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By MDA Staff with Rachel Sinacola, DDS
Chair, MDA Committee on Membership

Avoiding a Ransomware Attack: The MDA Can Help

Question: A dentist colleague down the road shared he was a victim of a ransomware attack. Hackers locked down the practice system and demanded

payment to release their info. How can I protect my patients and my practice so this doesn't happen to me?

Answer: Here's a checklist to get your started on making sure your practice is protected:

- Ensure you have a cyber liability insurance policy that provides 24/7 response.
- Create and test an Incident Response Plan: Designate key contacts, establish offline communication, and identify mission-critical data.
- Maintain secure, tested backups (including one offline).
- Use strong password policies and multi-factor authentication.
- Keep all systems patched and updated.
- Train staff to spot phishing emails.
- If an incident occurs: Contact your IT network manager/firm, disconnect infected systems, preserve evidence, and notify your insurer immediately.

Cyber liability coverage is available to MDA members through MDA Insurance. Coverage provides proactive monitoring, 24/7 claims response, expert forensic support, and coverage for breach response, ransomware, and regulatory defense. As you're realizing with the situation your colleague is in, it is important to have protection before an incident occurs. For a ransomware preparedness toolkit and to request a quote, contact MDA Insurance Account Executive Melanie Adler at 517-346-9464 or at madler@mdaifg.com.

Question: I received my 2026 membership renewal in the mail, but my local society isn't correct. What should I do?

Answer: Your local society is based on your practice address county. If a member doesn't have a practice address, the home address is typically used. To change

your local society, please contact the MDA membership department at membership@michigandental.org. Make sure you update your local society before you renew so that you are paying the correct amount.

Question: I've always sent in a check to renew my membership, but I'd like to pay with a credit card this year. What's the best way to pay my dues with a credit card?

Answer: Great question. Paying with a credit card is very easy, and there are two ways to do it. The easiest is to log in to the MDA website and your new Member Compass, where you can access your membership profile and renew membership. Once logged in, you can verify your contact information is correct and pay your balance. You also have the option to store your credit card for future purchases and set up auto-renewal for next year so that your membership never lapses. The second option is to call the MDA office at 800-589-2632, select 1, and then 1 again to pay your dues over the phone.

Question: I'm selling my practice and retiring from full-time dentistry at the end of the year. I'd like to still practice occasionally and wondered if there's a way to help others through the MDA?

Answer: Congratulations on the sale of your practice and retirement! The MDA keeps a list of member dentists who are willing to help out in a locum tenens situation. When a member asks the MDA for help in finding coverage for their practice, the MDA shares a list of dentists who have said they are willing to help out. This MDA COVER program is very helpful to members in a time of need, and always looking for new volunteers. You can message the MDA membership team at membership@michigandental.org to let them know you'd like to be added to the list.

One more thing: Make sure to let the membership team know about your retirement too. You'll want to fill out a retired affidavit so your association membership can be updated, which will come with a discount. ●