

# Abuse Detection and Reporting Policy Statement

**California Dental Association**  
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Licensed dental health care providers in California are mandated to report domestic violence physical assault, and suspected child abuse/neglect and elder abuse/neglect. In response to this requirement, in 1999, CDA adopted a policy that outlines the legal and ethical requirements of California dentists, registered dental hygienists and registered dental assistants. The policy reads:

*" . . .since all licensed dental care providers in California are mandated reporters, the California Dental Association urges its members to become familiar with and report all physical signs of child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, elder neglect and domestic violence that are observable in the normal course of the dental visit and report the suspected cases to the proper authorities.*

*Additionally, the association will continue to develop resource material and make training courses available to its members on this subject. The Council on Community Health will monitor state and federal legislative and regulatory activity on abuse and neglect and make information on this subject available."*

In the April 2004 issue of the CDA Journal, Kathleen Shanel-Hogan, DDS, MA writes,

*"Family violence exists in every city, every neighborhood and every community. It is often a silent cycle of physical, verbal and financial abuse that leaves its victims feeling trapped and helpless. Because 65% of all physical child abuse and 75% of all physical domestic violence results in injuries to the head, neck and/or mouth, the dental professional is often the first person to render treatment to the abuse victim as well as being their first line of defense."*

CDA has demonstrated its commitment to ongoing education on abuse detection and prevention in a variety of ways, from CDA Journal issues devoted to the subject, to developing and offering training. Most recently, the California Dental Association Foundation, in partnership with Blue Shield of California, Blue Shield of California Foundation and the Dental Benefit Providers of California sponsors Dental Professionals Against Violence (dpav). This group provides resources and training directly to dental professionals, as well as conducts train-the-trainer workshops.

The CDA recognizes the tragic impact abuse and neglect have on the health and welfare of Californians and the important role dental professionals have in detection and reporting. CDA remains committed to supporting the profession in fulfilling this commitment.

*Last revised August 2004*

## Resources

Forms to report abuse/neglect can be obtained from the

California Department of Justice  
Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information  
P.O. Box 90317  
Sacramento, CA 94203-4170

Forms can also be accessed online at:

[Elder Abuse Form](#)  
[Child Abuse Form](#)  
[Domestic Violence Form](#)

## Adult Protective Services Contact List

Attorney General's Elder and Dependent Abuse Hotline.  
Referral to Ombudsman or Adult Protective Services:  
888.436.3600; Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder  
Abuse hotline 800.722.0432