorite part of the job. I also coordinate member services, in which I help new dentists have a smooth transition into membership with SCCDS and strongly encourage them to become involved in all that the



Society has to offer. I also coordinate all aspects of membership transfers and status changes. I enjoy working closely with the members, offices and the public. I really appreciate our dental society, its evolution and the helpful and supportive team of staff members here who are patient with this “non-techy” among them.

I worked at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco before moving back home to Willow Glen (where I was raised) with my husband Jerry (now retired) and Shiloh, our mini-Aussie puppy, to raise our family. I began at the Dental Society a long, long time ago!!! My life-long friend, Dianne Brodies Dashnaw, was executive director then, called and asked if I would like to work one day a week! She retired in 2000 and I am still here!

I have three children, Karen, Stacey and Kevin, my greatest teachers and two grandchildren Nolan, 15 and Davan, 13. We are a very close and involved family. I love reading mysteries, the ocean, nature, hiking, walking (my dog), swimming and socializing with friends, cooking and eating out.



**Erich Larsen**  
Communications Coordinator  
erichl@sccds.org

I joined the Dental Society in 2012 after working as a graphic designer in the health care and education industries. I'm thrilled to say that I design all of the promotions, web pages and printed materials released by the SCCDS, including this magazine! One of my biggest professional accomplishments has been the design of the SCCDS logo. It's not every day you get to redesign the logo of an organization that's more than a century old.

This year, I'm excited to announce that "*The Dentist's Mentor*" magazine was recently selected to receive the 2017 Platinum Pencil award from the International College of Dentists and the American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists. This award is given to publications with a high proficiency in graphics and design.

Working with our Editorial Board on our award-winning magazines is one of the most rewarding aspects of my career.

In my spare time, I try to stay creative. Aside from drawing, painting and sculpting, I perform in a local rock and roll band. I also love to cook gourmet meals for my family and friends. I live with my wife and daughter in Scottsdale, AZ.



**Tim Sudano**  
Facilities Coordinator  
tims@sccds.org

I make sure our presenters' computer systems interface with our in-house audio and projection systems, allowing both the presenter and audience to have a glitch-free experience. When the presenter and the audience have a smooth presentation, I am at my happiest.

A San Jose native and filmmaker, my passion is creative narrative film. While commercial shoots and product intensives pay the bills, as a writer/director, nothing is more exhilarating than seeing characters come to life from the written page.



**Michael Tran**  
Community / Member Programs Coordinator  
michaelt@sccds.org

I joined the Dental Society in 2016 after previous stints as a project coordinator in the tech and semiconductor industries. I'm excited to be at SCCDS for the opportunities to help connect our member dentists to their local communities. This allows our dentists to meet new people, make new friends and get to know their communities on a personal level. It makes me very proud to see the impact our dentists have had in the community by giving free dental care so a child can sleep at night pain free or to a recovering mother so she can have a smile again to find a job and reunite with her children. I also love organizing Dental Society social events for

our member dentists so they can enjoy them with their families, meet other dentists and make professional connections away from their practices. In my spare time, I try to stay active. I love to play board games, pickup basketball and organize hiking trips. As a big sports fan born and raised in San Jose, I like to follow the bay area teams especially the Sharks, Giants, As, Warriors, and 49ers. I try to attend some games and catch games on TV, especially the Warriors.

## here to help

While every SCCDS staff member has a specialty, each of us is also trained to help members accomplish a wide variety of tasks including:

- Course registration
- Auxiliary staff programs
- Information research

Call during normal business hours with any question. Our offices are open Monday through Thursday, 9 am until 5 pm and Friday from 9 am until 3 pm. You'll get a live person without a complicated phone menu. If you ever have a question that we can't answer, we'll make the necessary phone calls to find the answer for you. It's all part of our commitment to personal member services and it's one of the benefits our members prize most.

# a user's guide to the sccds website



The SCCDS website is your new dental home online. It is the most vital tool at your disposal for maximizing your benefits and getting involved with your new dental society. In this article, we'll detail the website's most important features and describe how to use them.

**1. The SCCDS Home page** - The home page contains all of the most current information you'll need to stay updated. Be sure to scroll down the page to see all that it has to offer. You'll find news articles, recent events and links to all the valuable content available on our site. You'll also find our Member Directory, which offers greater detail and functionality than our printed annual directory. Give it a try!

Guests can view a lot of great content on our site. But, to gain access to everything the site has to offer, you must be logged in as a member.

**Logging in** - After being processed, you will receive a flyer detailing login credentials. We encourage new members to login right away and update their information. From the home page, you can login using the green login button in the upper right corner of the page or by clicking the big login icon in the center of the page.

**Profile** - After logging in, you will see your profile. This is where you can control the information displayed in our Find-a-Dentist directory which is available to the public. Every element of a member profile is editable except for the username. Be sure to change your password to something memorable to you! Please also make sure to fill in your office hours, indicate if you are participating in the DentiCal program and ensure your address, phone number and other contact information is accurate. Finally, make sure to post a current photo!

**CE history** - Your profile is also where you keep track of your continuing education courses and certificates through our website. Scroll to the bottom of your profile and you'll see a list of the courses you've enrolled in. Click the name of the course to obtain your CE certificate for that course. Some courses will require you to enter a keyword for verification before you can download the certificate.

Now that you are familiar with the home page and your profile, let's take a look at the navigation options that will help you dig deeper into the site content. The site is divided into four main sections: About, Calendar, Resources and Members. You'll see these sections clearly defined at the top of every page. Moving your cursor over a main section will cause a sub-menu to appear. If you are viewing the site on a mobile device, you can access our menus by tapping on the

icon that resembles three horizontal lines. The remainder of this article will review the functions and content available in each of our main sections.

**2. About** - The “About” option contains all of the public information about our Society. Here, you’ll find everything you need to know to get in touch with us, learn about our mission, goals and values and discover more about our rich history.

- **Contact** - Here, you’ll find our office address, a helpful map, our phone number and a quick contact form.
- **Join and renew** - This page provides information about the tripartite structure and describes the process for those who are interested in joining our organization.
- **History and mission** - The SCCDS has been operating for almost 130 years. Take a look at our history and learn more about our mission, vision and some statistics on this page.
- **SCCDS Bylaws** - The SCCDS Bylaws document contains the organization’s operating rules and regulations.
- **Past Presidents** - Since 1889, the dental industry’s best and brightest have served as leaders of our Society. This page lists our presidents from the first all the way up to the present day.
- **Board of Directors** - Our Board of Directors is the governing body of the Society and decides on matters that directly impact our members. Find out who is currently serving on the Board by visiting this page.
- **SCCDS Staff** - Each staff member at SCCDS serves a vital role in helping our members stay informed, compliant and involved with the Society. Take a look at this page to learn more about our dedicated and diverse team.
- **In the Community** - Each year, SCCDS member dentists give back to the

community in a variety of ways. Read about our programs and partnerships here.

- **Foundation** - Through the generous donations of its supporters, the Santa Clara County Dental Foundation raises the necessary funds to pay for Society volunteer work. This page connects interested parties directly to the Foundation’s website.
- 3. Calendar** - All of our upcoming events, committee meetings and more can be viewed in a traditional calendar format on this page. For a more informative view, try clicking “Agenda” in the upper right corner of the calendar.
  - **News** - There is always something going on at our Society. Important events, compliance information, discounts, new member benefits and more are described in our news articles.
  - **Events and courses** - This is the most popular portion of the website. Organized into a clear and concise table, our events are easy to sign up for. Filter events by category and sort the table by event name or date. To learn more about an event, click the word “Register.” The subsequent event page shows the description and other pertinent details. For ongoing events, multiple dates will be shown under the “Event Details” section of the page. To sign up for an event, select the ticket for the date and membership level that applies best and then click “Add to Event Cart.” A confirmation window will appear allowing you to go back to the event list, proceed to registration or view the event cart. When you proceed to register, you will be asked to enter the name(s) and contact information for each attendee you are purchasing tickets for. If you are logged in, some of this information will already be filled in for you.
  - **View Cart** - If you have registered for

several courses, they’ll be waiting here for payment. Our website uses the simple and secure Stripe payment system. Once you have paid for your course(s), you will receive a confirmation email. If further information is necessary, a second email will be sent to you.

**4. Resources** - The SCCDS website is more than just a place to register for events. It also serves as a valuable source of information for members, dental auxiliary and the public. The “Resources” section places all of this information at your fingertips.

