



**American  
Dental  
Assistants  
Association**

**American Dental Assistants Association  
140 N. Bloomingdale Road  
Bloomingdale, IL 60108-1017  
P: 877-874-3785  
F: 630-351-8490  
www.adausa.org**

---

**American Dental Assistants Association  
Statement on Infection Control  
April, 2020**

The American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA) believes that all members of the oral health care team, including dental assistants, should be held to a high standard of excellence in regard to patient safety. This begins in the area of infection control. All patients need to be safe from any type of infection. One way to ensure that this standard is met is to identify and implement a minimum standard of training and continuing education in infection control for all dental assistants, regardless of their education, training and number of years of employment.

According to the Oral Health Work Force research that was published in 2015, the average full time solo dental practice will employ at least 1.5 dental assistants. This report does not distinguish between business assistants or clinical assistants. The report continues to state that the majority of these dental assistants are on-the-job (OJT) trained dental assistants.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the Raven Maria Blanco Foundation (RMBF) conducted a survey to determine patient expectations and knowledge regarding medical emergencies. Patients expected the dentist and staff, including all dental assistants, to be prepared to use current trends to prevent medical emergencies which can include exposure to numerous microorganisms that can cause communicable diseases including, but not limited to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis D, HIV and now the COVID-19 virus.

As research conducted by such groups as the Oral Health Work Force, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the American Dental Association (ADA); and the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) has demonstrated, there are approximately 346,000 dental assistants in the country and 8,200 who graduated in 2018 from a CODA program. Please note there were neither formal nor informal data regarding non-CODA accredited programs and the number of people who had completed education in those programs. It is this lack of data that makes it difficult to monitor the level of knowledge and competency for dental assistants in the area of infection control and prevention.

In addition, to date, more than 37,000 dental assistants are currently DANB certified nationwide (approximately 10% of the workforce).

---

***"The people who make dental assisting a profession!"***

In order to provide the level and quality of care that our patients both demand and deserve, and protect the dental assistant, the ADAA believes that there should be a standard, consistent minimum amount of training and continuing education required for dental assistants in the area of infection control across all states.

ADAA believes that the education should consist of both a didactic and a clinical component in such areas as occupational safety, sterilization procedures, proper personal protective equipment (PPE), and standard infection control procedures. ADAA is actively developing its recommendations on the suggested curriculum for this training.

ADAA further believes that this knowledge evolves, and therefore infection control training should include an annual continuing education component.

The American Dental Assistants Association looks forward to working with the federal government, state legislatures and regulatory boards, and our fellow professional associations and certification groups to achieve this important goal for the better protection of the public whom we all serve.

See also the American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA) Education and Credentialing of Dental Assistants -

<https://www.adaausa.org/Portals/0/About/Education%20and%20Credentialing%20Policy.pdf>