

This Day in History... August 3, 1859

The American Dental Association

On August 3, 1859, twenty-six dentists met in Niagara Falls, New York, at the first meeting of the American Dental Association (ADA).

Prior to the founding of the ADA, there was another dental organization in the US – the American Dental Convention (ADC). Over time, some members of the ADC grew unhappy with how the organization was run and sought to establish a better, more organized group.

The first meeting of the ADA was held on August 3, 1859, while at the fifth annual conference of the ADC. The 26 dental professionals present wanted their new organization to be based on their ideals for the dental field, including establishing scientific standards and a group of delegates for representation.



The ADA's first meeting was held in Niagara Falls.

At that first meeting, the members agreed to form a new national organization. They selected a chairman and secretary, established a committee to create a constitution, and selected a date and location for their second meeting the following year. In the months to come, the 26 members encouraged state and local dental societies and schools to send representatives to the next meeting of the ADA.

The ADA met for the second time in 1860. At that meeting they elected a president and adopted their first constitution and bylaws. The meeting the following year was canceled due to the outbreak of the Civil War.

Meetings resumed in 1866, when they adopted their first Code of Ethics.

In 1908, the ADA published its first dental education pamphlet. This pamphlet shared tips for good oral hygiene, recommended brushing twice a day and visiting the dentist twice a year. In 1931, the ADA created their Seal of Acceptance. The seal was created to protect people from unsafe products. For decades, companies had offered dangerous products advertised as dental remedies. This included tooth powders for gum disease that contained sulfuric acid. The ADA seal ensures the safety of toothpastes, brushes, and other dental products.

On February 6, 1949, the ADA sponsored the first National Children's Dental Health Day. This was expanded to a week in 1955 and a month in 1981.

Today, the ADA has more than 161,000 members and is the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. The ADA is based in Chicago, and each month produces the *Journal of American Dental Association*, which includes articles about dental issues.



Stamp issued for the ADA's 100th anniversary in 1959.



The ADA's headquarters has been located in Chicago since 1931.

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