- **Dental clinics** - You may wish to refer the public to this page if a patient has financial difficulty. Users will find our list of low-cost dental clinics, including locations in Alameda, San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties.
- **Dental emergencies** - This page is intended to educate the public by providing descriptions of dental conditions that require emergency treatment along with home remedies for many non-emergency conditions and helpful links to related websites.
- **Denti-Cal** - The Medi-Cal program’s dental services are also known as Denti-Cal. Dentists voluntarily participate as service providers in this program. This page contains the list of SCCDS member dentists who participate in the Denti-Cal program available as a downloadable PDF document. The page also offers links to other relevant web pages.
- **Peer review** - A major benefit of SCCDS membership is our Peer Review process. Disputes between a dentist and patient about the quality and appropriateness of care are considered during a fair and impartial process. This part of the site includes a description of the Peer Review

continued on page 12

concept and a contact form that can be used to initiate such proceedings.

- **Jobs** - This is one of the most popular and heavily used sections of our website. Job seekers can post resumés and respond to job postings. Members can post job openings and browse available candidates. The process has been streamlined to be as easy as possible. Let's take a closer look. The Jobs page presents two options to visitors: "I Am An Employer" or "I Am A Job Seeker." Clicking the "I Am An Employer" button will take visitors to our Employer Dashboard. From here, two green buttons invite members to "Post a job" or "Browse Resumés." These and future Employer Dashboard features are SCCDS member benefits requiring users to be logged in. Once logged in, the "Post a job" button will lead to a form that can be filled out to post a job opening. After completing and submitting the simple form, the site will offer the option to view the completed job post. All of the member's job posts will appear in a table below the green buttons. Employers can always edit posts, mark a position as filled, delete posts or duplicate them for later use.  
TIP: Posting a job provides better results than browsing available resumés. In a competitive job market, you should review other job posts and try to make yours outstanding by incorporating your company logo and website. Make the most of your post by filling out each field with attractive and descriptive information. Try making and linking to a short (and HIPAA compliant) video of your workplace to show future employees what it's like to be a part of your team! Our job posting form allows for this and more. Clicking the "I Am A Job Seeker" button will take users to our Job Seeker Dashboard. This page offers the options

"Browse Jobs," "Submit Your Resume" and "Manage Resumes."

**Browse Jobs** - This page displays a filterable list of all jobs posted by our members. Try filtering by job type, location, key word and more. With all of the great opportunities available, job seekers visit this page first!

**Submit Your Resume** - By completing a simple form, job seekers can submit a professional resume. Submitting a resume will also create a user account on the website. This is necessary so job seekers can manage their stored resumes through our site.

**Manage Resumes** - As previously mentioned, job seekers who have created and stored a resume with our website will automatically have a user account created for them using the details entered in the resume. By logging in, the job seeker can easily edit, copy, delete and submit their stored resume through this page.

- **Classifieds** - Visitors can buy and sell property, equipment, services and more in our Classified ad section. A handy search bar allows visitors to use keywords to search all of our current ads, or simply browse one of four categories: For Sale, For Lease, Items Wanted and Services. Posting an ad is a simple process. Users select a category for their ad, fill out a form to describe the item or service and upload up to four images. Ads can be edited through the website using an access key sent via email. Contact the office at 408.289.1480 for assistance.
- **Volunteer** - SCCDS members have a long history of volunteering their time and expertise to those in need. Because we know volunteering is important to our members, our website lists volunteer opportunities that members can participate in. Users can view organizations and events both locally and

internationally at the click of a button.

Events are displayed in a calendar format and helpful links to organization websites are included above the calendar for easy reference.

- **Facility rentals** - Rooms at our beautiful office and conference center are available to rent for study clubs, events, meetings and conferences. This page describes the amenities and provides contact information. Our facility is very popular and dates fill up quickly. Interested parties are encouraged to secure their date as soon as possible by calling our office at 408.289.1480.
- **Sponsorship opportunities** - This page contains information about sponsoring our events.
- **Photo gallery** - Take a look at the latest images from our programs and social events. See how much fun it is to be a member!

**5. Members** - The final section is designed to put member-specific services within a few clicks from any page within our website. Here, members will find links to:

- digital versions of our award-winning publications
- upcoming member-exclusive events
- the user's profile
- our Member Directory - find friends, referrals and colleagues by last name, city, zip code or specialty
- individual committee pages

The SCCDS website is always changing and evolving to better suit the needs of our membership. We encourage all of our members to explore the site, become familiar with its contents and visit frequently. Feedback is highly appreciated and taken into account by our administrator and our Web Oversight Committee. Please send comments and suggestions to [erichl@sccds.org](mailto:erichl@sccds.org).



giving back to the community

# volunteer opportunities

**W**e know as dental professionals that good oral health is vital to good general health. Unfortunately, quality dental services are simply unavailable for too many individuals. Many people haven't seen a dentist in years due to overwhelming difficulties in accessing care. The problem is not exclusive to underdeveloped countries. It is a serious issue right here in high-cost Santa Clara County.

As a dental professional, you are in the unique position to help people achieve better health through improved oral hygiene and dental care. You can truly make a difference in the lives of people from San Jose, CA. to San Jose, Mexico and beyond.

Volunteering is hard work, but it can also be extremely rewarding. Your volunteer experience can be as exciting as you want it to be. You may find yourself performing extractions at a regional CDA Cares event or traveling up the Amazon River to fill teeth in a remote village.

No matter whether you choose to volunteer for an international dental charity mission or at a local health fair, your work will be appreciated by people who truly need your help.

The following is a list of organizations and programs our members volunteer their services for.

### Local Organizations and Events

- CDA Cares
- Foothill College's Medical and Dental Brigades
- California CareForce
- Health Mobile

### International Organizations

- ADA International Volunteer Organization
- Charity Dental Work | Global Dental Relief
- Los Médicos Voladores

- Canvasback Missions, Inc.
- Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
- Team Smile Nonprofit Childrens' Dental Organization

One of the ways you can volunteer close to home is with our annual "Give Kids A Smile" program in early February 2019. In 2018, our volunteers screened more than 7,000 local children for potential dental issues. This critical work would not be possible without volunteers who donate their time and expertise to ensure our children have the brightest smiles and futures possible.

If you are interested in volunteering for Give Kids A Smile or would like to know more about any of our volunteer opportunities, please contact Community / Member Programs Coordinator Michael Tran at (408) 289-1480, by email at [michaelt@sccds.org](mailto:michaelt@sccds.org) or you can visit <https://sccds.org/resources/volunteer>.

# Join a Committee

## Find friends and patients for life!



By: Megan Duncan, Operations Manager

After many years of studying, testing, practicing techniques and learning science and physiology, you've finally graduated. But now what? How do you even get started? Do you want to be an employee or a practice owner? What are all the regulations you need to comply with here? We all had many questions after college but very few professionals have access to such a strong, vibrant and collegial association.

The Society is your answer to almost every question and joining a committee is an important step toward practice success. By joining a committee, you can

- Meet friends and colleagues
- Meet referrals
- Find a job or a practice for sale
- Find a mentor and get questions answered
- Learn leadership skills that apply to your practice
- Give back to the community

Our committees are the gateway to getting your name "out there". All of our Board of Directors and our President started their climbs to leadership through committees. Their work as leaders has improved how they manage their practices and staff as well as improving their referrals. Many of them are life-long and close friends. Meeting other professionals through committees is an excellent way to meet a mentor and a great place to get advice and share hardships and triumphs.

We have committees that fit with most passions and interests. Do you love planning and attending social events? Join the

Membership, New Professionals or Women in Dentistry Committees. Want to give back to the community? Join the Community Services Committee. Love writing articles and stories? Join the Editorial Board. Want to see new and innovative speakers for clinical CE? Join the Continuing Education Committee. There are many options to choose from so you're sure to find your niche.

Committees are the backbone of the Dental Society. They shape the direction that the organization takes going into the future and you could have your "hand on the tiller". It is also a lot of fun! Hopefully, after reading this you will be inspired to come by a meeting, have dinner on us and get involved! Without a doubt, it will affect your life and your practice positively as it has for all of our leaders going back to the 1850s.

For more information visit: <https://sccds.org/members/committees/> or call us today at (408) 289-1480. We are always here for you with answers to any of your questions!

### SCCDS Committees

**Allied Dental Health Professionals:** Works with allied dental professional groups, encourages youth to choose dental careers, and awards scholarships to deserving students.

**Public Relations/Communications:** Guides communications in all media to enhance the image of the Society and the dental professions among members and the public.

**Community Services:** Identifies community oral health needs, coordinates programs to address them, and develops partnerships with

others to address community needs.

**Continuing Education:** Identifies great speakers for CE courses and monthly meetings, a core activity for the Society.

**Editorial Board:** Organizes, writes and selects articles for the Society's monthly publication, "The Cutting Edge."

**Leadership Development Committee:** Responsible for identifying and developing competent leaders at all levels of involvement. Develops strategies to encourage members to join committees, plans trainings to develop committee members to assume leadership roles and develops committee chairs for board roles.

**Legislative Committee:** Responsible for supporting the legislative policy priorities of CDA and ADA as they apply to the best interests of members and the public and acts when requested by the CDA Legislative Council and Cal-D-PAC chairperson.

**Membership Committee:** Helps to recruit and welcome new members and organizes social and professional programs to engage all members in their professional society.

