



Definition of Access to Care in Emergency Dental Situation

Overview and Background Facts:

The ISDS has defined a dental emergency as an oral condition that occurs suddenly and creates an urgent need for professional consultation and/or treatment. The clinical condition may include hemorrhage, infection, pain, and trauma. (ISDS Parameters of Care Document – The Dental Emergency 1993)

Dentists shall be obligated to make reasonable arrangements for the emergency care of their patients of record. Dentists shall be obligated when consulted in an emergency by patients not of record to make reasonable arrangements for emergency care. (The ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct Section 4.B.)

Comments:

Most Illinois residents can obtain care for the treatment of dental emergencies by contacting the dental practice where they have established themselves as a patient of records. Individuals that have not established a dental home must, at a minimum, seek help through community resources such as local health departments and medical facilities for relief of the symptoms of a dental emergency situation.

ISDS Position Statement:

A patient of record should have a reasonable expectation to have their dental emergency addressed within 24-48 hours. Communities should endeavor to work with the local dentists to help address how individuals who do not have a dental home can obtain emergency dental care.