

HOLIDAY HEAD START AGENDA

[All speaker bios can be found on the course information page.](#)

Financial Disclosure: The speakers and planners for this educational activity have no relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies to disclose.

8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Cannabis Use and Dental Sedation: Recognition, Risk, and Patient Safety - Dr. Lee Whitesides

This course provides one hour of CE towards a sedation permit renewal.

As access to low-THC cannabis products has expanded in Georgia for qualifying patients, understanding how cannabis use may affect dental treatment and sedation is increasingly important for patient safety.

This presentation examines the growing importance of understanding how cannabis use among patients may affect dental treatment and patient safety. It reviews basic cannabis pharmacology, routes of administration, and the acute and chronic systemic effects of cannabis. The presentation also addresses cannabis-related oral health concerns, dental hygiene considerations, pain management, FDA-approved cannabinoid medications, and cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome. Clinical cases help dental professionals recognize cannabis use and evaluate intoxication, patient risk assessment, informed consent, medication interactions, local anesthesia, sedation, airway risks, and the need to modify or postpone treatment.

This is not just a sedation issue. General dentists and dental teams may encounter patients who use cannabis and should understand how that use may affect routine dental care and treatment decisions. Overall, the program provides a practical framework for safely assessing and managing dental patients who use cannabis.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Differentiate the pharmacologic and clinical effects of THC and CBD and recognize oral health findings associated with cannabis use, including xerostomia, periodontal concerns, and effects related to smoking or vaping.
2. Obtain and document a cannabis history that includes product type, route, frequency, dose, time of last use, and concurrent substance use.
3. Assess whether a patient who uses cannabis can provide valid informed consent and safely undergo elective dental treatment, including consideration of potential effects on local anesthesia, epinephrine administration, IV sedation, and perioperative monitoring.
4. Recognize and respond to cannabis-related clinical problems, including acute intoxication, anxiety or panic, airway irritation, and cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, and determine when treatment may need to be modified or postponed.

9:45 - 11:45 a.m. Clean, Safe & Compliant: Infection Control and Waterline Essentials - Dr. Kevin Plummer

This course fulfills the two hours of infection control with waterlines CE requirement.

This course provides a comprehensive review of infection control recommendations and their crossover with various agency regulations regarding safe dental environments, including dental laboratories. Participants will also receive an introduction to essential information on dental unit waterline (DUWL) protocols and how to incorporate those protocols into the dental office. Time will also be provided for questions and answers.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify and implement means to prevent the transmission of infectious agents between patients, dental healthcare workers, and staff, providing a safe working environment.
2. Recognize the need for appropriate DUWL maintenance protocols.
3. Identify resources and products that fulfill recommendations and guidance on DUWL quality.
4. Incorporate proper infection control procedures for internal and external dental laboratory operations.
5. Understand sterilization requirements for dental environments.

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch and information from our sponsors, Fortune Law and SouthState

12:45 - 2:15 p.m. LEAP: Laws, Rules & Trends Shaping Georgia Dentistry - Janelle Adams

This course fulfills the one hour of legal, ethics and professionalism CE requirement.

Stay informed on the issues shaping dentistry in Georgia! Join Janelle Adams, GDA's Director of Government Affairs, for a timely look at the legislative and regulatory developments impacting dental professionals. Get up to speed on the Georgia Board of Dentistry's teledentistry rule and other regulatory updates, the evolving 2026–2027 legislative landscape, Georgia's dental workforce, and more.

Whether you're a practice owner, associate, new dentist, seasoned professional, or dental hygienist, this is a LEAP course with something for everyone. Check off the Georgia LEAP CE requirement and gain practical insight into the laws, rules, and professional responsibilities that affect everyday dental practice—including professional ethics, professional boundaries, risk management, and more. Stay informed about what's happening in Georgia dentistry, what's changing, and what it means for you, your patients, and your practice.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify recent legislative and regulatory developments affecting dental practice in Georgia, including Board of Dentistry rule changes, teledentistry, and dental workforce issues.
2. Apply Georgia's legal and ethical standards related to professional conduct, professional boundaries, and risk management to everyday dental practice.

2:30 - 3:30 Opioid Epidemic Update 2026 – Dr. Lee Whitesides

This course fulfills the one hour of opioids CE requirement.

This presentation reviews the development and current state of the opioid epidemic in the United States, with particular attention to dentistry. It examines federal opioid regulation (MATE Act), opioid prescribing by dentists, and the vulnerability of adolescents and healthcare professionals to substance use disorders. The program explains the shift from prescription opioids to illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, nitazenes, and polysubstance use. The program also discusses opioid-related deaths in Georgia, online drug distribution, opioid litigation, settlement funding, and Georgia's opioid-abatement efforts. The presentation emphasizes the dentist's role in responsible prescribing, patient education, risk recognition, and overdose prevention.

1. Describe major federal laws, policies, prescribing practices, and other factors that contributed to the prescription-opioid epidemic and have shaped controlled-substance prescribing.
2. Compare the prescription-opioid phase of the epidemic with the current epidemic involving illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, nitazenes, and polysubstance use, including associated overdose risks.
3. Recognize populations and factors associated with increased vulnerability to opioid misuse and substance use disorders, including adolescents and healthcare professionals.
4. Apply responsible prescribing, patient education, risk recognition, referral, and overdose-prevention strategies in dental practice, including an understanding of the roles of buprenorphine and naloxone.