**New Professionals Committee:** Assists dentists with fewer than 10 years in the profession in transitioning to active membership in organized dentistry.

**Web Oversight Committee:** Responsible for maintaining and improving the appearance, content, layout, functionality, construction and maintenance of the SCCDS website

**Women In Dentistry Committee:** Plans CE and social events focused on health, wellness and families.



## Section 2 Your Career

Practice Management Building Blocks.....	16
Is Your Practice Structured Properly?.....	17
Negotiating a Good Lease.....	18
Branding Tips for Dentists.....	20
Hiring Dental Assisting Students.....	22
Employee or Independent Contractor.....	23
The 10 Most Common HIPAA Violations.....	24
New Practice Checklist.....	26
Records and Documents Retention Guidelines.....	28
Life Insurance.....	30
Good Communication Is Good!.....	32



Practice Management

# building blocks

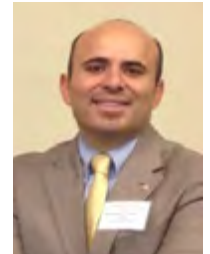




# Is Your Practice Structured Properly?

Know your options for entity selection.

By: Bassim Michael, CPA, MS Tax



There is no doubt that starting a new practice is a tremendous challenge, and one of the first tasks you will face is entity selection. There are a number of ways in which to form an entity, and each has distinct advantages and disadvantages. In addition, with the new tax laws enacted under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, it might be prudent to revisit your choice of entity with your CPA and dental attorney if you have an existing practice.

Dentists in California can practice in the form of a sole proprietorship, corporation or partnership. If a dentist incorporates, he/she has a choice to be treated as a C corporation or an S corporation. While in other states dentists can form LLCs or PLLCs for their dental practices, California does not allow dentists to practice as an LLC. In this article, I want to inform the reader on the types of entities available to California dentists and the differences between them.

## Sole Proprietorship vs. Corporations

A sole proprietor is someone who owns an unincorporated business by himself or herself. Sole proprietorships are simpler to start since they don't require any filings with the Secretary of State. They also don't require a separate tax return, since the income or loss from a sole proprietorship is reported on the owner's personal tax return. While sole proprietorships are simpler to form and have less compliance, they tend to be subject to more IRS audits than corporations and the owners could pay more taxes. On average (depending on the net income of the practice), a sole proprietor dentist pays

\$3,000 to \$10,000 more in Social Security and Medicare taxes than a dentist who incorporates.

The second option is to incorporate your practice as a professional corporation. A corporation is a separate legal entity from its shareholders (owners), and because of that fact, you should consider discussing with your dental attorney the limited liability aspects that come with incorporating your dental practice. In addition, it may be helpful to incorporate before you start or buy a practice to show the practice loan, equipment loan and business credit cards in the name of the corporation. Doing so will free up your personal credit rating.

If you decide to incorporate, the next step is choosing between a C corporation and an S corporation. S corporations are corporations that elect to pass their corporation income, losses, deductions and credits through to their shareholders for tax purposes. The owners or shareholder of the S corporation will report their flow through income or losses on their individual tax returns and pay taxes on that income at their individual tax rate. To qualify for the S corporation status, the corporation must

file an election in a timely fashion and must meet the following requirement:

- Have no more than 100 shareholders
- Have one class of stock
- Must be a domestic corporation
- The shareholders cannot be partnerships, corporations or non-resident aliens

C corporations are taxed as a separate tax entity, therefore a C corporation pays taxes on its income. When the profits are paid to the owners, they get taxed on that money again. That's why C corporations get the "double taxation" label. Prior to the passing of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, professional C corporations paid a flat rate of 35%, that rate has now been reduced to 21% under the new law. While a 21% tax rate sounds attractive, keep in mind that when the retained profits are distributed to the owners, they will be taxed again at the owner's tax rate.

In general, we find that the S corporation status is suitable for most dentists who decide to incorporate. It provides the practicing dentist some legal and audit protection, reduces his/her Social Security and Medicare tax and avoids the double taxation issues related to C corporations.





## Negotiating a Good Lease

You get what you negotiate!

By: Dale Willerton, Founder and CEO and Jeff Grandfield, Professional Commercial Lease Consultant with The Lease Coach, Inc.



For many dentists, negotiating a good practice lease or lease renewal against an experienced agent or landlord can be a challenge. While you will think of patient check-ups, fillings, and managing your practice, savvy real estate agents and brokers are specialized sales people. Their job is to sell dental tenants on leasing their location at the highest possible rental rate.

From office towers to strip mall plazas to quaint old downtown houses, the options for dental tenants are many. No matter which route you choose, as a dental tenant, you will most likely need to lease commercial space for your practice. With doing so, you may go through the leasing process once or twice in your lifetime – yet you have to negotiate against seasoned professionals who negotiate leases every day for a living.

As we explain in our new book, "Negotiating Commercial Leases & Renewals FOR DUMMIES," there is much to remember whether you are leasing a new location for the first time or negotiating a lease renewal for your dental practice. Here are some tips:

- **Negotiate to Win:** All too frequently, tenants enter into lease negotiations unprepared and don't even try winning the negotiations. If you are not even negotiating to win, you won't. With big commissions at stake, you can be sure the landlord's agent, on the other hand, is negotiating fiercely to win. Negotiate assertively.
- **Be Prepared to Walk Away:** Try to set aside your emotions and make objective decisions. Whoever most needs to make a lease deal will give up the most concessions. A good dental practice in a poor location will become a poor dental practice.
- **Ask the Right Questions:** Gathering information about what other tenants are paying for rent or what incentives they received will position you to get a better deal. Consider that your landlord and his agent know what every other tenant in the property is paying in rent, so you must do your homework too.
- **Brokers ... Friend or Foe?** Agents and brokers typically work for the landlord and receive a commission for completed lease deals. It is not normally the agent's role to get the dental tenant the best deal – it is their job to get the landlord the highest rent, the biggest deposit, etc.

Often, the higher the rent you pay, the more commission the agent earns. If you are researching multiple properties, try to deal directly with the listing agent for each property, rather than letting one agent show you around or show you another agent's listing. Your tenancy is more desirable to the listing agent if he/she can avoid commission-splitting with other agents.

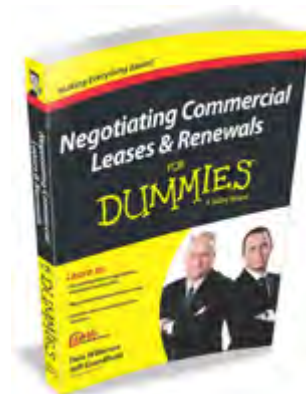
- **Never Accept the First Offer:** Even if the first offer seems reasonable, or you have no idea of what to negotiate for, never accept the leasing agent's first offer. In the real estate industry, most things are negotiable and the landlord fully expects you to counter-offer.
- **Ask for More Than You Want:** If you want three months free rent, then ask for five months. No one ever gets more than they ask for. Be prepared for the landlord to

counter-offer and negotiate with you as well. Don't be afraid of hearing "no" from the landlord – counter-offers are all part of the game.

- **Negotiate the Deposit:** Large deposits are not legally required in a real estate lease agreement. Deposits are negotiable and, more so than anything else, often serve to compensate the landlord for the real estate commissions he will be paying out to the agent(s). If you are negotiating a lease renewal and your landlord is already holding a deposit of yours, negotiate to get that deposit back.
- **Measure Your Space:** Dental tenants often pay for phantom space. Most dental tenants are paying their rent per square foot, but often they are not receiving as much space as the lease agreement says.
- **Negotiate, Negotiate:** The leasing process is just that – a process, not an event.

The more time you have to put the deal together and make counter-offers, the better the chance you have of getting what you really want. Too often, dental tenants mistakenly try to hammer out the deal in a two- or three-hour marathon session. It is more productive to negotiate in stages over time.

- **Educate Yourself and Get Help:** Unless you have money to throw away, it pays to educate yourself. Taking the time to read about the subject or listen in on a webinar will make a difference. And, don't forget to have your lease documents professionally reviewed before you sign them. With hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent at stake, personal guarantees and other risks, you can't afford to gamble. In leasing, dental tenants don't get what they deserve, they get what they negotiate.



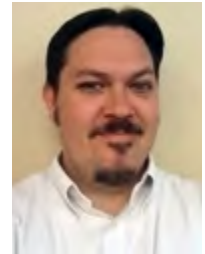
For a free copy of our CD, "Leasing Do's & Don'ts for Dental Tenants", please e-mail your request to [JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com](mailto:JeffGrandfield@TheLeaseCoach.com).

