

Aspect

A QUARTERLY NEWS BULLETIN

Great Health Starts Here[®]



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Welcome to Aspect, Nevada Dental Benefits, Ltd.'s quarterly news bulletin, through which we offer contemporary news information on oral health, the dental industry, the latest research and advice for providers.

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VAPING ILLNESSES TOP 1,000, C.D.C. SAYS

New York Times | Denise Grady

Illnesses and deaths linked to vaping continue to increase around the country, now totaling 1,080 cases and 19 deaths, health officials said on Thursday, October 3, 2019.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that cases had occurred in 48 states and the United States Virgin Islands. The first week of October 2019, Nebraska, Alabama, Delaware, Connecticut, Virginia and New Jersey reported deaths, which brought the total to 19 in 16 states.

The new case count reflects an increase of 275 in just the past week. About half of the 275 were hospitalized in the past two weeks, and the rest were older cases whose link to vaping was just recognized, Dr. Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the C.D.C., said during a news briefing.

She described the outbreak as “continuing at a brisk pace,” emphasized that the illnesses were serious and life-threatening and called the proportion of patients hospitalized and in intensive care “just terrible.”

“We know that additional deaths are under investigation,” Dr. Schuchat said.

About 70 percent of the patients were male, 80 percent under 35 years old and 16 percent younger than 18, she said. Among the patients who died, the median age was about 50, and the proportion of women was higher than in the overall group of patients.

In response to the outbreak of illnesses as well as the increasing rate of teenage vaping, several states have ordered bans on flavored e-cigarettes. The Trump administration has said that it would draft a ban on flavored e-cigarettes, too.

But on Thursday, a New York appeals court ordered a temporary stay of a statewide flavor ban that was to take effect on Friday. Vaping groups had filed suit against the ban, contending that it would hurt retailers and adults who use the products. The vaping industry is also battling a more extensive ban of all vaping products in Massachusetts.

Dr. Howard Zucker, the New York state health commissioner, called the outbreak a “public health emergency,” adding: “It is undeniable that the vaping industry is using flavored e-cigarettes to get young people hooked on potentially dangerous and deadly products. While the court’s ruling temporarily delays our scheduled enforcement of this ban, it will not deter us from using every tool at our disposal to address this crisis.”

Symptoms of the illness include coughing and breathing trouble that can become severe enough to require that patients be attached to ventilators. Some also have nausea, vomiting and fever. Many have vaped THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana; some have vaped both THC products and nicotine. Some say they have vaped only nicotine.

It is not yet possible to tell whether the illness comes on quickly or is the cumulative effect of long-time vaping.

The exact cause of the illness is still not known, although C.D.C. officials have been referring to “chemical exposure.” The culprit could be one or more ingredients in the vaping fluids, or a toxin released from the materials used to make vaping devices, which contain heated coils that vaporize fluids or other substances. Many of the ingredients in the products are unknown.

“I wish we had more answers regarding the specific harmful products or components that are causing these illnesses,” Dr. Schuchat said.

She added: “I think we have the feeling right now that there may be a lot of different nasty things in e-cigarettes or vaping products, and they may cause different harms in the lungs.”

In some cases, the injury to the lung tissue looks like a chemical burn, the same kind of damage that occurs from industrial accidents where chemicals spill and people inhale poisonous fumes, experts in lung pathology from the Mayo Clinic reported on Wednesday. Their findings were based on studying samples of lung tissue from 17 patients, ages 19 to 67, who became ill after vaping. Most reported vaping THC.

Medical investigators are scrambling to find the cause of the illnesses, a task made more difficult by the booming market in vaping products, some legal and many not, from sources unknown. Some are concocted at home by users themselves. All the products are a stew of chemicals, often including flavorings, oils and solvents that may react with one another when heated, to produce still more molecules that have yet to be identified.

The Food and Drug Administration is testing vaping products, and has obtained more than 440 samples from 18 states, Judy McMeekin, the agency’s deputy associate commissioner for regulatory affairs said at the briefing on Thursday.

