



SEPTEMBER 2023

Special Edition Newsletter:
National Recovery and Suicide
Prevention Month

Bridgett Anderson,
Executive Director



September is a special month to spotlight substance use, recovery, mental health, suicide, and most importantly, to address the stigma associated with these important topics. Raising awareness and promoting overall health and wellness is near and dear to my heart, as I personally have lost loved ones to overdose, substance use disorder, and suicide.

Dental professionals are not immune to mental health conditions or substance use disorders. The Board’s mission is to protect the health and safety of the public. We want to ensure that professionals are well supported in these areas, so it does not ultimately impact the care being provided to patients or the access to care. We want to support providers that are in recovery. We want to see them stay in recovery. We want to make sure that all dental professional licensees understand that they are mandatory reporters for physical, psychological, and substance use conditions. This is what helps protect the public and serves to connect to further support for licensees.

I recently had the pleasure to speak at the ADA Health and Wellness Summit regarding the Health Professional Services Program in Minnesota and how the Board of Dentistry works with the program to engage individuals in need of support and accountability in management of substance use disorders, physical or mental health conditions.



[Addiction can happen to anyone.](#)

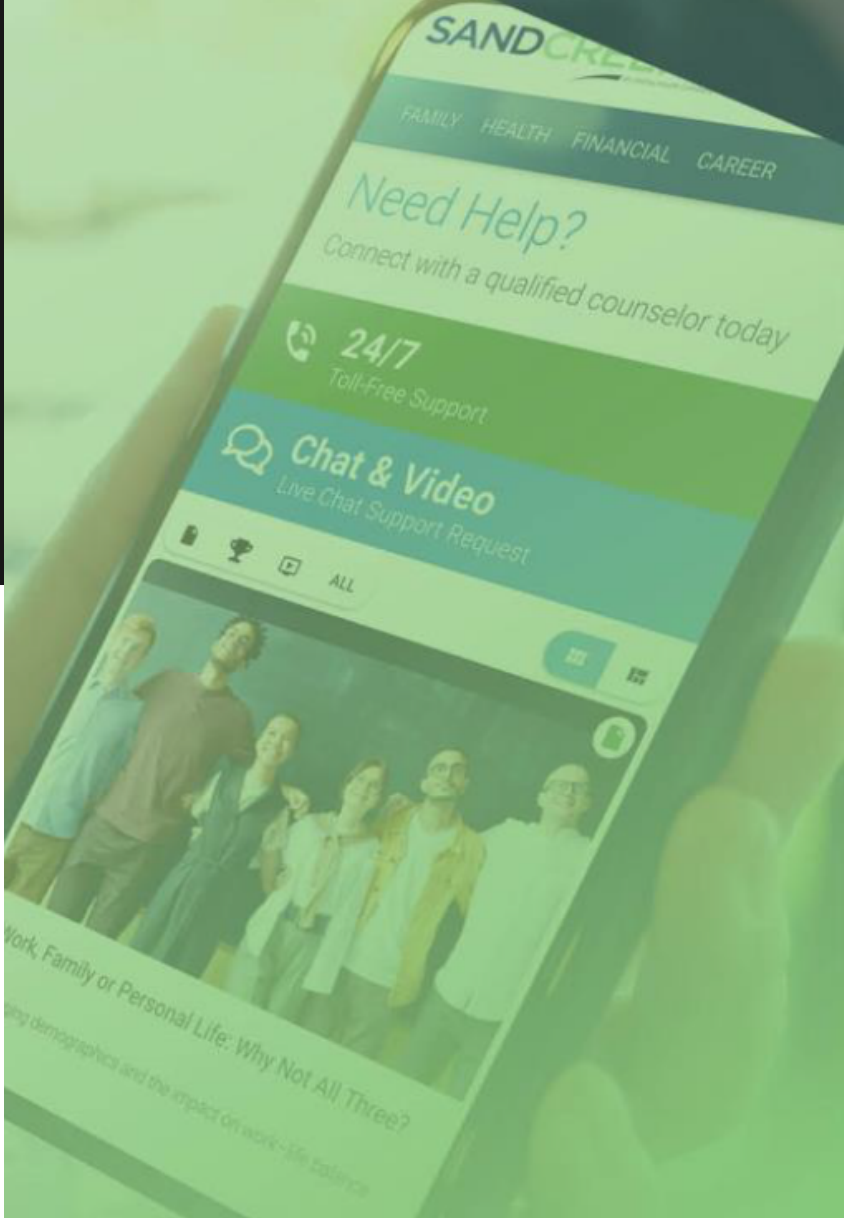
Talk to Someone

Did you know?

All licensed dentists in Minnesota and immediate family members are eligible for the counseling services offered through the Minnesota Dentist Wellness Program through the Minnesota Dental Association partnership with Sand Creek.