*Dale Willerton and Jeff Grandfield - The Lease Coach are commercial lease consultants who work exclusively for tenants. Dale and Jeff are professional speakers and co-authors of Negotiating Commercial Leases & Renewals FOR DUMMIES (Wiley, 2013). Got a leasing question? Need help with your new lease or renewal? Call 1-800-738-9202, e-mail [DaleWillerton@TheLeaseCoach.com](mailto:DaleWillerton@TheLeaseCoach.com) or visit [www.TheLeaseCoach.com](http://www.TheLeaseCoach.com).*



## Branding Tips for Dentists

It's much more than a logo.



By: Erich Larsen, SCCDS Communications Coordinator

**A** brand is the aesthetic, feeling, reputation, personality and identity of your company or business. It is comprised of many different elements including your logo, business collateral, interior design, clientele, online reviews or testimonials, business culture, history and more. If this seems like a big, vague description, think of it this way: your brand is the story you want to tell your customers. It's the impression they get when they think of your business.

Let's take a few of the most recognizable brands as examples.

Disney has spent years cultivating and carefully shaping its brand. Every aspect of the company is intended to work toward a brand that is synonymous with family, nostalgia, happiness, wholesomeness, fun, innovation and quality.

Coca-Cola has built an empire almost on branding alone. Their original product was a relatively simple beverage. But, they leveraged the popularity of that product to create a true lifestyle brand. Coke means refreshment, fun, tradition and, again, nostalgia. Most people also associate it with the color red. The brand is so strong that we can be reminded of its product just by the use of color.

Speaking of red, Target store employees always wear a red shirt with khaki pants. If you see someone walking down the street wearing those colors, you will inevitably think that person works for Target even if you don't see the Target logo or nametag. Of course, as soon as you think of Target, all of your impressions of that store come into your head as well.

### Why do I need it?

The power of branding applies to everything from retail to health care. Imagine what could happen if your practice name was universally synonymous with comfortable, compassionate high-quality dentistry! Even if your current patient base recognizes you this way, a well-developed brand will help you extend your reach to increase your patient flow and improve the impression those patients leave with.

According to a recent report by the Health Policy Institute, California has more practicing dentists than any other state.<sup>1</sup> This level of saturation means that each practice has to work harder to stand out from the crowd. Private practices in particular must work to differentiate themselves from large group practices or corporations. Even if the bulk of your patients are referrals or come from word-of-mouth, a solid, cohesive brand will go a long way toward improving the patient experience and, consequently, the story they tell when referring their friends and neighbors to you.

Now, imagine two dental practices: Office A and Office B. Both have invested in professional-looking logos. Both have nice, inviting offices with thoughtful interior design. Both doctors have comparable experience and services.

Office A has aftercare, follow-up and appointment reminder cards that feature the logo, complimentary colors and carefully chosen wording. Office A has an attractive website that features the same visual style as their printed materials plus a virtual tour, online forms, a description of common treatments and services

and a blog that establishes the doctor as an authority in the dental profession. Office A is run by a doctor who is involved in the community, his/her local dental society and, perhaps, other volunteer organizations as well. Finally, Office A includes personal touches throughout the building that tell you more about the character of the doctor and staff.

Office B uses non-branded templates for their printed materials and aftercare instructions provided by a national vendor. They also have a generic website... the same website used by 15 or 20 other dentists in the area. The dentist at Office B is not involved in the community, organized dentistry and does not volunteer his/her services. There are no personal touches anywhere in the office that highlight the people who work there.

You can tell with very little effort that Office A has attention to detail and cares about the impression they give to their patients. They work hard to convey an image of quality, cohesiveness and personality. When a patient sees Office A's logo, all of these impressions will come to mind and the patient will feel better about their choice of dentist and, thus, more likely to refer Office A to others.

Meanwhile, Office B is not doing anything wrong. They're just giving the impression that they're doing only what is necessary. For most people, this impression isn't negative but won't make the office stand out from the competition. In a crowded market, that's a mistake. The lack of branding is a missed opportunity at best and a poor impression at worst.

### Where do I get it?

Unfortunately, a brand is not something you can simply pay for and receive. It's a complicated set of integrated visual elements, ideas and professional habits that is grown and perfected over time.

You start developing your brand by identifying your target audience. In an ideal world, you should identify your target audience before you begin to work consciously on your brand. Once you know who you're marketing to, you can customize your efforts to appeal to them.

Ask yourself questions and seek out the demographics for your area.<sup>2</sup> Try to be as specific as possible.

- Who is your ideal patient?
- Who are your current patients?
- How do they differ?
- Do you practice in an affluent neighborhood?
- Are there many single young people in your area or is it mostly families or retired individuals?
- What are the most common or the most lucrative procedures you perform?

Ultimately, by asking these questions and many more, you should end up with an understanding of your current patients and an idea of your practice's strengths as well as what you need to change to attract the patients you want.

Once you've identified your target audience, craft a message that will appeal to them. Tell them why your practice is perfect for them.

For example "We are a boutique dental practice focused on luxurious patient comfort and clinical excellence" or "We are a warm and friendly family dental practice devoted to prevention and oral health education."

Both of the above messages require different approaches to succeed.

Once you have your message, make sure everything else you do supports that message. You should hire a designer to create a logo and choose colors, slogans and imagery that convey your message. Start seeking out testimonials that concentrate on values your ideal patient will find attractive. Create a custom website or update your existing one to ensure it focuses on delivering your message. Hire or train staff to understand and support your brand and be sure your entire office is cohesive in its efforts.

### How much will it cost?

Again, this question does not have a simple answer. You can develop many elements of a successful brand yourself. You should, at some point, rely on a marketing or branding specialist to provide insight and expertise. You should also use a professional designer for your visual identity. Remember, if you take shortcuts, that will become a part of your brand. If your priority

is saving money, this will also become evident in your brand.

According to [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com/), freelance graphic design services can cost between \$35 and \$75 per hour in San Jose.<sup>3</sup> Prices for brand and marketing consultants are comparable to those of graphic designers.

Before hiring a designer or specialist, ask them for a list of deliverables. Ask about their development process and, of course, ask for a portfolio of past relevant work.

**It's important to note that** branding isn't for everyone. For most dentists, good enough is good enough. But, to be a truly outstanding practice in a sea of competitors takes a bit more effort. Branding is a complicated process that can't be done quickly. It requires you to be honest and thoughtful about your business goals and to maintain clarity and focus as you work to achieve them. However, the time, effort and money you spend on branding can ultimately allow you to grow the practice of your dreams.

1. *Dentist Profile Snapshot by State 2016 (XLSX - Revised January 2018)*
2. *American Fact Finder - <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>*
3. *Glassdoor - [https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/san-jose-graphic-designer-salary-SRCH\\_IL,0,8\\_IM761\\_KO9,25.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/san-jose-graphic-designer-salary-SRCH_IL,0,8_IM761_KO9,25.htm)*



## Hiring Dental Assisting Students

Create a “win-win” for your new practice.

By: Michelle Sugden, Dental Instructor, Silicon Valley Career Technical Education Center



So, you are just getting started and your practice skills and practice volume may not be up to its full potential as you build your practice. You’ve just bought your own dental practice and the reality of staffing and office overhead is soon to make itself apparent.

The Bay Area is one of the highest overhead communities in the nation, bringing with it a robust economy to draw patients from but also steeper competition among your peers. Being in debt and the dream of owning your own practice may seem just a pipe dream due to the start-up costs and at the very minimum is likely a point of initial anxiety in your life and a call for action. Considering all expenses of running a dental office, your personnel expenses will be one of the largest. Most dental offices have an average 75% overhead cost and staff salaries can generally amount to 25 to 30% of that overhead. When we break down the positions in a dental office and consider volume and busyness, the assisting position can account for as much as 9-15% of your overhead. Controlling your personnel costs in a competitive economy will be an area that will deserve your attention, especially if you have not reached your peak busyness.

Why not consider taking on a dental assisting trainee who is also beginning their lifelong career like yourself? The benefits can be many, but the first is that salaries for a person just beginning his/her dental career will generally be lower than for someone with many years experience under their belt. Silicon Valley Career Technical Education Center has taught more than 1200 students, with many working as

DA, RDA, RDAEF, RDH and even eventually as a dentist. One of our students placed second in the nation in 2016 for dental assisting in the world-wide organization, SkillsUSA, competition. Of course, we are not the only vocational school training dental assistants and other auxiliary dental personnel in our area. The intent of my article is to encourage new dentists to reach out to these programs to help get their students started in dentistry and likely provide a “win, win” opportunity for your office staffing.

Many dentists have found their most loyal lifelong employees are graduates of our local vocational programs. Training and hiring a

new person to dentistry allows you to grow together and often you’re able to mold them to your needs and modern techniques. The reality of these training programs is that you have an opportunity to train people in your office with the right to mutually determine whether they are the best fit for your personality and office. When you find the right person, you have the option to hire them.

Whether you are a new dentist or a well-established and experienced dentist, choosing to train new dental professionals has few downsides and is a great opportunity to help your profession and very likely your own office.





# Employee or Independent Contractor?

Do you know the ABCs?



