

TDATODAY

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Medicaid Update

2026 CDT CODE UPDATES FOR TEXAS MEDICAID AND CHIP DENTAL PROVIDERS

The American Dental Association (ADA) published the 2026 Current Dental Terminology (CDT) Code Manual. Changes that affect Texas Medicaid and CHIP dental benefits apply to dates of service on or after January 1, 2026.

Medicaid dental providers should review the updates below to support proper billing practices and maintain compliance with program requirements.

Discontinued CDT Codes

The following CDT codes are no longer covered by Texas Medicaid and CHIP and will not be reimbursed for services performed after December 31, 2025:

- D1352—Preventive resin restoration for permanent teeth in patients with moderate to high caries risk
- D9248—Non-intravenous conscious sedation

Claims submitted using these discontinued codes for 2026 dates of service will be denied.

CDT Descriptor Updates

Several CDT codes remain covered but include revised descriptions in the 2026 CDT manual. Providers are encouraged to review the updated manual for complete details. Affected codes include D0180, D5863–D5866, D5934–D5935, and D9222–D9243.

New Sedation CDT Codes Effective in 2026

Four new CDT codes have been established to replace D9248. Providers may begin billing these codes for services rendered on or after January 1, 2026, provided claims are submitted within the 95-day timely filing window. The new codes are:

- D9244—In-office administration of minimal sedation, single drug, enteral
- D9245—Administration of moderate sedation, enteral
- D9246—Moderate sedation, non-intravenous parenteral, first 15-minute increment
- D9247—Moderate sedation, non-intravenous parenteral, each additional 15-minute increment

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has scheduled a rate hearing for these new dental codes in **March 2026**. In advance of that hearing, the Texas Dental Association's Council on Public Health and Access to Care is developing recommended reimbursement amounts and plans to submit those recommendations to HHSC by the end of January 2026.

Sedation Permit Requirements

Medicaid dental providers must hold the appropriate permit for the level of sedation delivered:

- D9244—Level 1 Minimal Sedation permit
- D9245—Level 2 Moderate Enteral Sedation permit
- D9246/D9247—Level 3 Moderate Parenteral Sedation permit

Billing Reminder

To reduce the risk of claim denials or compliance concerns, providers should ensure that all claims accurately reflect the services performed and that the CDT code selected aligns with the clinical care provided. ■



INSPIRATION AWAITS!

Save the date and start planning your
2026 Texas Dental Association Meeting Now

Happy New Year to you and your loved ones! It is a true honor to serve as your co-chair for this year's annual TDA Meeting in beautiful San Antonio. Together with my North Texas District colleague, Dr Yeri Guak, we are thrilled to welcome you to the Henry B. González Convention Center, May 7–9, 2026.

Keeping with meeting tradition, this year's program offers something special for everyone—dentists, hygienists, dental teams, and students alike. Our meeting council and hardworking TDA staff have devoted countless hours to creating meaningful, impactful experiences that will inspire and invigorate your practice.

What's New in 2026

- **Keynote Session:** Start your Friday morning with Dr Chris Ramsey at 7:30 am. His dynamic presentation, "*Master Your Passion for Excellence*," will motivate and energize all who attend.
- **Pankey Institute Partnership:** For the first time, dentists can begin the renowned Pankey Essentials curriculum—offered exclusively at the TDA Meeting. We have a few seats still available so act FAST to reserve your seat today!
- **Hygienist Programs:** Anesthesia certification renewal courses will be featured.
- **Predental Opportunities:** The popular Dental School Admissions Panel returns Saturday morning. Predental students attend free when they volunteer!
- **The Puppies Are Back!** More details coming soon.

The Exhibit Hall will once again be a highlight—featuring trusted exhibitors and vendors showcasing the latest innovations in dentistry. Don't miss Thursday's Tropical Tiki Party, an island-inspired celebration complete with tropical sips, bites, and one free drink ticket for all attendees. Grab your favorite hula shirt and join the fun!