So far, she said, no single product or substance has been identified as the source of the trouble. She said that the agency was particularly concerned about black-market sources, but that it was too soon to rule out other products.

During the briefing, Dr. Schuchat was asked if THC vaping products could be considered safe if purchased from dispensaries in states that license them.

She replied: “With all the data I’ve been seeing, I don’t know what safe is now.”

To view the original article, [click here](#).

ELITE ATHLETES HAVE POOR ORAL HEALTH DESPITE BRUSHING TWICE DAILY

Science Daily | University College London

Elite athletes have high rates of oral disease despite brushing their teeth more frequently than most people, finds a new UCL study.

The findings, published in the British Dental Journal, highlight potential for improvement as most of the athletes expressed an interest in changing their oral hygiene behaviour to improve their oral health.

The UCL Eastman Dental Institute research team surveyed 352 Olympic and professional athletes across 11 sports, including cycling, swimming, rugby, football, rowing, hockey, sailing and athletics, when they provided dental check-ups for male and female athletes measuring tooth decay, gum health and acid erosion.

The researchers also asked athletes what they did to keep their mouth, teeth and gums healthy.

The dental check-ups revealed substantial amounts of oral disease as reported in a 2018 paper, finding that nearly half (49.1%) had untreated tooth decay, the large majority showed early signs of gum inflammation, and almost a third (32%) reported that their oral health had a negative impact on their training and performance.

Elite athletes have poor oral health despite their efforts to care for their teeth: this new study found that 94% reported brushing their teeth at least

twice a day, and 44% reported regularly cleaning between their teeth (flossing) -- substantially higher figures than for the general population (75% for twice-daily brushing and 21% for flossing).

The researchers found that the athletes regularly use sports drinks (87%), energy bars (59%) and energy gels (70%), which are known to damage teeth.

"We found that a majority of the athletes in our survey already have good oral health related habits in as much as they brush their teeth twice a day, visit the dentist regularly, don't smoke and have a healthy general diet," said researcher Dr. Julie Gallagher (UCL Eastman Dental Institute Centre for Oral Health and Performance).

"However, they use sports drinks, energy gels and bars frequently during training and competition; the sugar in these products increases the risk of tooth decay and the acidity of them increases the risk of erosion. This could be contributing to the high levels of tooth decay and acid erosion we saw during the dental check-ups..."

To view the full article, [click here](#).



SUMMARY OF CDT CODE CHANGES FOR 2020

The American Dental Association has evaluated and updated the CDT codes that will go into effect on January 1, 2020. The following is a brief summary of changes that may affect codes covered under a NDB plan.

DELETED CODES

- ▶ **D1550** re-cement or re-bond space maintainer; replaced with new codes:
 - ▶ **D1551** re-cement or re-bond bilateral space maintainer – maxillary
 - ▶ **D1552** re-cement or re-bond bilateral space maintainer – mandibular
 - ▶ **D1525** re-cement or re-bond unilateral space maintainer - per quadrant
- ▶ **D1555** removal of fixed space maintainer; replaced with new codes:
 - ▶ **D1556** removal of fixed unilateral space maintainer - per quadrant
 - ▶ **D1557** removal of fixed bilateral space maintainer – maxillary
 - ▶ **D1558** removal of fixed bilateral space maintainer – mandibular

NEW CODES

- ▶ **D2753** crown - porcelain fused to titanium and titanium alloys
- ▶ **D5284** removable unilateral partial denture - one piece flexible base (including clasps and teeth) - per quadrant
- ▶ **D5286** removable unilateral partial denture - one piece resin (including clasps and teeth) - per quadrant
- ▶ **D6243** pontic – porcelain fused to titanium and titanium alloys
- ▶ **D6753** retainer crown – porcelain fused to titanium and titanium alloys
- ▶ **D6784** retainer crown $\frac{3}{4}$ – titanium and titanium alloys

Please see the schedule of benefits for each plan to determine benefit coverage and reference the CDT 2020 Dental Procedure book from the ADA for a complete listing of all changes for 2020.

