

Resolution No. 203 NewReport: N/A Date Submitted: 04/03/2025Submitted By: Dr. Steven Saxe, delegate, NevadaReference 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.

**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. This resolution does not propose a feasibility study but rather the formal establishment of a voluntary, member-based union. A task force would be appointed solely to oversee legal compliance and implementation logistics. 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. These services include professional advocacy (such as support during employment disputes or internal investigations) and ethical and workplace support (such as guidance on navigating production pressure, unethical directives, or workplace discrimination), modeled after protections offered by healthcare unions such as the Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD) and the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). 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. To guide this process, an implementation group shall be formed under the Board of Trustees to support NUAED development and ensure compliance with legal and structural requirements. This group will assist with execution and deliver a progress update to the 2026 House of Delegates.

After the implementation cost, the NUAED would be self-funded through voluntary union dues or participation fees paid by its members, in compliance with federal antitrust and labor laws, including the

1 FTC's guidance for associations and the National Labor Relations Act. With the exception of the
2 implementation costs, no ADA dues or general association funds will be used to subsidize its operations.
3 A separately elected board of directors, composed of NUAED members, would govern the union's
4 operations and assume legal and fiduciary responsibility independent from ADA governance.

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

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

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

19 References:

- 20 1. *Dentists of Tomorrow 2023: An Analysis of the Results of the ADEA 2023 Survey of U.S. Dental*
21 *School Seniors* – Istrate, ADEA, 2023 [https://www.adea.org/home/publications/research-and-](https://www.adea.org/home/publications/research-and-data/dental-school-seniors/dentists-of-tomorrow-2023)
22 [data/dental-school-seniors/dentists-of-tomorrow-2023](https://www.adea.org/home/publications/research-and-data/dental-school-seniors/dentists-of-tomorrow-2023)
- 23 2. *Union of American Physicians and Dentists (UAPD)* – www.uapd.com
- 24 3. *National Labor Relations Act Summary* – NLRB, 2024 [https://www.nlr.gov/guidance/key-reference-](https://www.nlr.gov/guidance/key-reference-materials/national-labor-relations-act)
25 [materials/national-labor-relations-act](https://www.nlr.gov/guidance/key-reference-materials/national-labor-relations-act)
- 26 4. *FTC Guide to Antitrust Laws* – Federal Trade Commission, 2024 [https://www.ftc.gov/advice-](https://www.ftc.gov/advice-guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws)
27 [guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws](https://www.ftc.gov/advice-guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws)
- 28 5. *National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW)* – <https://nuhw.org>
- 29 6. *SEIU–United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW)* – <https://www.seiu-uhw.org/>
- 30 7. ADA Policy, Statement on Employment of a Dentist (*Trans.*2013:353; 2018:357; 2019:251)

31 Resolution

32 **Resolved**, that the American Dental Association shall establish the National Union of ADA Employed
33 Dentists (NUAED) as a voluntary, membership-based union available to any employed dentist who is
34 also a member of the ADA, and be it further

35 **Resolved**, that the NUAED shall operate in full legal compliance with applicable labor, antitrust, and
36 association law, with legal oversight guiding its structure and separation from ADA governance, and
37 be it further

38 **Resolved**, that participation in NUAED shall be optional and no employer, including private
39 practices, shall be required or expected to hire union-affiliated dentists, and be it further

40 **Resolved**, that the NUAED shall provide member services including legal and contract review;
41 professional advocacy (such as support during employment disputes or internal disciplinary actions);
42 ethical and workplace support (such as guidance on production pressure, discrimination, or unethical
43 directives); and—where legally permitted—participation in salary and benefit negotiations, and be it
44 further

1 **Resolved**, that excluding implementation costs, the NUAED shall be financially self-sustaining,
2 funded exclusively through voluntary union dues or participation fees paid by its members, and
3 structured in compliance with federal antitrust and labor laws, including the FTC's association
4 guidance and the National Labor Relations Act, with no ADA dues or general association funds used
5 to subsidize its operations, and be it further

6 **Resolved**, that the NUAED shall be governed by an independent board of directors elected by its
7 members, and that this board shall be responsible for ensuring the union's legal compliance,
8 member services, and operational integrity, in accordance with all applicable laws and its own
9 bylaws, and be it further

10 **Resolved**, that the Board of Trustees shall designate a temporary implementation group to support
11 the development of the NUAED and deliver a progress update to the 2026 House of Delegates, and
12 be it further

13 **Resolved**, that this union shall serve as a benefit-driven support system to help employed dentists
14 protect their rights and elevate standards of professionalism across all practice settings.