The 2026 program is live online at tdameeting.com, and registration opens January 7. Be sure to take advantage of Early Bird Discounts! Download the TDA Meeting App for CE tracking, schedules, real-time updates, and exhibitor info. And don't forget: applications for the 2026 TDA Meeting volunteers are now open. As a volunteer, you receive great rewards and have a one-of-a-kind experience. Enjoy FREE course registration and CE credit for the courses you host, plus FREE breakfast and lunch when you volunteer for the entire day. Don't miss out on unlimited networking opportunities!

Come for the education—stay for the camaraderie, networking, and San Antonio's unforgettable charm. The 2026 TDA Meeting promises inspiration, learning, and memories to last a lifetime. ■

See you there!
Partha Mukherji, DDS
2026 TDA Meeting Co-Chair



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TDA Remembers the Legacies of Two Past Presidents

Friends and coworkers, Drs David Duncan and Richard Smith were giants in the world of organized dentistry

Dr David A. Duncan

May 29, 1962 — December 31, 2025, Amarillo

Dr David Al Duncan died at his home in Amarillo on December 31, 2025, surrounded by his friends and family. He battled cancer until the end, and a celebration of life services was held on January 8.

His local professional leadership quickly elevated him to state and national involvement in organized dentistry. In TDA, he served on DENPAC and committees and councils, including the Committee of New Dentists, Council on Dental Education, Trade, and Ancillaries, and the Council on Legislative and Regulatory Affairs (CLRA). He was the president of the association from 2014 to 2015. He is a fellow in the American College of Dentists and International College of Dentists. At ADA, he was a member of the Council on Dental Practice and ADPAC.

Donations in memory of Dr Duncan may be made to the Harrington Cancer Survivorship Center, 1732 Hagy Blvd, Amarillo, TX 79106.



Dr David A. Duncan

Dr Richard "Dick" Madsen Smith

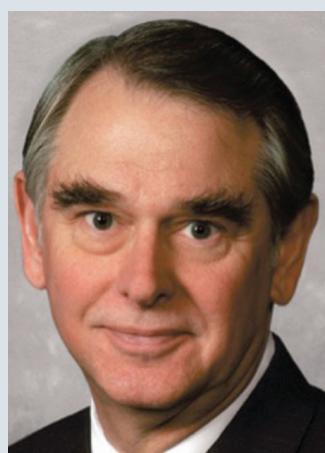
May 16, 1946 – January 10, 2026, Amarillo

Dr Richard "Dick" Madsen Smith, 79, of Amarillo died at his home surrounded by family on January 10, 2026. A memorial service will take place at 2:00 PM on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at the First Presbyterian Church of Canyon, and a reception will follow at 4:00 PM at Creek House Honey Farm in Canyon, Texas.

Dr Smith was supportive of organized dentistry throughout his more than 50-year career. He was a founding member of Texas Mission of Mercy and served as the TDA treasurer and TDA president (2000-2001). He was also past president of Panhandle District Dental Society, the TDA Smiles Foundation, and the Texas Chapter of the International College of Dentists. He was chair of the American Dental Association Council on Insurance and Member Retirement, treasurer of the USA Section of the International College of Dentists (ICD), and president of the Global ICD.

Donations in Dr Smith's memory may be sent to the First Presbyterian Church of Canyon.

Read more about Drs Duncan and Smith in the January-February 2026 issue of the *Texas Dental Journal*. ☺



Dr Richard M. Smith

A "Day of Giving" for San Antonio Dentists and Alliance Members

Karen Cox, ATDA 4th Vice President, Publicity

Patients from the women's home "Arms of Hope" and men from the "Sold Out Believers" Christian Fellowship lined up at 7:30 AM on November 21, 2026, outside of The Barn Dental Office where the big windmill distinguishes itself from other structures on Austin Highway in San Antonio.

Inside, Drs Gary Shults and Tyler Childs, 2 hygienists, auxiliary staff, and 1 lab technician stood ready to happily serve their patients. Also helping that day were local Alliance of the TDA (ATDA) members Susan Shults (Mrs Gary), Patty Taylor (Mrs Ben), and Karen Cox (Mrs David).