NDB's Fred Horowitz, DMD was a contributing author, section on restorative dentistry, in the just released CDT 2020 Coding Companion published by the American Dental Association. This is the second edition for which Dr. Horowitz contributed to this valuable book, helping dentists and their staff understand the uses of the CDT.



SPECIAL OFFER

FROM

DENTAL RECYCLING OF NORTH AMERICA!

No Cost Amalgam Separators for Network Dentists

Many of you know, the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations require all dental practices to install amalgam separators and recycle the waste in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

We have arranged for **Nevada Dental Benefits** and **PrimeCare Administrators** network dentists to receive an **amalgam separator** at **no cost**, when signing up for Dental Recycling of North America's (DRNA)* recycling service with a 3-year or 5-year service agreement. The annual service plan fee is \$500 for the BU10 separator and \$750 for the larger BU10-30 separator.



SEPARATOR	SIZE	DRNA RETAIL PRICE	YOUR PRICE
BU10	1-8 chairs	\$850	\$0
BU10-30	9-16 chairs	\$1,495	\$0

BONUS!

Request a 1.25 gallon **amalgam recycling kit for FREE** with service agreement – retail cost is \$165 and required as a part of the EPA regulations.

ALREADY HAVE AN AMALGAM SEPARATOR?

Receive special pricing of \$225 when replacing your Hg5™1 cartridge. The DRNA amalgam cartridge works with your dental office's dental amalgam recycling unit and has been successfully tested to ISO 11143 standard and certified by NSF International. Save extra when you purchase two or more (\$205 each).

Current EPA compliance date for installing amalgam separators is **July 14, 2020**

Visit www.drna.com/primecarebenefits.php or call (800) 360-1001 Ext. 2 to sign up and receive your FREE amalgam separator.

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Click here to view the complete DRNA Compliance Guide. Here you'll find the EPA's amalgam separator rule breakdown, who's effected by the rule, costs, how to get into compliance and frequently asked questions.



SURVIVAL TIPS FOR HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Travel Channel | Kathleen Rellihan

Do your research.

Plan alternative trips if traffic makes your way home too overwhelming. Is there a scenic drive that might be longer but have less traffic? Break up a long drive by finding a few places to stop that will get the kids more excited than a truck rest stop. When flying, make sure you check the airline's restrictions ahead of time on carry-on luggage and fees for checked bags.

Stay connected.

Stock up on the latest travel apps before you leave home. GateGuru gives you approximate times you'll spend in security. Heading out on the road? Find the cheapest gas and cleanest bathrooms on the road with GasBuddy and SitOrSquat.

Pack light.

Avoid checking bags altogether if you can. You won't have to wait for your luggage on the conveyor belt, and you won't have to worry about your mom's Christmas present getting lost in Logan Airport. If you do check luggage, make sure you have all your medications, important documents and a change of clothes in your carry-on just in case your luggage gets lost. Here's a family packing list for more tips.

Pack earplugs.

Short of doing yoga in the airport, the best way to mentally escape your stressful surroundings is to turn the volume down. And the easiest way to do that is with earplugs. Crying baby next seat over on the plane? Earplugs. Sister's music in the car driving you mad? Earplugs. And if you really want to check out for a bit? Bring an eye mask (as long as you aren't driving).

Don't get hungry.

When your tummy growls, your mind can't think straight, and you could unknowingly get in the wrong line, take the wrong turn, or worse, upset an innocent flight attendant. Pack snacks and drinks, so you and your family will be fueled up for a road trip. If you're flying, definitely get some grub before you board the plane, so you won't have to rely on airline food if you're sitting on the tarmac for hours.

Ship gifts or give gift cards.

TSA suggests to ship wrapped gifts or wait until you reach your destination to wrap them, as they might have to unwrap a present to inspect it. Ship gifts ahead of time or bring the gift that can't go wrong: gift cards to their favorite store or an Amazon card.

To read all 10 holiday travel tips, read Kathleen Rellihan's full article from Travel Channel, [Click here](#).



