

# Dental lab news

- Don't choose to go it alone.
- Let's work together.
- We invite you to be involved.
- We want your help.
- Come and find out more.
- Your Utah Dental Lab Association
- Attend the Fall Meeting

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## Questions, Questions, Questions Who's got the Answers

Are you keeping track of the lot numbers of all the materials that contact the patient, in the crowns, partials, or dentures you make? Porcelain, metal, acrylic, stain, glaze? If there was a recall or it was discovered some material was harmful, would you be able to contact all the patients/dentists that were affected? Is the a requirement for dental labs? Is it possible, or even necessary? What other requirements will be demanded of laboratories? How many regulations do we really need to make such changes in our businesses

It almost makes us feel angry to be asked these questions. It seems impossible, considering the custom nature of our business; to try to keep track of everything seems like a night-

mare. We could end up spending as time doing paperwork as making crowns.

We are operating businesses in a changing landscape. With increased competition from all parts of the world and the recent publicity of lead tainted dental restorations, dental labs have hit the radar screen of the FDA. Is it possible we can continue to operate without much government oversight? We have enjoyed being able to focus on our work as a form of art. We have quietly gone about our business making crowns, often in a home or the back of a dental office, not a medical manufacturing facilities.

On one hand, we have been complaining about not getting any respect from the

dental community. Are we now being told to act the part? We are beginning to be viewed by the media and the government as producers of medical devices. Think of the stringent regulations that must be required of companies that make heart valves or other medical devices.

I think we have been in denial of what may soon be demanded of us as an industry. I don't think we have structured our pricing or our staffing to accommodate the demands of the regulations of medical manufacturing facilities. To be able to step up and meet these demands is going to take some significant changes.

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### Fall Technical Seminar

September 24,2009

Dave Sipos 3M

**Course Description** To provide an understanding of marketing in a "Fast" changing laboratory and Dental Industry. We will explore the ten key marketing functions in today's marketplace. Examine how we can better understand customer wants and develop strategies that satisfy customer needs which can grow your laboratory business. Our goal will be to cover business and industry trends.

# Schedule of Coming Events

- **Technical Seminar September 24,2009**
- **Technical Seminar November 5,2009**
- **Installation Meeting Dec 5, 2009**
- **Spring Meeting (to be announced)**
- **Western States Conference**

## Officers of the Utah Dental Laboratory Association

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We would like to be able to E-mail this newsletter to any who are interested.

You can receive this publication by giving your E-mail address to

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## This is Important

**To: All Utah Dental Laboratories**

**Re: No more Utah sales tax on any dental prostheses**

*Beginning January 1, 2009 All dental prosthetics are exempt from Utah sales and use taxes. Yes, all. This is a change from January 1, 2008 when most, but not all, dental prostheses were exempted by the Utah legislature.*

These changes are due to the hard work and persistence of our Past President Dale Wooley and Dr Pete Knudsen. We certainly do thank these two men for their effort..

## Who's got the answers?

From pg 1

Many of the foreign labs that have registered with the FDA are complying with the stringent requirements, as are several US labs, both large and small.

I don't know whether it is the time to say we need to get with the program and comply, or to suggest "lay low" and take advantage of the time we have before enforcement requires it. Right now there are a lot of questions. Our laboratory has decided to use DAMAS (Dental Appliance Manufacturing Audit Scheme) as a format for voluntary compliance. There may be a financial advantage to delay our compliance but, if we comply now our doctors are better served, our patients are better cared for and our employees may be better protected. Also for those unfortunate enough to come under the scrutiny of the FDA unprepared, or in the event non-compliance were to cause harm or injury then the cost of compliance may not seem so bad in today's litigious society. The peace of mind that comes from compliance does have value.

For those who comply, to compete against those who don't, creates economic disadvantage. It would be nice if all labs were operating under the same rules. Before that can happen, we need education as to what is actually required. Sometimes companies make a living stirring up dooms day scenarios and the selling the so called "Salvation" or solutions. However, we can't continue to go around like ostriches with our heads in the sand. Have we taken the time to search out the laws and regulations that apply to us now or do we just go on doing today what we have always done?

If we, as an industry, could unite on standard operation procedures, then maybe there would be pressure on all laboratories to conform, to even the playing field. The NADL is working towards that end with their support of DAMAS, but it requires us to wake up to the situation and be ready to change (for more information on DAMAS see the NADL website at [www.nadl.org](http://www.nadl.org))

Before we begin this process, we need to do a self evaluation. Do we really consider ourselves

as manufactures on custom made medical devices? If so, are we ready to step up to the standards of a medical manufacturer. That is a tough question, however, the answers may already be written in the regulations. Now it's just a matter of "if", "when" and "how" they will be enforced. With the current Administration's focus on government stimulus spending, funding for increased enforcement could be on its way. "Our world" may be changing. We need to prepare for that change.

Hal Shepherd CDT

Past president UDLA

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