

Today many people are abusing a diverse assortment of drugs. Both patients and dentists can fall prey to addiction to alcohol, prescription drugs, and illegal drugs. Addiction can have a devastating impact on a dentist's ability to practice. Too many of our colleagues have lost their practices, their families and even their lives to addiction. Sadly, they often fail to seek help due to fear that others will learn their secret. They do not realize that their colleagues, staff, families and patients may already know their secret.

Our Dental Association - part of the New York State Dental Association (NYSDA) - is committed to aiding our colleagues in addressing substance abuse and addiction. NYSDA's [Committee on Substance Abuse and Well-being](#) provides a statewide network of dentist-peers who are available to assist members, their families, and the dental office staff in addressing problems with drugs or alcohol. The Committee includes dentists who have experienced both the devastation of addiction and the effectiveness of intervention and treatment in their own lives.

Funding is available for dentists who need in-patient treatment but do not have the financial resources to get it. Practicing a profession while impaired can result in a charge of unprofessional conduct. When you speak with our Peer Assistance Coordinator, Dr. Bob Herzog – or any of the Committee's members, your interactions are confidential and non-punitive. The Committee never refers a dentist to OPD or any other agency. When a dentist's license is at risk, the Committee can help the dentist protect his/her license and privilege to practice through the New York State Education Department's Professional Assistance Program (PAP).

If you or a colleague is struggling with addiction, *please reach out*. Your call is confidential.

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