4 STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR PRACTICE AGAINST CYBERSECURITY ATTACKS

Dr.Bicuspid.com | Gary Salman

You have spent many years training to become a dentist, growing your practice, building your reputation, and developing a loyal patient base. It is now imperative that you take steps to protect your investment of time and money. Mitigating a cybersecurity breach -- an occurrence that has become increasingly more frequent and severe for healthcare entities over the past year -- can cost your practice hundreds of thousands of dollars and a loss of patient trust.

As more hackers seek to exploit the weaknesses in dental practice networks and target the significant amount of data and patient information that dental practices store, being proactive to protect your data has become more critical than ever. Hackers use stolen records for identity theft and blackmail purposes and sell them on the dark web. During an August 2019 ransomware attack, approximately 400 dental practices had their data encrypted and are now facing lengthy, costly, and complicated processes to restore these encrypted files.

If your practice has a data breach, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Breach Notification Rule requires that you notify every patient of record by sending a first-class letter, offer identity theft monitoring, and set up call centers. During this disruption, you may not be able to access your patient files, and it will be extremely difficult to keep your practice running smoothly. In addition, data breaches will affect patient trust, which is very difficult to regain.

It is crucial to understand that the scope of an information technology (IT) company is not the same as a cybersecurity firm. Your IT company typically sets up your computers, installs your software, and handles your basic IT needs. You will also need the knowledge, expertise, and advanced tools of a specialist in cybersecurity to help ensure the overall security of your network.

The FBI and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security warned IT vendors in 2018 that so-called advanced persistent threat actors were targeting them to attack their clients. Since your IT vendor typically stores your IP address, user name, and password, a breach of its system will give cybercriminals the keys to your castle.

While many dental practices work with an IT company, they can be unaware that IT companies should not audit their own work. You should always have an independent audit of your network performed by a cybersecurity company.

4 STEPS TO TAKE

To secure your network and combat against sophisticated attacks, the following are four critical steps that dental practices need to take.

1

Cybersecurity audit

During an initial cybersecurity audit, the practice will work closely with the cybersecurity team to understand how data are stored and accessed. They will also inspect the protocols in place to protect the data. The cybersecurity firm will also inquire about any remote employees or contractors with the ability to log into the network.

2

Awareness training

The HIPAA Security Rule requires that covered entities (such as your practice) undergo cybersecurity awareness training to mitigate the risks of human error and chances of being exposed to an attack. Recent data indicate that there is a 50% to 70% reduction in cyberattacks when staff members are appropriately trained.

Social engineering (known as hacking the human) is the most common threat impacting practices. Most ransomware attacks are initiated via spear phishing, which is an attempt designed to trick a user into opening a seemingly harmless email. These emails may even appear to come from a familiar name or email address but contain attachments or links that can trigger a ransomware attack, affecting a single computer and then searching for other machines on the network to target.

3

Vulnerability scanning

Networks that have vulnerabilities such as unpatched operating systems, outdated equipment, or weak passwords are more susceptible to ransomware or breaches. Hackers can also gain access to your practice's data through any device with an IP address, such as laptops, workstations, printers, or security cameras. Cybersecurity firms can deploy sophisticated tools and technologies to search for these types of vulnerabilities. Vulnerability scanning should occur quarterly or whenever network devices are upgraded, modified, or added.

4

Penetration testing

Cybersecurity firms will often utilize "white-hat" (or ethical) hackers to attempt to (safely) break into your practice's network. This allows cybersecurity firms to detect any weaknesses in the network directly. Once testing is complete, the results will be turned over to the practice's IT company to mitigate the risks.

To view the original article, [click here](#).

This quarter, we're excited to introduce Dr. Jennifer Wu, general dentist and owner of Ivy Dental Care. Dr. Wu graduated from the University of Southern California and is originally from Los Angeles. She says moving to Las Vegas in 2000 was a "leap of faith" that she took with her husband. We always like finding out more about the dentists we work with, so we grabbed a few minutes of Dr. Wu's time, so she could spill a little bit about herself.



NDB: What made you choose a career in dentistry?

JW : I always knew I wanted to work in the medical field, but did not like the long hours a medical doctor works plus who likes to be on call? Dentistry was the best choice for me.