By: Mari Bradford, California Employers Association (CEA)

You may currently have an employee in your dental practice classified as an independent contractor, or perhaps you are thinking of a new team member and 1099-ing them. If you are considering having an independent contractor in your office, you should be aware that the California Supreme Court has a new test for determining the difference between an independent contractor and an employee. The new ABC test will make it harder for companies to classify workers as independent contractors. Workers who do not engage in an independent business and do not provide services outside the usual course of your company’s business are considered employees.

The California Supreme Court has found that a hiring entity (that’s you), in order to prove that an independent contractor is not an employee, must establish each of the three factors embodied in the ABC test — namely, that the worker:

- A. Is free from the control and direction of the hiring entity in connection with the performance of the work, both under the contract for the performance of the work and in fact;
- B. Performs work that is outside the usual course of the hiring entity’s business; and
- C. Is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as the work performed.

According to the courts, the IWC wage orders “suffer or permit to work” definition must be interpreted broadly to provide the wage order’s

protection to all workers who would ordinarily be viewed as working in the business.

The suffer or permit to work definition “is a term of art that cannot be interpreted literally in a manner that would encompass within the employee category the type of individual workers, like independent plumbers or electricians, who have traditionally been viewed as genuine independent contractors who are working only in their own independent business” (Dynamex Operations West, Inc., April 30, 2018, Cantil-Sakauye, T.).

Do I have to worry? Yes, the burden is on you. After discussing each part of the ABC test and its relationship to the suffer or permit to work definition, the court concluded that unless the

hiring entity establishes each part of the ABC test it set forth, the worker should be considered an employee. The hiring entity’s failure to prove any one of these three prerequisites will be sufficient in itself to establish that the worker is an included employee, rather than an excluded independent contractor, for purposes of the wage order.

What do you need to do? Review anyone classified as an independent contractor and be prepared to convert them to an employee. If you do this now, it can save your practice significant liability moving forward. CEA is here to help! You can contact us at 800-399-5331 to discuss how CEA can help support you for all of your HR compliance needs.





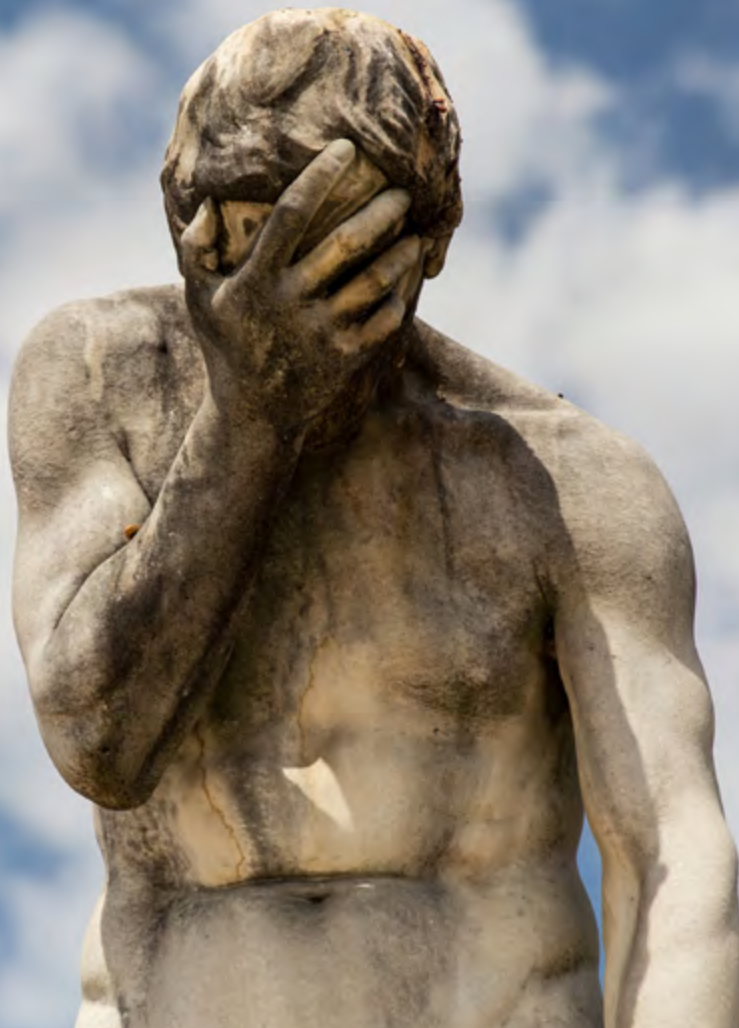
## The 10 Most Common HIPAA Violations

Are you compromising patient privacy?

By: Tyna Whipple of Make Compliance Simple



# OOPS



Dental professionals need to be vigilant in our increasingly digital world to protect patient privacy and stay in compliance. Take a look at our list of the most common HIPAA violations and make sure your practice isn't in violation!

1. Failure to adhere to the authorization expiration date on patient forms:
  - a. Patients can set a date when their authorization expires on their forms. A HIPAA violation occurs if confidential records are released any time after the specified date.
2. Failure to promptly release information to patients:
  - a. Patients have the right to receive electronic or physical copies of their medical and billing records within 5 days from the date of the request. A HIPAA violation occurs if the delivery of a patient's protected information is made after the 5 days from the requested date.
3. Failure to properly dispose of patient records:
  - a. All patient paper records need to be shredded before disposal. A HIPAA violation occurs if your practice threw a patient chart into the garbage can.
  - b. All patient electronic records need to be completely deleted before a hard drive is destroyed. A HIPAA violation occurs when recycling your entire computer system as e-waste.
4. Failure to obtain a patient signature:
  - a. HIPAA forms without a patient's signature are invalid. So, releasing any information from those unsigned forms results in a violation. A HIPAA violation occurs when the information is sent.



5. Releasing information to an undesignated party:
  - a. Only the exact person listed on the authorization form may receive patient information. For example, a HIPAA violation occurs if your patient authorized your practice to give their protected health information only to their mother and you gave their protected health information to their father.
6. Failure to have a Right to Revoke clause:
  - a. Any HIPAA form a patient signs needs to have a Right to Revoke clause or the form is invalid. The HIPAA violation occurs when a patient signing an authorization form asks your practice to send their protected information to another office for a second opinion but nowhere on the form does it state that the form can only be revoked in writing or that it is revoked by a certain date.
7. Intentionally or accidentally releasing the wrong patient's information:
  - a. This can happen when two patients have the same or similar names, are related or have very similar email addresses or fax numbers. For example, a HIPAA violation occurs if your practice emails a patient the wrong information because your practice improperly input a patient's email address.
8. Insider snooping:
  - a. This happens when friends, family members or co-workers look at a patient's medical records without authorization. The HIPAA violation occurs immediately when a friend, family member or co-worker looks at any patients records that their job functions do not allow.
9. Releasing unauthorized protected health information:
  - a. Releasing the wrong document or any data that has not been approved for release constitutes a violation. A patient has the right to release his/her medical records in parts if they choose. The HIPAA violation results from your practice sending an entire medical record after not fully reading an authorization form your patient filled out that requests the practice to only mail out a part of the medical record.
10. Having unprotected storage of protected health information:
  - a. Protected health information stored electronically needs to be stored on secure devices.
  - b. Laptops, mobile devices or USB drives all need to be encrypted. A HIPAA violation results immediately, for example, if your unencrypted cell phone containing patient information is lost or stolen.
  - c. Servers need to be either encrypted or caged and bolted to the wall or floor and stored in a locked room. A HIPAA violation does not occur if your server is stolen and is encrypted but there is a violation if your computer is unencrypted and not caged, bolted to the wall or floor and stored at all times in a locked room.

**Real Life Scenarios that Violate HIPAA**

1. Not logging off of your computer or a computer system that contains protected health information.
2. Discussing protected health information over the phone in a public area.
3. Releasing information about a minor without the consent of a parent or guardian.
4. Faxing protected health information to the wrong fax number.
5. Emailing patient information to the wrong email address.
6. Telling friends and family about a patient in your practice.
7. Discussing private health information in public areas such as a coffee shop, lobby, hallway or restaurant.
8. Including protected information in an email that is sent unencrypted.
9. A health insurance company, for example, requests the number of the tooth that needs a crown but is given the patient's entire chart.
10. Taking patient charts home and they are stolen or lost.



**Make Compliance Simple**  
Getting Compliant is as simple as ABC

**We Save You Time, Money & Take The Stress Away!**

**In-House Compliance Consulting, Training, and Support Services:**

- Cal-OSHA
- Dental Board Education
- HIPAA
- Human Resources

**(408) 362-9550**    [www.MakeComplianceSimple.com](http://www.MakeComplianceSimple.com)

# New Practice Checklist

## Are you ready to open for business?

By: SCCDS Member Support Staff

### Business License or Registration

Most cities require a business license or registration. Contact the city hall or seat of government where you intend to practice to find out if the treasurer, city clerk and/or business license department administers licenses. If you set up and then move your practice within a city, you may be required to notify the same agency about your address change.

