

# Well-Being Program Frequently Asked Questions

**California Dental Association**  
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The Well-Being Program exists to assist dental professionals who suffer from alcohol and/or chemical dependency. It's also a referral source for other disorders such as Bi-Polar, depression, diabetes, glaucoma, Parkinson's, sexual addiction, sexual boundary issues and more.

Assistance is offered through component and regional well-being committees who encourage an individual to seek treatment in order to preserve their life, privilege to practice dentistry and maintain public safety.

**Q.** What is chemical dependency?

**A.** It's an illness or disease characterized by addiction to a mood-altering chemical and includes both drug addiction and alcoholism. The dependent person is unable to stop drinking or taking a particular drug despite serious consequences. It's progressive and chronic if left untreated. Sadly, it can also ruin the lives, careers and the health of dental professional as well as compromise patient safety.

**Q.** What are the warning signs?

- A.**
  - Frequently late or absent from work
  - Difficulty meeting scheduled appointments and/or deadlines
  - Impaired motor coordination
  - Prescribes large doses of controlled substances
  - Frequent and prolonged bathroom breaks; periods of isolation
  - Obvious physical changes; lack of attention to hygiene/appearance
  - Dramatic mood swings
  - Unexplained family and/or financial difficulties
  - Decline in quality of care; exercise poor judgments
  - Slurred speech

**Q.** How do I refer?

**A.** For more information regarding the Well-Being program or for a confidential referral, please contact your local dental society or a Well-Being committee near you:

<b>Central Calif.</b>	Matthew Korn, DDS	916.947.5676 (cell)
<b>No. Calif.</b>	Donald (Don) Fowkes, DDS	530.898.0821 (cell)
<b>San Diego</b>	William Britton, DDS	562.832.2489 (cell)
<b>SF/Bay Area</b>	Edward Graham, DDS	209.601.4410 (cell)
<b>So. Calif.</b>	Steven Goldy, DDS	310.487.5040 (cell)

**Q.** Will my referral be kept confidential?

**A.** Yes, unless you advise the committee otherwise.

**Q.** What happens next?

**A.** An investigation will take place to determine the claim's validity. If accurate, an intervention will be facilitated and, if necessary, the individual will be referred to a professional evaluation team for treatment recommendation. A contract will then be drawn up between the individual and the well-being committee.

**Q.** Will the Dental Board be informed?

**A.** As long as individuals comply with recommended treatment/monitoring and there are no issue regarding patient safety, the board will not be notified.

**Q.** What treatment is available?

- A.**
  - Individual, group and family counseling
  - 12-step group involvement (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous)
  - Education to address the individual's physical, mental and emotional needs

**Q.** How does the program work?

**A.** Confidential peer-to-peer support and professional assistance is provided through assessment, treatment, recovery and monitoring.

The program also restores dignity and self-respect, provides an opportunity to gain support from fellow dental professionals in recovery and maintains quality health care along with the safety of the general public through on-going monitoring.

**Q.** How are members of the well-being committees chosen?

**A.** Composed of volunteer members (i.e. dentists, allied dental health professionals and/or dental society staff), members are selected for their specific experience and expertise and their interest and willingness to serve. We also try to find those with similar experience or pertinent knowledge.