

**Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)**

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**From:** willeyj@ada.org  
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**Comments**

The American Dental Association is pleased to provide comment on the strategic goals of the National Occupational Research Agenda and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The agenda includes a comprehensive list of factors that may affect worker and patient safety in health care settings. As health care is increasingly provided in non-hospital settings, particularly in home healthcare and social service settings, it is timely to address safety and health in those settings. The specific strategic goals that focus on accurately identifying safety and health issues, reducing risk of injury and illness, and educating providers about risks to safety and health is fundamental to improving safety and health of workers and patients in healthcare settings. Also, the recommendation to study the financial impact of specific interventions in health and safety improvements is essential for implementing interventions that are effective, efficient and realistic. The American Dental Association also wishes to encourage ongoing collaboration in the work toward these goals.

Over the past two years the ADA has assisted NIOSH in preparation for its Healthcare Worker Survey that aims to describe the prevalence and distribution of important health and safety hazards and perceptions. The survey is intended to yield data that will help NIOSH to identify gaps relative to utilization of best practices and help define future research and intervention priorities. The survey results also will help the ADA, which is in the best position to determine which of the resulting NIOSH findings apply to dentistry and how best to address them, identify areas for expanding guidance, safety training and continuing education.

The ADA expresses its desire to continue in this collaborative spirit with NIOSH in implementation of its National Healthcare and Social Assistance Agenda.

The ADA has a long record of investing in educational and research activities in an effort to make the dental office safer for dentists and patients. For example, the Association has conducted its annual Health Screening Program (HSP) for more than 40 years. More than just a complimentary medical and health screening program, HSP has evolved into a cutting-edge research program that now boasts the largest national database on the health of dental professionals. Program data have been used to inform infection control policies and standard precautions, as well as to develop safety guidelines related to amalgam, latex sensitivity and bloodborne pathogens.

The American Dental Association, in support of the ADA-OSHA Alliance develops and publishes resources for the dental team. Such resources are aimed at educating and encouraging safety and health measures, in providing care, to reduce any risks to the patient and the dental team.

The ADA is committed to protecting the health of dental healthcare personnel and their patients. As an organization that represents over 155,000 dentists, we hope that NIOSH will continue engaging the ADA as a key stakeholder during the development of programs related to the five strategic goals described

in its National Occupational Research Agenda.