

Resolution No. [Resolution Number] [Type]

Report: Resolution: Establishing the National Union of ADA  
Employed Dentists (NUAED) to Promote Workplace  
Protections, Ethics, and Professional Support Date Submitted: 04/03/2025

Submitted By: Steven Saxe, DMD

Reference Committee: A (Business, Membership and Administrative Matters)

Total Net Financial Implication: [Total Net Financial Impl.] Net Dues Impact:

Amount One-time: Amount On-going:

ADA Strategic Forecast Outcome: Tripartite: Promote Tripartite stability, success, and future growth.

**[RESOLUTION: ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL UNION OF ADA EMPLOYED DENTISTS (NUAED)  
TO PROMOTE WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS, ETHICS, AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT]****Background:**

The structure of the dental workforce is rapidly evolving. A significant and growing percentage of new dentists begin their careers as employees in large group practices, DSOs, community health centers, and other institutional settings. In recent years, over 25% of new graduates reported affiliating with DSOs within their first year of practice (1).

Despite this shift, the American Dental Association (ADA) currently offers no formal structure through which employed dentists can collectively advocate for their professional rights (7), negotiate employment terms, or defend their ethical standards. Other healthcare professionals—including physicians, mental health specialists, nurses, and even employed dentists in public systems—have long benefited from union representation through organizations like the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD), SEIU-UHW, and the National Union of Healthcare Workers (2)(5)(6).

This resolution proposes the creation of the **National Union of ADA Employed Dentists (NUAED)**, a voluntary, ADA-affiliated union for employed dentists. Membership in the NUAED would be optional and available only to ADA members. Employers—including private practice owners—would **not** be required or encouraged to hire union-affiliated dentists. The union would exist solely to serve employed dentists who voluntarily choose to join, protecting their rights while avoiding undue pressure on any practice model.

The NUAED would offer valuable services such as legal and contract review, ethical case support, peer-led professional guidance, and—where legally permitted—salary and benefit negotiations. The union would be established in full compliance with the National Labor Relations Act, FTC antitrust guidelines, and association law (3)(4). Legal counsel will be retained during development to ensure appropriate structural separation between the ADA and

the NUAED, as required to prevent liability while allowing for collaboration in infrastructure and support.

Organized dentistry cannot remain silent while early-career dentists face increasing workplace stress, loss of autonomy, or retaliation for speaking up. A dedicated union is not only legal—it is overdue. It is also a meaningful response to the concerns of a generation of dentists who have increasingly disconnected from organized dentistry. Recent surveys and membership trends show that even when free or discounted ADA memberships are offered, some new dentists decline to join because they do not see sufficient value (1). Providing legal and workplace protections through union representation may become one of the most powerful incentives the ADA can offer its employed members.

This union would provide the ADA with a generational bridge to younger dentists—offering something no employer or DSO can: an independent professional structure focused on dentists' rights, ethics, and long-term well-being. Wider adoption of NUAED membership may also contribute to a healthier practice culture across the profession by promoting transparency, ethics, and professionalism in employee-employer relations—without imposing mandates on employers.

By sponsoring this effort and ensuring it operates within federal law, the ADA demonstrates that it is willing to evolve—protecting not just the profession, but the professionals who carry it forward.

## References:

1. *Dentists of Tomorrow 2023: An Analysis of the Results of the ADEA 2023 Survey of U.S. Dental School Seniors* – Istrate, ADEA, 2023
2. *Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD)* – [www.uapd.com](http://www.uapd.com)
3. *National Labor Relations Act Summary* – NLRB, 2024
4. *FTC Guide to Antitrust Laws* – Federal Trade Commission, 2024
5. *National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW)* – [home.nuhw.org](http://home.nuhw.org)
6. *SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW)* – [seiu-uhw.org](http://seiu-uhw.org)
7. *2023 ADA Current Policies – Statement on Employment of a Dentist*

## 1   **Resolved Clauses**

2   **Resolved**, that the American Dental Association shall establish the **National Union of ADA**  
3   **Employed Dentists (NUAED)** as a voluntary, membership-based union available to any  
4   employed dentist who is also a member of the ADA, and that the NUAED shall operate in full  
5   legal compliance with applicable labor, antitrust, and association law, with legal oversight  
6   guiding its structure and separation from ADA governance; and further, that participation in  
7   NUAED shall be optional and no employer, including private practices, shall be required or  
8   expected to hire union-affiliated dentists;

9   **Resolved**, that the NUAED shall provide member services including legal and contract review,  
10   professional advocacy, ethical and workplace support, and—where legally permitted—  
11   participation in salary and benefit negotiations, and that the ADA shall appoint a task force to  
12   oversee NUAED development and deliver a progress update to the House of Delegates within 12  
13   months of adoption; and further, that this union shall serve as a benefit-driven support system to  
14   help employed dentists protect their rights and elevate standards of professionalism across all  
15   practice settings.

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