### Prescription Drug Compliance

If your practice will require you to write prescriptions for controlled substances, you must have a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) number issued by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Apply for a number: <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/webforms/jsp/regapps/common/newAppLogin.jsp>

You'll also need to order Controlled Substance Prescription Forms from approved vendors listed by the California DOJ. [oag.ca.gov/security-printers/approved-list](http://oag.ca.gov/security-printers/approved-list)

If you are a direct-dispense prescriber you may electronically report dispensing data to the DOJ. To apply for an account, view instructions on how to apply or submit dispense data, visit <https://www.aaicures.com/register.for.access.php>. Please note that the DOJ no longer accepts paper direct dispense reports.

### Equipment Permits and Registration

#### X-Ray Equipment

State law requires that owners of X-ray machines register with the California

Department of Health Services and comply with state radiation-protection standards. Current registration is \$236 per X-ray tube, billed every two years. For registration forms and standards information, visit <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DRSEM/Pages/RHB.aspx>

#### Air Compressor Tanks

Cal/OSHA requires a permit for compressors larger than 1.5 cubic feet in volume or when the safety valve is set greater than 150 psi. Compressor tanks must have a nameplate with the ASME Code symbol (a clover leaf with a "U" or "UM") to indicate compliance. Contact Cal/OSHA's Pressure Vessel Section for your tank to be inspected and permitted. Fees may vary by location. A typical permit is issued for five years, after which the compressor must be re-inspected.

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/pressure.html>

Phone: 510.622.3066

Most cities in Santa Clara County also require a Hazardous Materials Storage Permit from the Fire Department to use nitrous oxide or other explosive gas. For example, visit the San Jose Fire Department website:

<https://sanjoseca.gov/?nid=749>

### Waste Disposal and Registration

#### Medical Waste

All generators of medical waste (including sharps, pharmaceuticals and biohazardous materials) must register and pay a fee to regional enforcement agencies. Some areas

are regulated by a local enforcement agency (LEA), such as the county health department or environmental health department. Others are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Health Services (DHS). Visit the DHS website to find out how your area is regulated. You can also find information about mail-back sharps services, alternative waste treatment technologies, waste-generator application forms and instructions and the Medical Waste Management Act.

[cdph.ca.gov/Pages/CDPHHome.aspx](http://cdph.ca.gov/Pages/CDPHHome.aspx)

Phone: (916) 558-1784

#### Hazardous Waste

Many dental offices generate hazardous waste (amalgam, outdated chemicals or fixer) but manage it as recyclable materials or universal waste. Generators of hazardous waste typically require an EPA ID number, but there are exceptions. Visit the Department of Toxic Substances Control website to determine if you need a number and apply for one if needed.

[dtsc.ca.gov/IDManifest/index.cfm](http://dtsc.ca.gov/IDManifest/index.cfm)

Phone: 800.728.6942.

#### Wastewater

It is illegal in Santa Clara County to dispose of hazardous wastes by flushing them down the drain. Santa Clara County also requires dental offices to secure a wastewater permit.

Consult the CDA Compliance Manual for guidance about a broad spectrum of hazardous wastes and how to meet Cal/OSHA and waste management requirements. Order

a copy for FREE at <https://www.cda.org/MemberResources/CDAPracticeSupport/AdditionalResources/tabid/271/pfcatid/50/Infection-Control.aspx>. Must be logged in as a CDA member.

**Taxes**

As an employer/businessperson, you need a federal tax identification number, which is not the same as your Social Security number. To obtain a federal tax ID number, register with a local office of the IRS. Forms and information about federal FICA (Social Security) quarterly tax returns are also available there.

Enrollment forms for state tax deductions are available from the local office of the California Employment Development Department (EDD). If you have employees, enrollment is mandatory. The EDD can also give you information about State Disability Insurance (SDI) and an explanation of mandatory payroll reports.

IRS: Small Business and Self-Employed Resources: [irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html](https://irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html)

Employment Development Department: [edd.ca.gov/Payroll\\_Taxes/Am\\_I\\_Required\\_to\\_Register\\_as\\_an\\_Employer.htm](https://edd.ca.gov/Payroll_Taxes/Am_I_Required_to_Register_as_an_Employer.htm)

**Insurance**

Although California law does not require dentists to carry professional liability insurance, they are legally liable for actions under the Dental Practice Act. In order to protect your professional and personal assets, professional-liability insurance is a necessity.

California state law does require that employees be covered by workers' compensation insurance. It is also a good idea to have employment practices liability insurance (EPLI).

Information about these plans is available through The Dentists Insurance Company (TDIC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the California Dental Association. TDIC offers

professional and premises liability coverage and risk-management services to dentists and their employees.

Please contact them with any questions.

TDIC  
1201 K Street, 17th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone 800.733.0633  
Fax 877.498.6105  
[www.thedentists.com](http://www.thedentists.com)  
CA Lic #0652783

**Workplace Compliance**

The state also requires employer compliance with provisions governing working conditions, including wages. For information, refer to a set of posters provided by CDA and your local component; or to the California Department of Industrial Relations website; or to your local office of the Department of Industrial Relations.

Department of Industrial Relations  
[www.dir.ca.gov/wp.asp](http://www.dir.ca.gov/wp.asp)  
San Jose office: (408) 362-2120

Federal and state laws require employers to display posters about employee safety and health, job discrimination, wages and other employee issues. CDA has compiled these posters into a set, available through SCCDS. You may also purchase a duplicate poster by visiting [cda.org/posterset](http://cda.org/posterset). Every California employer must establish, implement and maintain a written Injury and Illness Prevention (IIP) Program and keep a copy at each office. Dental offices also must have a written Hazard Communication Plan and an Exposure Control Plan for blood-borne pathogens. For information, contact:

California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA)  
800.963.9424  
[www.dir.ca.gov/occupational\\_safety.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/occupational_safety.html)

 On The Web

**Dental Board of California**  
[www.dbc.ca.gov](http://www.dbc.ca.gov)

**American Dental Education Association**  
[www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)

**California Academy of General Dentistry**  
[www.caagd.com](http://www.caagd.com)

**American College of Dentists Dental Ethics**  
[www.dentaethics.org](http://www.dentaethics.org)

**California Business and Professions Code**  
<https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes/TOCSelected.xhtml?tocCode=BPC>



American Dental Association  
211 East Chicago Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60611-2678

[www.ada.org/en/member-center/](http://www.ada.org/en/member-center/)

312.440.2500



California Dental Association  
1201 K Street, 14th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

[www.cda.org/member-resources/practice-support](http://www.cda.org/member-resources/practice-support)

800.232.7645



Santa Clara County Dental Society  
1485 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95126

[www.sccds.org](http://www.sccds.org)

Dentist's Mentor Online  
[sccds.org/mentor.html](http://sccds.org/mentor.html)

Jobs Section  
[sccds.org/jobsclassifieds.html](http://sccds.org/jobsclassifieds.html)

408.289.1480

# Records and Documents Retention Guidelines

Don't shred that file just yet!

By: CDA Member Support Staff

Record keeping for a new dental practice can be confusing and intimidating. Unfortunately, there are no easy rules that apply to every document. Some must be kept indefinitely, while others can be destroyed after a matter of months. Luckily, our friends at CDA Practice Support have put together this handy spreadsheet to help you decide how long to keep each different document. If you still have questions about this or any other practice support topic, you can always call the SCCDS office at 408.289.1480. One of our staff members will be happy to find the answers you need.

