

## Are These 5 IV Sedation Myths Holding Your Practice Back?

*Sedation training might feel like a big step. The reality is often more straightforward and more rewarding than expected.*

Roughly 93 million Americans experience some degree of dental fear, and many of them have spent years without the oral healthcare they genuinely need. As such, IV sedation is one of the most direct ways to reach that population, and the pathway to certification is more accessible than some myths would have you believe.

### 1. "IV Sedation Certification Is Too Expensive"

Certification requires substantial didactic and clinical hours, and that carries a cost. However, the return on that cost is easy to underestimate.

**For instance, IV sedation takes effect faster than other modalities. Patients relax sooner, appointments run more efficiently, and complex cases require fewer visits. It also opens a practice to longer procedures and to patients who've spent years avoiding dental care out of anxiety. Serving those patients well also builds a practice's profile in the community as a provider equipped to handle what others have a harder time accommodating.**

Additionally, many training providers offer payment plans that spread the cost across several months, making certification workable alongside an active schedule. Concerns about malpractice premium increases for IV-certified practitioners are generally unwarranted, though confirming specifics with your carrier is always a sound step.

### 2. "It's Too Hard to Get Certified and Permitted as an IV Sedation Provider"

Dental regulations can be a lot to navigate, and sedation requirements will add another layer. While some states have more demands than others, choosing the *right* training program matters as much as the certification itself.

However, every U.S. state and Washington, D.C., now offers a formal pathway to IV sedation permits for dentists already in active practice. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends a program with at least 60 hours of didactic study and 20 live patients in a clinical setting.

**DOCS Education is the only non-residency training program to meet those requirements across all states, through its affiliation with Idaho State University and Meharry Medical College, and it's structured to fit an active practice schedule.**

A strong program also goes beyond the coursework. It prepares permit applications after successful completion and supports offices through board inspections, with full regulatory guidance built in from start to permit.

### 3. "IV Sedation Is Too Risky"

Every sedation modality carries clinical risk, and IV sedation is no exception. However, what distinguishes it from other modalities is the level of preparation required before a dentist ever uses it independently.

State dental boards require substantial didactic and clinical hours before granting IV permits. Dentists must also earn the American Heart Association Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification, which covers airway management, emergency response protocols, and techniques for managing common complications that arise during sedation. **The goal of that training is pretty straightforward: Teaching dentists to sedate patients safely. The supervised clinical component then confirms that competence *before* independent practice ever begins.**

Additionally, patient assessment and case selection are equally important. While some patients are better served by deep sedation or general anesthesia in a hospital setting, accurately identifying such cases is a key component of sedation certification training, even if they represent only a small share of the overall pool.

### 4. "IV Sedation Belongs in a Hospital"

**IV sedation administered in a dental office is typically moderate sedation, which is clinically distinct from deep sedation or general anesthesia. Patients remain conscious, responsive to verbal commands, and continuously monitored throughout the procedure.**

The versatility of the medications used also allows dentists to adjust sedation levels in real time based on each patient's needs and the scope of treatment. A well-trained dentist and team make this level of care more convenient and cost-efficient for patients than a hospital setting, with the added benefit of individualized attention from a clinical team that already knows them.

However, some higher-risk patients, such as certain children or those with significant comorbidities, may require involvement from a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) or physician, even in the office setting. A thorough medical history and strong patient communication identify those cases early. Additionally, hospital and surgery center space falls well short of the volume of IV sedation dental procedures performed each year, making in-office capability essential for patient access.

### 5. "IV Sedation Is Only for Oral Surgery"

**While wisdom tooth extractions were once the primary reason for in-office IV sedation, that's no longer the case. Advances in sedation training and sedative medications have made IV sedation appropriate for a much wider range of patients.**

People with severe anxiety, special needs patients who have difficulty controlling their movements, and those who haven't had success with milder sedatives have all benefited. Although patients maintain some awareness throughout, many report little to no procedural recall

afterward. That outcome actively reduces future dental fear and supports the kind of long-term patient relationship that turns a single appointment into consistent, ongoing care.

Any patient whose anxiety, medical complexity, or treatment needs would benefit from a deeper level of comfort is worth evaluating as a candidate. Case selection and clinical judgment define the scope, and both develop steadily with experience.

### **Quality Education and Training Make All the Difference**

With the right education and certification, IV sedation can be one of the most accessible additions a dental practice can make, with a clear pathway and a regulatory framework in place across every state. And for the roughly 93 million Americans who need a different experience at the dentist, a practice that offers IV certification may be exactly the provider they've been searching for.

To talk through your specific practice situation with someone on the clinical side, [schedule a free 30-minute call with DOCS Education's Clinical Program Manager, Lindsay Cahill](#).

#### ***About DOCS Education***

*DOCS Education is the premier provider of dental sedation education in the United States. During their 27-year history, they have trained more than 30,000 dental professionals in safe and effective sedation protocols. They offer online, in-person, and Interactive ((LIVE)) Streaming education. To learn more, visit [DOCSEducation.com](http://DOCSEducation.com).*

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