

Policy Statement on the Use of Deep Sedation and General Anesthesia in the Pediatric Dental Office

Originating Council

Council on Clinical Affairs

Review Council

Council on Clinical Affairs

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Purpose

Methodology

Background/Literature Review

Pediatric dentists have long sought to provide dental care to their young and disabled patients in a manner which will promote excellence in quality of care and concurrently induce a positive attitude in the patient toward dental treatment. Behavior management techniques have allowed most children to receive treatment in the dental office with minimal discomfort and without expressed fear. Conscious sedation has provided others with the ability to accept treatment. However, some children and developmentally disabled patients require general anesthesia in order to receive comprehensive dental care in a safe and humane fashion. Many pediatric dentists (and others who treat children) have sought to provide for the administration of general anesthesia by properly trained individuals in their offices or other facilities (e.g., outpatient care clinics).

In 1998, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry established the *Guidelines for the Elective Use of Conscious Sedation, Deep Sedation and General Anesthesia in Pediatric Dental Patients*. These guidelines reflect the current understanding of appropriate monitoring needs and further, provide definitions and characteristics of five functional levels of sedation and general anesthesia involving pediatric patients. Pediatric dentists must be responsible for evaluating the educational and professional qualifications of the general anesthesia provider and determining that the provider is in compliance with state rules and regulations associated with the provision of deep sedation and general anesthesia. The pediatric dentist is also responsible for establishing a safe environment that complies with state rules and regulations, as well as these guidelines for the protection of the patient.

Policy Statement

Deep sedation and general anesthesia must be provided only by qualified and appropriately trained individuals and in accordance with state regulations. Such providers may include pediatric dentists who have completed advanced education in anesthesiology, dental or medical anesthesiologists, or certified registered nurse anesthetists. The expertise in providing deep sedation and general anesthesia cannot be gained through the undergraduate dental school curriculum or continuing education. Only dentists who have completed an advanced education program, which meets the requirements of the American Dental Association (ADA), are considered qualified to provide deep sedation and general anesthesia in practice. This includes:

1. Completion of an advanced training program in anesthesia and related subjects beyond the *predoctoral* dental curriculum that satisfies the requirements described in Part II of the ADA Guidelines for Teaching the Comprehensive Control of Pain and Anxiety in Dentistry at the time training was commenced.
2. Completion of an ADA accredited post-doctoral training program (e.g., oral and maxillofacial surgery) which affords comprehensive and appropriate training necessary to administer and manage deep sedation/general anesthesia.

Risk Management

As stated above, the pediatric dentist is responsible for providing a safe environment for the provision of deep sedation and general anesthesia. In addition to evaluating the qualifications of the anesthesia provider, he/she must be actively involved with the following aspects of care to minimize risks for the patient:

- facilities and equipment
- selection of pharmacologic agents and dosages
- monitoring and documentation
- patient selection utilizing medical history, physical status and indications for anesthetic management
- preoperative evaluation
- appropriately trained support personnel
- emergency medications, equipment and protocols
- preoperative and postoperative patient instructions
- criteria and management of recovery and discharge.

References