Business Documents	Retention Period
Annual audited financial statements	Indefinitely
Annual plans and budgets	2 years
Bank statements and cancelled checks	7 years
Charitable contribution records	7 years
Contracts and related correspondence and documents	6 years after expiration or termination
Corporate records (articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules)	Indefinitely
Correspondence – general	1 year
Correspondence – legal and other important matters	Indefinitely
Financing documents, credit agreements, loan agreements, etc.	10 years after satisfaction or termination
General ledgers	10 years
Group insurance plans	Active employees (until plan is amended or terminated); retirees (indefinitely or until 6 years after death of last eligible participant)
Insurance claims files	10 years after claim is closed
Insurance policies and certificates	Indefinitely
Legal memoranda	5 years after close of matter
Litigation files	Indefinitely
Monthly financial statements	7 years
Paid vouchers	7 years
Pension documents and supporting employee data	Indefinitely
Regulatory filings and documents	Indefinitely
Tax returns	Indefinitely
Wage assignments, attachments, garnishments	3 years after payment or settlement

Patient Documents	Retention Period
EOBs (Explanation of Benefits)	7 years
Patient payment records	3 years after full payment
Patient (active) treatment records	Indefinitely
Patient (inactive) treatment records	Adults –10 years from the date patient was last seen Minors –7 years from the patient’s last treatment or 1 year past the patient’s 18th birthday (age 19), whichever is longer

Employee Documents	Retention Period
Continuing education certificates	3 complete license renewal periods
Employee earnings records	Indefinitely
Employee handbooks	Indefinitely
Employee exposure and medical records	Duration of employment plus 30 years
Employee Eligibility (I-9 form)	The later of: 3 years from hire date or 1 year after termination
Group insurance plans	Active employees (until plan is amended or terminated); retirees (indefinitely or until 6 years after death of last eligible participant)
Job applications, resumes, interview notes	2 years for applicants and 4 years from termination for hired individuals
Job descriptions	3 years after superseded
Payroll	4 years after termination
Pension documents and supporting employee data	Indefinitely
Personnel records	4 years after termination
Wage assignments, attachments, garnishments	3 years after payment or settlement

Compliance Documents	Retention Period
Sterilizer monitoring results	12 months
Hazardous waste treatment / disposal / recycling records	5 years
Medical waste treatment / disposal records	3 years
HIPAA-related policies, procedures and documentation of training and other actions	6 years
Controlled substances purchase records / inventory log / dispensing log	3 years
EmployeeCal / OSHA training records	3 years
Injury and Illness Program •Records of regular inspections •Training records	3 years Employers with less than 10 employees need only maintain inspection records until the hazard is corrected, and may maintain a log of instructions in lieu of separate training records
Exposure Control Program •Training records •Sharps Injury Log •House keeping schedule	•3 years •5 years •No mandated retention period; recommend 1 year

# Life Insurance

## When, why and how?



By: Carey F. Wolf, Independent Life Insurance Consultant

**F**loss and brush your teeth before you go to bed. Don't eat too many sweets. This is what I know about dentistry. As an insurance specialist, I would not diagnose a cavity or the need for a crown. A smart patient leaves that to you, the expert.

Similarly, as a dentist, you might wonder why you should try to become an expert in risk management and life insurance. Devoting significant hours to learning what an insurance agent can help you with is not the best use of your time.

Myths abound about life insurance, just as they do about dentistry and misinformation makes matters confusing. It's too expensive, too hard to get and unnecessary until you have significant liabilities. Additionally, there is the suspicion about what is not understood. You may be thinking "Insurance companies do not want to pay claims. I cannot trust the agents because they only want their commissions and are not really looking after my best interests." There are too many questions and concerns to simply leave it to the experts.

Let's try to address these underlying doubts and questions logically. Ask yourself: do I have debt in my practice? Do I have personal financial responsibilities or outstanding college loans? What is the relationship with my dental practice partners and employees? Will my financial burdens be left for my spouse to solve? When does liability become responsibility?

Life insurance can be the prescription for these issues as well as several other scenarios. How do you get started? How hard is it to get a

good policy? When should I buy life insurance? How do I find a life insurance representative I can trust? Let's tackle these questions right here and now.

### **Why should I get life insurance?**

You should get life insurance because you love and care about somebody and you do not want to leave them in a financial bind. You have debt including college loans, equipment loans and a mortgage. You are responsible and don't want to leave your debts for others (cosigners) to satisfy. Why? It is the financially prudent and responsible action both on a personal and professional level. If you pass away suddenly, the liquidation of your practice, your family's ability to maintain a mortgage and car payments suddenly fall on a grieving family and your insurance policy may be one of the few lights at the end of a dark tunnel.

### **Finding a reputable life insurance agent**

Probably the best way to do this is a referral from a satisfied peer. Find an agent with at least a few years in practice, not a part-time agent and part-time teacher or mechanic or necessarily an insurance company representative that may have limited products to offer. As a dental professional, you have worked hard to establish your practice and reputation and keep yourself current; similarly, you may find the right life insurance professional doing exactly the same thing. Choose wisely, do a little homework, feel free to ask some questions and conduct an interview when making your selection. Some

fair questions to ask are:

- How long have you been in practice?
- What does your sales process look like: fact finding, needs analysis, application and underwriting?
- Are you a broker with access to many products or are you affiliated with one specific company?
- How are the companies you use rated with A.M. Best?

You're not obligated to buy from an agent because he spends time with you and offers to analyze your finances. It is more critical that you feel comfortable and can form a trusting bond during the process. Optimistically, this will be a trusted financial resource and life journey partner.

### **When should I buy a life insurance policy?**

The sooner the better! Pricing is based on age, health, family health history, financial and lifestyle stability. It is quite simple, the younger you are and the healthier you are, the more insurable you are. The big challenge here is that you might have some financial challenges: grad school loans and debt, family, mortgage, dental practice loans. When finances are lean, the solution might be a Guaranteed Level Premium Term Life policy from an A or A+ rated insurance carrier. Insurance companies are rated by an organization called A.M. Best and the 3 primary measurements are: distribution, reserves, and claims paying ability. All 3 of these are important in the stability of the company and in turn your life insurance policy. A strong

company with great rates and a quality product and process are much easier to find than you may think. If you are in good health, it will probably be significantly less expensive than you might have imagined.

### Getting ready to shop for insurance

Ask your peers who they use and trust. Go online. There are many educational sources, online agencies and industry blogs that can provide you volumes of information, guidance and answers. Be prepared to be overwhelmed and potentially daunted by all the industry terms and acronyms. Do not let this discourage you; it really does not have to be all that complicated. The right professional can walk you through the jargon, process and product detail and get you started on protection solutions that will cover you, your practice and family.

In my opinion, the best website in the industry to get educated about life insurance is Life Happens: <https://www.lifehappens.org>. Life Happens does not promote or partner with any specific carrier and has been designed for agents as well as consumers. For a more technical-research-and news-related site, go to LIMRA – Life Insurance Marketing and Research Association: <https://www.limra.com>

### What do the insurance companies look for during the exam and underwriting?

You buy life insurance with your health and lifestyle wellness; oh yeah, you'll need your wallet too. Understand that the insurance company and the underwriting process are about managing and mitigating risk. The first step is finding an agent who will help you manage this process by providing you some basic education without overwhelming you. You do not want to become an authority but you do want to be knowledgeable about what you are getting involved in. I do not want to know how to do a root canal, I just want to know why I need one, how soon we can complete it, what the pain and recovery will be like and how much will be covered by my dental insurance policy. It's not

much different when looking for insurance and other financial products.

### How are you going to qualify and how do you get the lowest premium possible?

There are many factors that go into the decision-making process by the insurance company to determine what risk you are and what rate class you best qualify for. Remember, just as your dental companies do a lot of research to predict long-range outcomes, so too do the insurance companies. They look at the health and activity factors that affect the longevity of human life. You can see where you may be able to improve some factors and must accept others. It can seem daunting and you might think it is just too much effort. Do not give up or walk away. Find the agent you are comfortable with, one where you feel you can establish trust and a strong communicative relationship. This person will do their best to make the process easy and guide you through the process and pitfalls.

Run from the agent who says: "I can guarantee to get you the best rates" before they know you and understand your needs and risk factors. Run from the agent who gives you a quote before having a fact-finding conversation with you. If I walked into a dental practice and the dentist tells me I need 10 fillings and it will cost me nothing because I have good dental benefits, I would run out of there as fast as I could. Where is the exam, the x-rays, a review of my dental history? As you learned in dental school, prescription without diagnosis is malpractice! The same is true with the relationship with your life insurance professional or financial advisor. Take your financial health as seriously as you take your physical health.

You and your agent should be prepared for a detailed fact-finding conversation around the aforementioned topics: health history, family history, life style, activities, financial health. An often, overlooked critical piece is the "needs analysis". The needs analysis involves a thorough questionnaire regarding your financial obligations and needs such as mortgage,

personal and professional debt, retirement objectives, college funding for children and charitable desires.

The heavy lifting continues with a carrier-specific application followed by a para-medical exam, where a small blood draw and urine sample will be taken, along with a "Part 2" questionnaire about health and lifestyle. These exams are generally free to you. The costs are absorbed by the life insurance company. You do get access to the test results. The exams are conducted at your convenience. Your agent should counsel you on when and how to prepare for the exam. Remember, the insurance company is going to be carrying a large financial risk and they are only getting one look at you; plan on giving them the best look possible. Some helpful tips: your blood pressure is usually lowest in the morning after a good night's rest so plan a morning appointment. Watch what you eat a few days prior to the examination. Avoid consuming high volumes of alcohol, eating highly salted foods, poppy seed rolls (will test positive for opium use) and be sure you've been eating more wholesome foods prior to an examination. Believe it or not, it is better to skip your workout the day before or of your exam. Vigorous exercise can give false positives around enzymes and proteins. Your goal is not to be untruthful but to put your best health forward during the examination.

Are you intrigued, a little educated, ready to go online and start your research? Time to take some steps towards securing your life insurance, getting some peace of mind and doing the responsible, prudent and loving thing. Good luck and successful shopping.