NDB: Flashback to when you were 10 years old. What did you want to be when you grew up?

JW : I remember back when I was 10, I had to write a report in school about what I wanted to be when I grew up and I wrote a report about wanting to open a homeless shelter for pets. I even got in the news for this! My teacher thought it was very selfless of me and she submitted it to the news.

NDB: If you weren't a dentist, what would you be doing?

JW : I would be a house wife, so I can drive my husband crazy ;)

NDB: Do you and the staff have any fun traditions for the holidays?

JW : Every year, we do Secret Santa and a holiday dinner at a restaurant.

NDB: Do you have any comical office stories you'd like to share?

JW: A few years ago, we did a crown prep for a patient and she went to Mexico on vacation while wearing her temporary. One morning she felt her temporary came off and it fell on the ground, and a chicken swallowed it. She was mortified and her and her mom decided to kill the chicken to see if they could retrieve the temporary crown. When they did not find the temporary, they noticed that they had killed the wrong chicken.

NDB: Do you have any New Year's Resolutions?

JW: My resolution is to keep my tray organized. Also, to be healthy.

NDB: If you could be anywhere other than here, right this minute, where would you be?

JW: I would be on a cruise around the world.

NDB: Do you have a personal or professional motto?

JW: Work smarter not harder. Everything flows so much better when you are prepared.

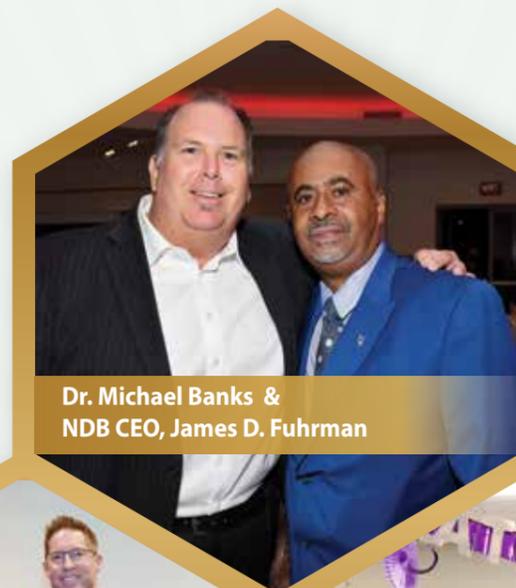


If you know of a dentist that might like to be featured in one of our upcoming news bulletins, please let us know. Email Crystal Robbins at crobbs@nevadadentalbenefits.com

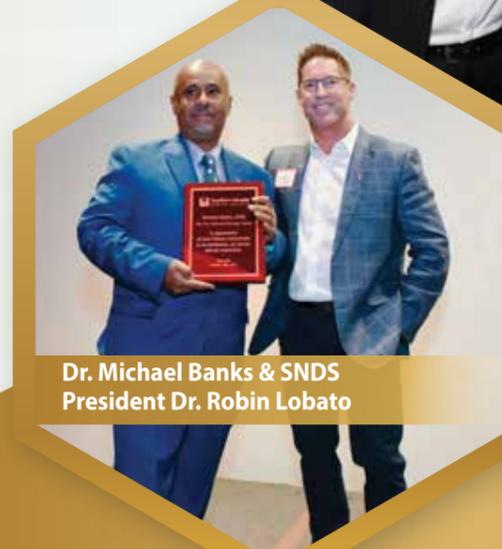


Congratulations!

DR. MICHAEL BANKS



Dr. Michael Banks & NDB CEO, James D. Fuhrman



Dr. Michael Banks & SNDS President Dr. Robin Lobato



Dr. Banks and NDB Staff

Congratulations Dr. Michael Banks! Last month at the Southern Nevada Dental Society Community Night, Dr. Banks was presented with the Fae Ahlstrom Heritage Award. NDB staff members were in attendance that night to support and honor him for his lifetime commitment to dentistry, society and his community.

NDB would like to congratulate Dr. Banks on being recognized. We are grateful for the opportunity we have had to work with such an outstanding dentist and individual for so many years.



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