Dr Shults, known to his patients as The Barn Dentist, designated the Friday before Thanksgiving as a "Day of Giving" and has given free dental care for over 20 years. Services on this day included cleanings, restorative treatment, extractions and subsequently, 8 patients receiving dentures and 1 partial.

One patient exclaimed, "For all of us here it's not part of our daily routine to think about taking care of our teeth. Cleanings and preventive care is too expensive, unless you have insurance. So, we are so thankful Dr Gary will see us."

Susan, wife of The Barn Dentist, spearheads the annual event and described the day by saying, "It is organized chaos, but God is always present, and it has benefitted many people over the years." Susan is an active member of the San Antonio Dental Alliance as well as a past ATDA president for 2020-21. She is passionate and fully committed to providing dental care to the underserved communities.

Dr Shults started his practice in 1991 across the highway. The current office is inside of a refurbished, historically preserved 1866 barn, literally transported log by log from Ohio. All the logs are hand-hewn. Over the years patients have contributed to the vintage farm decor by bringing in saddles, tools, windmill weights, old metal signs, etc. which gives it a great deal of character and creates a very inviting, comfortable atmosphere for patients. ☺

"Do not neglect to do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

Hebrews 13:16



The Barn Dental Office in San Antonio



Front, L-R: Drs Tyler Childs and Gary Shults.
Back, L-R: Julia Pichardo, Elizabeth Hernandez, Becky Carman, Susan Shults, Laura Morales, Debbie Drifill, and Adriana Puent



Patients are pictured on the front porch of The Barn Dental Office in San Antonio in November.

CAMCEP Prepares for TDA Meeting in May

The Council on the Annual Meeting and Continuing Education Programs (CAMCEP) is responsible for the strategic planning, development, and oversight of the TDA Meeting and its continuing education programming. The council works year-round to curate high-quality CE courses, identify engaging speakers, and shape an annual meeting experience that delivers both professional value and memorable engagement for TDA members.

At its January meeting, CAMCEP finalized key details for the 2026 TDA Meeting and began early planning for the 2027 program. From nationally recognized speakers and cutting-edge education to unique events and special experiences, the Council ensures the TDA Meeting remains one of the premier dental conferences in the country. CAMCEP members collaborate closely with TDA staff and serve as ambassadors for the meeting, so you will be seeing them a lot over the next few months in TDA communications and on social media. ☺



L to R: Dr Partha Mukherji, Nicole Gilbert, Shannan Cook, Dr Taylor Cook, Dr Yeri Guak, Dr Xavier Walker, Dr Shelley Seidel. Not pictured: Dr Alicia Gray and Dr Courtney Tello.

Texas Dental School News

UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry Announces New Dental Hygiene Program Director

The UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry named Emily Falls, RDH, BSDH, MAEd, as the director of the Dental Hygiene Program, effective Jan. 1, 2026.

Professor Falls brings more than a decade of experience in dental hygiene education, clinical practice, and program leadership. She served as program director and assistant professor in the Department of Dental Hygiene at College of the Mainland.



Emily Falls, RDH, BSDH, MAEd

Texas A&M University College of Dentistry Receives \$210,000 Grant from Metrocrest Hospital Authority

Texas A&M University College of Dentistry's Department of Public Health Sciences recently received a \$210,000 grant from Metrocrest Hospital Authority to continue the Empowering Smiles Oral Health Initiative Program, which launched last year.



Dr Amal Noureldin

The program provides preventive oral health care, including sealants and fluoride varnish; dental screenings; and oral health education to students of 10 schools in Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District. It also supports community health events in the area.

Dr Amal Noureldin, clinical professor and director of predoctoral programs in public health sciences, is director of the initiative.

Texas A&M Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor Named Secretary/Treasurer of AAP

Dr Brad Crump, an adjunct clinical assistant professor at Texas A&M University College of Dentistry's periodontics department, was recently elected secretary/treasurer of the American Academy of Periodontology, a 1-year term, ascending to the role of president over the next 4 years. The organization represents nearly 7,500 periodontists.