*Carey Wolf is respected and trusted in the life insurance industry for his knowledge, experience and candor. With more than 30 years of selling, consulting and leading within the community, he is always available to provide answers and guidance to life insurance shoppers. You can reach him at (916) 709-7149 or by email at [carey\\_wolf@comcast.net](mailto:carey_wolf@comcast.net)*

# Good Communication is Good!

## The use of photography for successful esthetic results

By: Mario F. Romero, DDS, Associate Professor, Director AEGD Program and Courtney S. Babb, DMD, Clinical Instructor, Department of General Dentistry at The Dental College of Georgia Augusta University



The meaning of the word “communication” is imparting or exchanging information, and this becomes extremely important when we talk about esthetic restorative dentistry. It is common in the US to work with dental laboratories that are geographically located in distant areas from our practices, so we need to make sure we have good tools for communication. The authors believe that high quality dental photography is a must in highly esthetic dental practices today. One of the reasons why it is not widely used is due to the lack of continuing education hands-on courses demonstrating a simple and predictable protocol. The intent of this article is to help eliminate that gap and promote an easy-to-use protocol that can be taught to any auxiliary personnel in the practice to effectively use dental photography.

### Equipment recommendations:

There is a wide range of camera systems available in the market for dental photography that will work well for most practices. However, the Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera system is considered to be the system of choice for predictable dental photography. When it comes to selecting a lens, the macro lens (85-

105mm) is a necessity. In regard to an external light source, the authors recommend the use of a twin light flash system (i.e. dual point flash) (Figure 1) mounted on a R2 bracket made by Photomed (Figure 2). The advantages of a DSLR camera include improved image quality, high speed of operation, and better control of the settings compared to a point-and-shoot camera system. Today’s systems are smaller, lighter and are similar to other systems in terms of cost. One nice feature present in newer DSLR models is WIFI capabilities, which makes transferring images from the camera to the computer an easy and quick task. The benefits of the R2 bracket is that it gives you three different settings to alter positions of the twin flashes in relationship to the macro lens (Figures 3) so that the light interacts in a different way based on the needs and type of photo. This is completely different from the “flat” and consistent light interaction obtained from a ring flash. Position 1 is used for posterior teeth photos since this position mimics a ring flash. Position 2 is used for all intraoral (retracted) anterior photos. This position gives you an even and soft lighting with little glare. Position 3 is used for rest position and full smile photos, giving your “final smile” photos an

artistic touch, suitable for social media marketing of your practice.

### Camera setting:

The authors recommend using fixed camera and lens settings. The Manual (M) mode is one that gives you full control of four basic features:

1. The aperture, or *f*/stop
2. The shutter speed
3. The ISO
4. The magnification

Out of these four features, the shutter speed and ISO settings are fixed and the *f*/stop and magnification will need some modification depending upon the image you want to obtain. The table below displays specific information regarding the fixed settings.

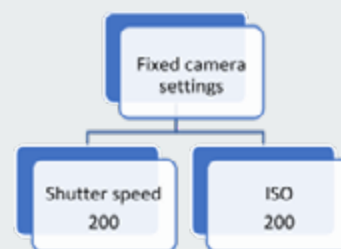


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figures 3





Before we explore the modifiable settings, let's review what photos are needed for good dentist/lab communication. Pre-operative photos of the smile and retracted view of the anterior teeth that are going to be altered give the lab technician a really good sense of the effort and extent involved to successfully restore the case (Figures 4,5). In Figure 5 we used a black contraster (Photomed) to eliminate the noisy background and show the lab intrinsic characterization like craze lines, white spots and translucent areas so that they can be reproduced in the final restorations. Magnification for these images is different; for the full smile 1:2 was used, and for the retracted view 1:1 was used. A simple way to determine the magnification is when looking through the viewer for the full smile, ensure that you can see the tip of the nose, the corners of the lips and half way to the chin (Figure 4). For the retracted photo, through the viewer, the distal of No. 6 to the distal of No. 11 should be displayed (Figure 5). These landmarks are easier for office staff to understand and follow.

**Communicating shape and length:**

Several methods of communication are available to convey the final shape and length of the final restorations to the lab. The most common ones are: 1) obtaining a cast from an intraoral impression of the provisional restorations or 2) fabricating a lingual matrix using a putty PVS material of the provisionals to be seated by the lab technician on the working cast. Regardless of the technique used, a photograph during smiling (Figure 6,7) or phonetics (f and s sounds) of these provisionals will help the lab technician visualize the end result that the dentist is trying to achieve. Figure 8 and 9 show the completed "new" smile with porcelain veneers on teeth No. 7-8-9, where the creation of natural-looking restorations has been achieved through good dentist/lab communication.



Figure 4



Figure 5

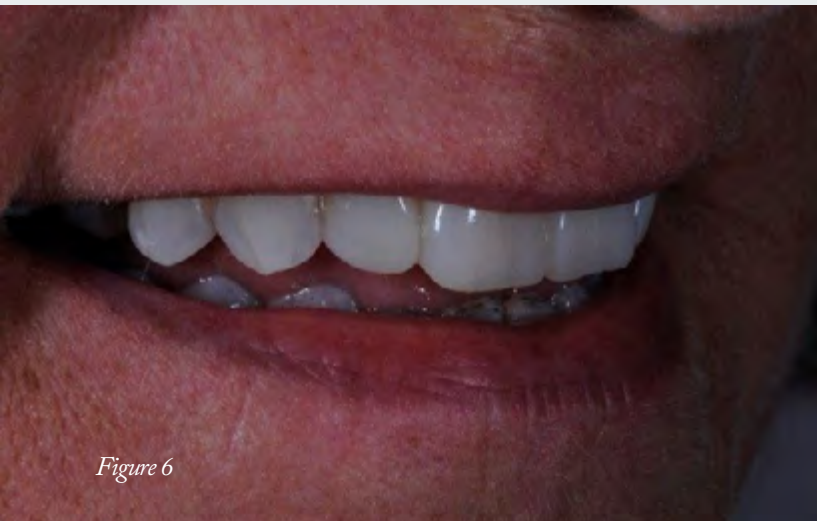


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

# Keep the Conversation Going

This magazine and its online companion were conceived as an evolving conversation between our new members, our experienced professionals and valued sponsors. Just like a traditional person-to-person mentorship, active conversation is vital to promote learning and growth.

With this in mind, the creators of The Dentist's Mentor magazine want to hear from you, our readers. Please fill out the short questionnaire to the right and fax it back to 408.289.1483. Your feedback will help make The Dentist's Mentor magazine and its online companion a more useful and thought-provoking benefit in issues to come.

Please take a moment to answer a few questions to help us improve The Dentist's Mentor for future issues.

1. List a few topics you would like to read about in future issues.

---



---

2. What challenges or difficulties have you encountered since becoming a member?

---



---

3. Would you like to be contacted to learn more about opportunities to get involved with your Dental Society? (Please circle one) YES NO

4. Are you interested in finding an experienced member as a mentor? (Please circle one) YES NO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Return by fax: 408.289.1483 or scan and email to [erichl@sccds.org](mailto:erichl@sccds.org)

SCCDS now offers  
**Notary Services**  
 from duly commissioned Notary Public, Megan Duncan

**Members receive 2 free notarized signatures over the lifetime of their membership.  
 \$12 per notarized signature thereafter.**



This is a members-only benefit. Services are provided by appointment only.  
 Notary cannot provide legal advice or dispense forms.  
 Members must provide documents to be notarized.



**Make an appointment by calling 408.289.1480 or by emailing [megand@sccds.org](mailto:megand@sccds.org)**

## LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Get all of the latest news, event listings, photos and fun by visiting the Official SCCDS Facebook Page!  
 Just search for "Santa Clara County Dental Society" on Facebook and click "LIKE"!

**You are not a  
market segment.**



You are a dentist. One who deserves superior protection and to be rewarded for your loyalty — something this company does quite well. Case in point, the substantial multipolicy discounts with the TDIC Optimum Bundle.

### **TDIC Optimum Bundle**

Professional Liability  
Commercial Property  
Workers' Compensation

Discounts apply to individual policies and are not cumulative. To obtain the Professional Liability premium five (5) percent, two-year discount, California dentists must complete the current TDIC Risk Management seminar. Call 800.733.0633 for current deadlines and seminar details.

**Good**  
10% discount on Professional Liability when combined with Workers' Compensation

**Better**  
10% discount on both Professional Liability + Commercial Property when combined

**Optimum**  
20% discount on Professional Liability

10% discount on Commercial Property

5% discount on Workers' Compensation

#### **Bonus**

Additional 5% discount on Professional Liability when you take the current TDIC Risk Management seminar.

Endorsed by the  
Santa Clara County  
Dental Society

**Protecting dentists. It's all we do.®**

800.733.0633 | [tdicinsurance.com](http://tdicinsurance.com) | CA Insurance Lic. #0652783

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

