



Summer, 2017
First District Report

Choosing Wisely is an initiative of the ABIM (American Board of Internal Medicine) Foundation in partnership with Consumer Reports that seeks to advance a national dialogue on avoiding wasteful or unnecessary medical tests, treatments and procedures. *Choosing Wisely* aims to promote conversations between clinicians and patients by helping patients choose care that is:

- Supported by evidence
- Not duplicative of other tests or procedures already received
- Free from harm
- Truly necessary

In response to this challenge, national organizations representing medical specialists asked their providers to “choose wisely” by identifying tests or procedures commonly used in their field whose necessity should be questioned and discussed. The resulting lists of “Things Providers and Patients Should Question” are intended to spark discussion about the need—or lack thereof—for many frequently ordered tests or treatments.

To help patients engage their health care provider in these conversations and empower them to ask questions about what tests and procedures are right for them, Consumer Reports has developed patient-friendly materials based on the specialty societies’ lists of recommendations. These materials are disseminated through the campaign’s consumer partners.

The ADA has been participating in the Choosing Wisely campaign as the only dental organization involved in that campaign. The campaign focuses on five statements recommended by the ADA. These statements are reviewed every year so that we can update them as needed. For example, this year, we voted to add a statement on opioid use. We approved the new statements at this meeting. Our five statements are now:

1. Don’t recommend non-fluoride toothpaste for infants and children.
2. Avoid restorative treatment as a first line of treatment in incipient (non-cavitated) occlusal caries without first considering sealant use.
3. Avoid protective stabilization, sedation or general anesthesia in pediatric patients without consideration of all options with the legal guardian.
4. Don’t routinely prescribe antibiotics for irreversible pulpitis (toothache) in the absence of cellulitis (swelling).
5. Don’t routinely prescribe narcotics/opioids to manage pain associated with dental pathologies and/or procedures.

An issue facing dentistry is the possible addition of a dental benefit to Medicare. This is not imminent but discussions among policy makers are taking place. Such a benefit will only be



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effective in enhancing care if it makes sense from the provider perspective. Our preliminary research indicates that most dentists would participate in a Medicare dental benefit, *if it is fair*. At the Board's direction, CDBP and HPI are working diligently to identify what would be a workable Medicare dental benefit and advocating for a benefit design that makes sense for dentists and older adults. In this way, the ADA is effectively influencing the multi-stakeholder advocacy efforts that are already well underway. Advocacy efforts by CGA are pending until results of the work by CDBP and HPI become clear.

Our country has recently experienced very difficult times dealing with the impact from two hurricanes. The American Dental Association Foundation, ADAF, offers financial assistance to affected dentists, as do our state societies. In addition, the ADA has been in regular contact with both Texas and Florida and offers comprehensive information, advice and guidance regarding necessary resources related to dealing with property and business losses for affected dentists and dental societies. The Board recognized that the Foundation is doing great work, and the ADA is ready to support the Foundation's relief work. At our September board meeting, we allocated up to \$250,000 to donate to the Foundation for its emergency disaster grant fund, upon the request of the Foundation. This will allow the Foundation to identify and vet the financial need. We support the Foundation and this donation is an important message to everyone to support dentists affected by these disasters. The ADA has recently been contacted by dentists and dental students in Puerto Rico as well and discussions as to how we can assist them are also underway.

Remember to update your profile on the ADA Find-a-Dentist tool at ADA.org/findadentist. This marketing/ad campaign is the latest phase of the three-year initiative to drive new patients to ADA members. A mix of paid search, banner ads and social media posts direct patients to the Find-a-Dentist tool. On July 10th, potential patients started seeing the new digital ad campaign urging them to schedule a check-up with an ADA dentist.

So, update your information in your profile and remember to add a photo. Research shows that having a photo in your profile is attractive to those looking for a dentist!

As always, please feel free to contact me at any time.

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