Dr Brad Crump

Crump, who founded BC Perio in Dallas, graduated with honors in 1997 from what was then Baylor College of Dentistry, Texas A&M University System. He became an AAP member 28 years ago and is a past-president of both the Texas Society of Periodontists and the Southwest Society of Periodontists. He is on the AAP board as District 5 Trustee, a position he's held for the past 5 years. ☺



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ON THE 15TH

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HIPAA Privacy Rules Change: What Every Dental Practice Needs to Know Now

New federal privacy rules are prompting an important update for dental practices nationwide. The American Dental Association (ADA) has revised its sample HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices to reflect stricter requirements on how substance use disorder (SUD) treatment information may be used and disclosed. HIPAA-covered dental practices must adopt this updated language by February 16, 2026. You can read the ADA news article titled "New HIPAA rules address substance use disorder records" for more information.

The change centers on records protected under 42 CFR Part 2, which applies to federally assisted substance use disorder diagnosis, treatment, or referral. Dentists may encounter these records through patient health histories or care coordination. Under the updated rules, these records receive heightened confidentiality protections and generally cannot be used against a patient in legal proceedings without patient consent or a qualifying court order.

The revised ADA notice also reminds dental practices that certain information—such as SUD records, mental health information, HIV-related data, and genetic information—may be subject to additional state or federal privacy protections.

Importantly, dental practices do not need to add language about reproductive health privacy. A federal court ruling in June 2025 struck down the requirement to include that information in HIPAA notices.

What Dentists Should Do

Dental practices should update their Notice of Privacy Practices with the new SUD language, provide it to new patients, make it available upon request, post it prominently in the office, and include it on the practice website if applicable. Electronic delivery is permitted when patients agree.

While the notice must be updated, all other HIPAA duties remain the same, including safeguarding patient information, obtaining required authorizations, and responding to data breaches. Practices should also review whether they receive Part 2 records, update internal policies and consent forms, and ensure staff are properly trained.

The updated ADA sample notice replaces prior versions in ADA HIPAA compliance materials, which have already been revised in their digital formats.

Texas Dentists: Don't Overlook State Privacy Act Training Mandates

Because the new Part 2 rules qualify as a material change in federal law, Texas dental practices must also update employee training required under the Texas Medical Privacy Act. Affected employees must receive updated training within a reasonable time, but no later than one year after the law takes effect.

For More Information

- Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Patient Records
- Fact Sheet 42 CFR Part 2 Final Rule

Staying current with these changes is not just about compliance; it is about protecting patients, reducing risk, and keeping your practice on solid legal ground. ■

COMPONENT CORNER

Each month, we aim to spotlight a state component society and the events happening in the area. For more information or to let us know what is happening in your TDA component society, please email Managing Editor Nicole Scott, nscott@tda.org.

SPOTLIGHT: Fort Worth District Dental Society, Dallas County Dental Society, Greater Houston Dental Society

Fort Worth District Dental Society: FWDDS Partners with Cook Children's for a Bear-y Special Santa Workshop

The Fort Worth District Dental Society (FWDDS) partnered with Cook Children's Medical Center for the third annual Santa's Workshop Giveback Event on December 14, 2025. FWDDS members and their families and friends stuffed more than 350 bears and dragons for distribution to patients on February 10 during National Children's Dental Health Month.

Each February, the American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health, according to ada.org.



Pictured are Dr and Mrs Craig Harrison.



Dr Mau Pham is pictured with family and friends.



The family of Dr Alex Fitzhugh enjoyed the Santa workshop.

Dallas County Dental Society: Gumdrops and Giggles Event at DCDS

Gumdrops and Giggles brought the holiday magic to life as families packed the Dallas County Dental Society (DCDS) office for an early December 2025 afternoon of decorating mini holiday trees, enjoying sweet treats, and sharing laughter. The creativity, the connections, and the children's excitement made this our most heartwarming gathering of the season.



Dr Alicia Spence encourages her children as they decorate their trees.

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L-R: Dr Rihl Buckley, Dr Michael Chan, Dr Joseph Bernier, and Dr Spencer Wood.

Greater Houston Dental Society: Practice Partners & Party

The Greater Houston Dental Society (GHDS) hosted the Practice Partners & Party event on November 6.