Help is available by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-800-632-7643

[Sand Creek EAP Flyer](#)
[Member Portal Flyer](#)



Dentists Concerned for Dentists was formed in the late 1970s by a small group of Minnesota dentists to provide help and support for dentists suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. This group not only functions as a support group and resource, but also serves to provide interventions for dentists in need of help. The primary goal of DCD is to assist dentists in getting the help they need to continue practicing dentistry without receiving sanctions from the State Board of Dentistry.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE: We're as close as your phone (651)-275-0313

[Dentists Concerned for Dentists Website](#)



Journey to Wellness

Dr. Robert G. McNeill is the board secretary with the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners. Several years ago, while on sabbatical for a public policy fellowship, he realized he was burnt out from clinical practice. Stepping aside from practice afforded him the opportunity to reflect. He realized he needed to put the oxygen on himself if he was going to help others. He had seen first-hand as a regulator the challenges that practitioners face with respect to their mental health. That started an adventure co-creating a YouTube and Podcast channel called Between Two Teeth. He and his partner Dr. Stephanie R. Ganter push a message of adventure with their own well-being journeys to help others as they push a message of connection, discovery, and inspiration.

Between Two Teeth Social Media



[Youtube](#)



[Instagram](#)



Recover Out Loud



Nearly three-quarters of the over 29 million adult Americans who identify as having substance use disorder are in recovery, new federal data shows. This weekend, hundreds of advocates in the field gathered in Washington, D.C. to call for political action and support for people in recovery, who make up a significant percentage of the population of U.S. adults.

The parties gathered at Mobilize Recovery, a conference now in its fifth year, hosted by a federal nonprofit organization of the same name. In addition to connecting people in the recovery field to each other, the conference aims to make people in recovery a visible, viable political group that can push for political and social change. [Click here to read full article.](#)

Personal Story

It was nearly 20 years ago, and I was in a living hell. Despite being an outwardly successful appearing dental specialist, inside I was miserable. Over many years I had gone from being a social drinker and marijuana user to the absolute depths of addiction. As my disease took me down the drain, I felt like I was living in a black and white movie, with no joy and only the endless drive to get more of my drug of choice, fentanyl. The addiction was crushing my soul, and I felt like there was no way out. My miracle came when I was confronted by my partners about my suspected drug use. I admitted everything, as I was so broken that just sharing the horrible secret took a weight off my heart. Fortunately, my partners reached out to Dentists Concerned for Dentists, and that started a recovery journey that has lasted since February of 2004.

I spent time in a residential treatment center and followed that with several years of monitoring by the Minnesota Health Professionals Service Program, multiple twelve step meetings weekly and a relapse prevention program. 12 step meeting attendance and trying my best to help others in the same situation has brought me happiness and peace I never thought possible. I was able to continue my career and was blessed to keep my family relations intact as well. I am truly a grateful recovering addict.

- Steve G.



The Health Professionals Services Program (HPSP) was developed in 1994 from a joint effort of Health Licensing Board members and association members from various professional organizations representing healthcare professionals. Our mission is protecting the public by providing monitoring services to regulated health care professionals whose illnesses may impact their ability to practice safely. HPSP promotes early intervention, diagnosis, and treatment for health professionals with illnesses and provides monitoring services as an alternative to Board discipline.

The stigma associated with certain illnesses such as substance abuse and mental health disorders can make health care practitioners hesitant to seek treatment. Confidential monitoring increases the likelihood that practitioners will seek treatment early - before clinical skills are compromised. And monitoring improves treatment compliance and successful outcomes. The Minnesota Health Professionals Services Program (HPSP) is charged with protecting the public by promoting early intervention, diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring for health professionals with potentially impairing conditions. Monitoring services are available to over 200,000 health care professionals regulated or licensed by one of the Health Licensing Boards or the Department of Health.

[Check out this video for more information.](#)

Reporting to HPSP fulfills mandatory reporting requirements for licensed healthcare providers.

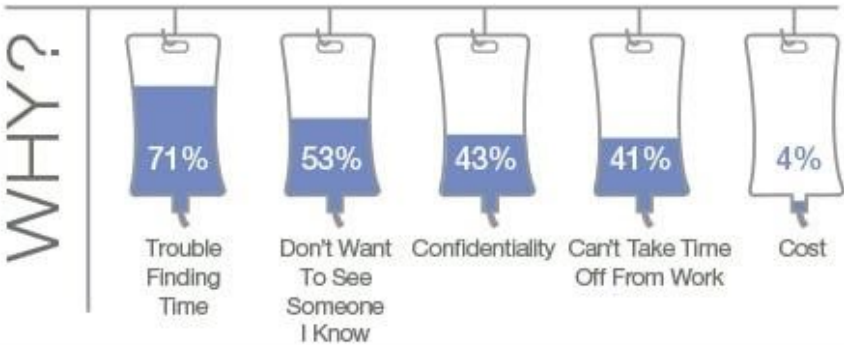
[See Minnesota Statute 214.33](#)



Resources

BARRIERS TO PHYSICIANS

Getting Appropriate Health Care



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[Mayo Clinic Physician Health Center](#)

Dentists can access services here as well. Taking care of your own health needs is critical in order for you to optimally perform dental services for patients.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.



BREAK THE STIGMA.
END THE SILENCE.

76% OF ALL
SUICIDES
ARE BY MEN.

DON'T
'MAN UP'.

IT'S TIME
TO TALK.

Contact Us



www.mn.gov/boards/dentistry



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