



## Anesthesia Delivery by CRNAs in Dental Offices

The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) firmly believes in prioritizing patient safety and ensuring the provision of high-quality care in dentistry. AAOMS values the significant contributions made by certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) in the healthcare ecosystem and acknowledges the expertise they bring to anesthesia administration. The intention of AAOMS is not to undermine the crucial role of these professionals but rather to address the unique circumstances surrounding dental anesthesia, dental practices and dental offices.

A review of claims data provided by FAIR Health for 2018-23<sup>1</sup> shows that oral and maxillofacial surgeons (OMSs) are the dental specialists providing the overwhelming majority of deep sedation/general anesthesia and IV sedation services in the U.S. to patients with private dental insurance. Because OMSs provide the majority of dental office-based anesthetic care in the country, AAOMS is uniquely qualified to offer an informed opinion.

AAOMS believes all dentists having sedation and/or anesthesia services administered in their offices should possess dental anesthesia training. Such requirements are intended to enhance patient safety by ensuring dentists possess the necessary knowledge and skills to provide anesthesia within the dental setting. This added training equips practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of the potential risks and complications associated with anesthesia administration, enabling them to respond appropriately in emergencies. Dental offices are unique locations, requiring all involved in the procedure to possess a basic understanding of anesthesia administration as well as the ability to recognize and know how to address medical emergencies.

Additionally, and in light of the growing importance of patient safety and the intricacies involved in dental procedures, it is imperative to highlight the critical need for dental board oversight of any anesthetic procedure performed within a dental office. To ensure the highest standards of care and minimize potential risks, it is

essential to establish a permitting process that grants authority to dental boards to regulate and monitor these procedures. By implementing a permitting process, states can effectively safeguard the well-being of patients and promote accountability within dental practices.

Accordingly, it is the position of AAOMS that CRNAs – who are unregulated by the dental board – should not provide sedation or anesthesia services in a dental office outside of the supervision of a dentist or physician with the education and training to provide a comparable or higher level of sedation or anesthesia.

While AAOMS acknowledges the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in the healthcare landscape, the Association believes the distinct nature of dental procedures and their unique challenges necessitate the involvement of professionals with specialized dental expertise. By allowing dental practitioners to lead in matters pertaining to dentistry – and most importantly, the unique nature of OMS practices – AAOMS can ensure patients receive the highest standard of care and treatment tailored to the specific intricacies of their oral health needs.

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1 Statistics calculated by AAOMS using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and information provided by FAIR Health based on its privately insured dental claims data for calendar years 2018-23. Of the total 14,905,240 moderate and deep sedation/general anesthesia (DS/GA) cases performed in this period, 77 percent – or 11,505,037 – were delivered by OMSs. In the 1- to 7-year-old age group, OMSs provided 36 percent (34,843) of the total DS/GA cases (97,849). In the 8- to 12-year-old age group, OMSs provided 78 percent (186,122) of the total DS/GA cases (238,493). For moderate sedation, in the 1- to 7-year-old age group, OMSs provided 32 percent (3,118) of the total moderate IV sedation procedures (9,657) and in the 8- to 12-year-old age group, provided 73 percent (22,627) of the total moderate IV sedation services (30,898).