This was the last member social for the year and provided members with connection, celebration, and community. It spotlighted vendors that provide the products and services that ensure members have successful and thriving practices. ■



Dr Kathy OKeefe and Dr Dongfang Thurow.



Dr Eva Boldridge and Rodney Brand



Dr Layla Lohmann and son work on a holiday tree.



TSBDE Rule Update

This recurring section is designed to help TDA members keep up with important Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) rules, other regulations, and state law affecting their practices.

Closing the Gap in Licensing Records: The TSBDE Fingerprinting Requirement Explained

Since June 2025, the Texas Dental Association (TDA) has been keeping members informed about a fingerprinting requirement from the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) that took effect January 1, 2026. In early December, the TSBDE emailed dentists and dental hygienists whose licenses did not have a State Identification Number (SID) on file, explaining how to complete the requirement.

After those TSBDE emails went out, TDA heard from many dentists who wanted to better understand where this requirement came from and why it applies to them now.

How The TSBDE Fingerprint Notice Came About

In 2024, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) conducted an audit of the TSBDE's licensing records. That audit revealed that approximately 14,000 dentists and dental hygienists—primarily those licensed before 2016—did not have a SID in the licensing system. A SID is created when fingerprints are submitted and allows DPS to link criminal history information to a specific licensee.

Without a SID on file, the TSBDE cannot receive notifications if a licensee is arrested or involved in a reportable criminal matter. DPS advised the TSBDE that this gap needed to be corrected and recommended collecting SIDs from licensees whose records predated current fingerprinting practices.

It is important to emphasize that this audit did not create a new requirement. The TSBDE has required fingerprinting and criminal history evaluations for licensure since approximately 2009. The audit simply identified that older license records were created before today's fingerprint-based system was fully implemented.

Legal Authority for Fingerprinting

Texas law clearly authorizes the TSBDE to require fingerprinting. Section 254.001 of the Texas Occupations Code allows the board to adopt rules necessary to carry out its responsibilities, enforce state dental laws, protect public health and safety, and regulate licensure.

Additionally, Section 411.12504 of the Texas Government Code expressly authorizes the TSBDE to obtain fingerprints for criminal history evaluations. The Legislature adopted

this statute to ensure state licensing agencies follow uniform state and federal (FBI) background-check standards.

Why Fingerprinting and SIDs Are Necessary

Fingerprint-based background checks are a routine and well-established part of health care regulation in Texas. Physicians, nurses, behavioral health professionals, and many other licensed health care providers are subject to the same requirements.

These measures exist because health care professionals work closely with patients, including vulnerable populations, and have access to controlled substances and sensitive personal information. Fingerprinting provides a reliable way to confirm identity and allows licensing boards to receive timely notice of criminal history events that could affect a licensee's ability to practice safely.

When a SID is on file, the TSBDE can receive prompt notifications from DPS about arrests or other reportable criminal activity. Without a SID, the board has no way to receive that information.

Clarifying Misconceptions and TDA's Ongoing Advocacy

TDA has been actively engaged with the TSBDE throughout this process to ensure members receive clear, accurate information and that implementation is handled as smoothly and reasonably as possible.

TDA continues to advocate for transparency, fairness, and sensible regulation on behalf of dentists. This fingerprinting requirement is not a new "Big Brother" identification program, nor is it something TDA allowed to happen without scrutiny. The requirement has been in statute and rule for years, applies broadly across health professions, and is narrowly focused on public safety and regulatory oversight, not tracking dentists or collecting unnecessary personal information.

What is happening now simply closes a long-standing administrative gap affecting dental and dental hygiene licensees who were licensed before modern fingerprinting systems became standard.

For more information on the TSBDE, please contact TDA Senior Policy Manager Diane Rhodes at 512-443-3675 ext. 122, drhodes@tda.org.



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2026 Required Course: Controlled Substances (January and February—Virtual)

Stay compliant with this virtual 4-hour course covering the opioid epidemic, ethical prescribing, PDMP use, pain management, and patient communication. This course meets all controlled substance CE requirements for dentists, including DEA permit holders (RULE §111.1(b)) and direct patient care (RULE §104.1(2)(B)).

Complete your required CE early and start 2026 on track!