

American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

As the sole national organization representing academic dentistry, ADEA is The Voice of Dental Education. ADEA's membership includes all 78 U.S. and Canadian dental schools, more than 1,000 allied and advanced dental education programs, over 60 corporations and more than 20,000 individuals (including faculty, students, residents, staff and administrators).

Dentists have been identified as among the leading prescribers of opioids. Minimizing and controlling substance prescription misuse is critically important to leaders in academic dentistry, and dental educators are playing a pivotal role in decreasing deaths from opioid overdose. Dental schools have undertaken actions to improve pain management through changing curricula and clinical protocols, conducting research, and providing continuing education. To curb prescription drug misuse, academic dental institutions are employing various methods to mitigate the opioid epidemic, including the following:

- Dental schools are helping to address the opioid epidemic by educating students about appropriate pain management strategies and providing continuing education about new approaches to current practicing dentists.
- Dental school faculty and students understand the importance of using Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) and screening at-risk patients for substance use disorder within school-based clinics.
- Clinicians and researchers at dental schools are leading the way in research on oral pain management and prescribing practices for acute and chronic pain.

ADEA is committed to countering the opioid epidemic through the formation of strategic alliances across multi-sectoral organizations. ADEA's efforts include convening a Dental Schools Addiction Education Summit on the Opioid Epidemic in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), disseminating sources on the opioid epidemic through our [Dental Education on the Opioid Epidemic](#) webpage and by publications such as [The Role of Dental Education in the Prevention of Opioid Prescription Drug Use](#) and the [ADEA Summary of State Legislation and Regulations Addressing Prescription Drug and Opioid Abuse](#), and surveying dental schools to identify best practices.

ADEA is pleased to join the National Academy of Medicine and other partners in the Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic. ADEA specifically aims to:

- **Enhance collaboration** across the dental education community and other health education disciplines to achieve a greater collective impact on addressing the opioid epidemic;
- **Elevate** the best practices undertaken by academic dental institutions to educate and train the next generation of dental practitioners; and
- **Promote** evidence-based research and practice in pain management.

ADEA's mission is to lead and support the health professions community in preparing future-ready oral health professionals. ADEA and its member institutions are contributing to combating the opioid crisis in all aspects of the educational mission through education, research, and application in dental care practice.