The Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon (OMS) faces many challenges in providing excellent patient treatment. Like other health care providers, OMSs want to help their patients. Most importantly, OMSs desire to do no harm to their patients in the process of administering care. Simply put, patient safety is the basis for good patient care. Patient safety must be thoughtfully and purposefully addressed to minimize adverse outcomes in delivering care to our patients. Patient safety involves multiple disciplines. Unlike large institutions, many OMSs are in private practices, and even the largest OMS groups do not have risk managers, compliance officers, medical directors, and quality officers to address the myriad of possible patient safety concerns, yet it should be expected that they maintain the same level of patient safety.

This issue is dedicated to patient safety in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery. The various topics included in this issue address the specific areas of concern in our field. The reader will see that many areas of concern overlap with other areas of medicine quite well. The most important concept embodied in this issue is the recognition that human error occurs in the best trained and dedicated health care professionals, and taking steps to recognize, minimize, and intercept these errors is the key to reducing the likelihood of error and minimizing the impact of adverse events.

Health care is evolving. Many of us have expanded our practice beyond what we were taught as students and residents. The old adage that it has always been done that way is simply unacceptable. Oral and maxillofacial surgery prides itself on the scope and quality of care that its practitioners provide. It is our sincere hope that the reader will review these concepts of patient safety and take steps to implement a program to enhance the culture of safety in their offices.

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