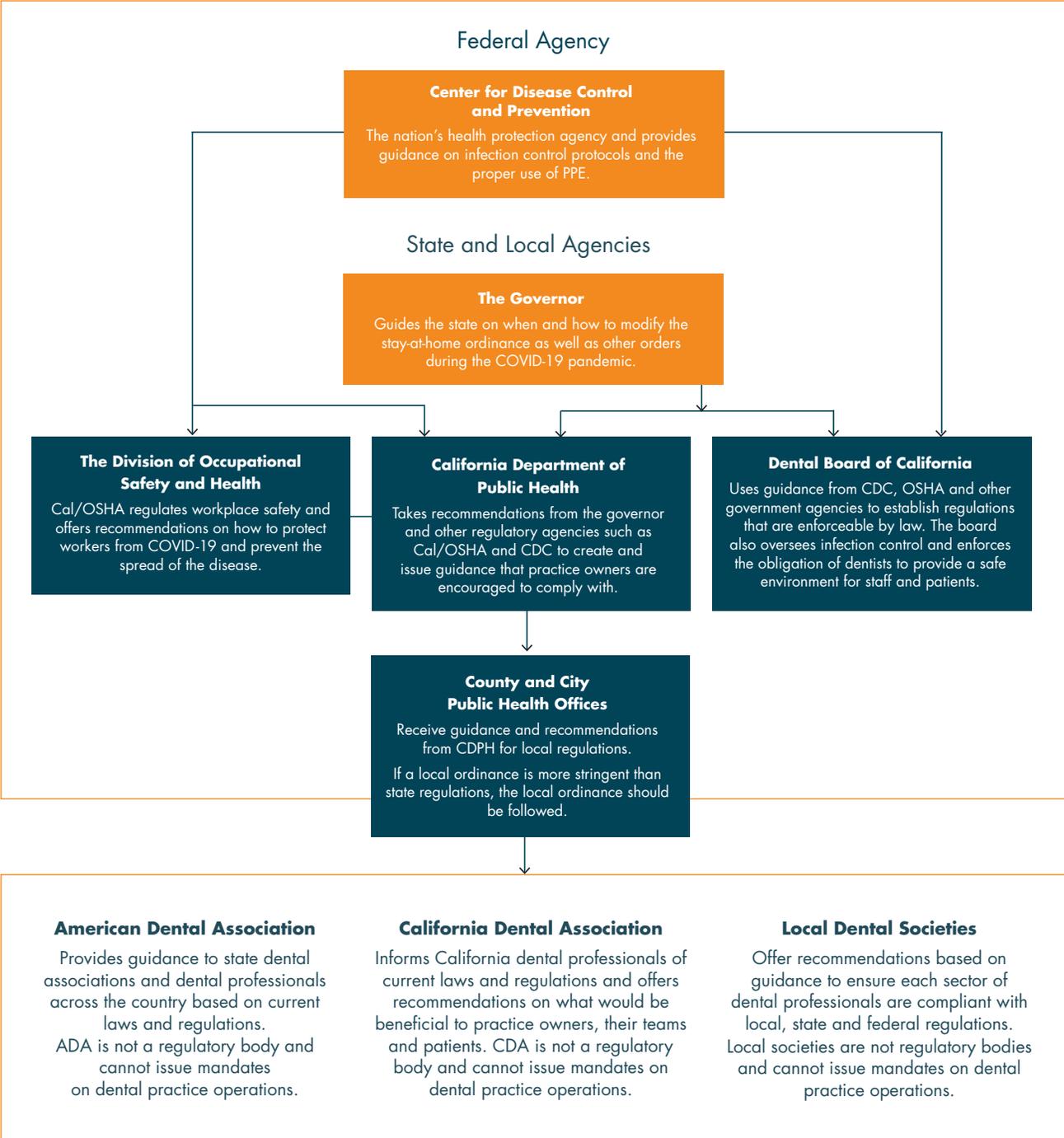




Who's in charge? The 'chain of command' for dental guidance

As dentists made their way through the COVID-19 pandemic, many found the varying guidance from state and local authorities to be confusing. The following chart breaks down the roles of each of the organizations involved:



General order of precedence: Federal, state, local; however, in most cases related to COVID-19 orders and mandates, the most restrictive will apply. For example, if a county has a more restrictive order or mandate than the state, the county order will apply.

Statutes/regulations: Unless deemed inapplicable by a federal or state executive order, existing statutes and regulations remain in effect. During a declared emergency, government agencies can issue interim regulations, sometimes called “interim rules”.

Orders/Mandates: May be enforced by law enforcement and generally must be complied with.

Directive: Similar to an order, but it depends on the specific language of the directive as to whether it’s enforceable in the same manner as an order or mandate.

Guidance/Guidelines: May be issued by government agencies, such as CDC, CDPH and Cal/OSHA and should be followed, but not enforceable in the same manner as an order or mandate.