

Moderate Enteral Sedation Regulations



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Background

Professional organizations have published guidelines for the administration of moderate enteral sedation. Despite the existence of these guidelines, the regulation of dental sedation practice is determined by individual state dental practice acts, leading to substantial variation in permitting, education, and safety requirements. Prior studies including Lapointe et al. 2011 and Simon et al. 2025 have been conducted comparing state dental sedation regulations. Findings from these studies show substantial variation among state permitting regulations and inconsistencies with national guidelines. There has yet to be an updated nationwide review of state dental practice acts for moderate enteral sedation of pediatric patients.

Purpose

To compare moderate enteral sedation regulations across the 50 US states and evaluate alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)/American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines.

Methods

An online review of state dental practice acts was conducted from January to June 2025. Data was extracted on permitting, safety, and education requirements. State regulations were compared with the AAPD Guidelines for Monitoring and Management of Pediatric Patients Before, During, and After Sedation for Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures and the ADA Guidelines for Teaching Pain Control and Sedation to Dentists and Dental Students.

Results

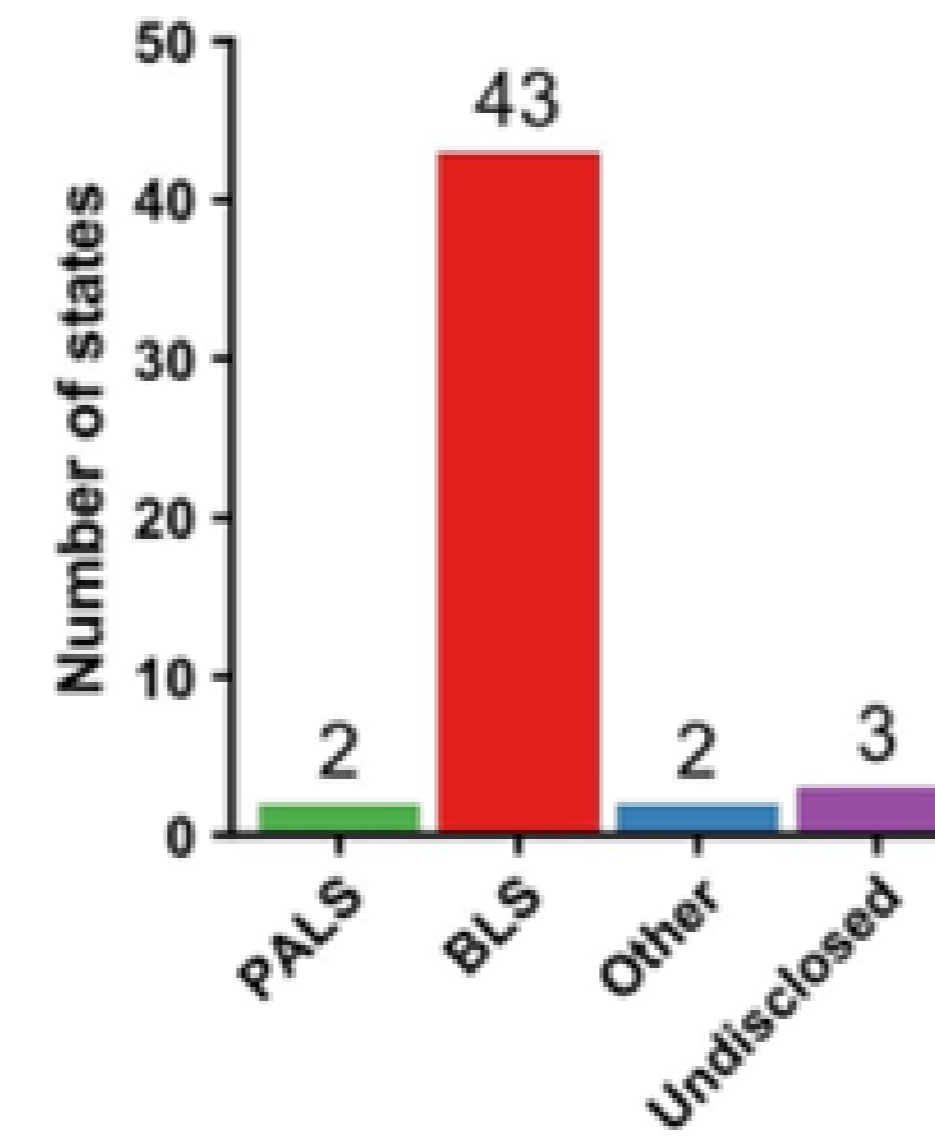


Figure 1. Life support training requirements for monitoring personnel for moderate enteral sedation across the 50 US states.

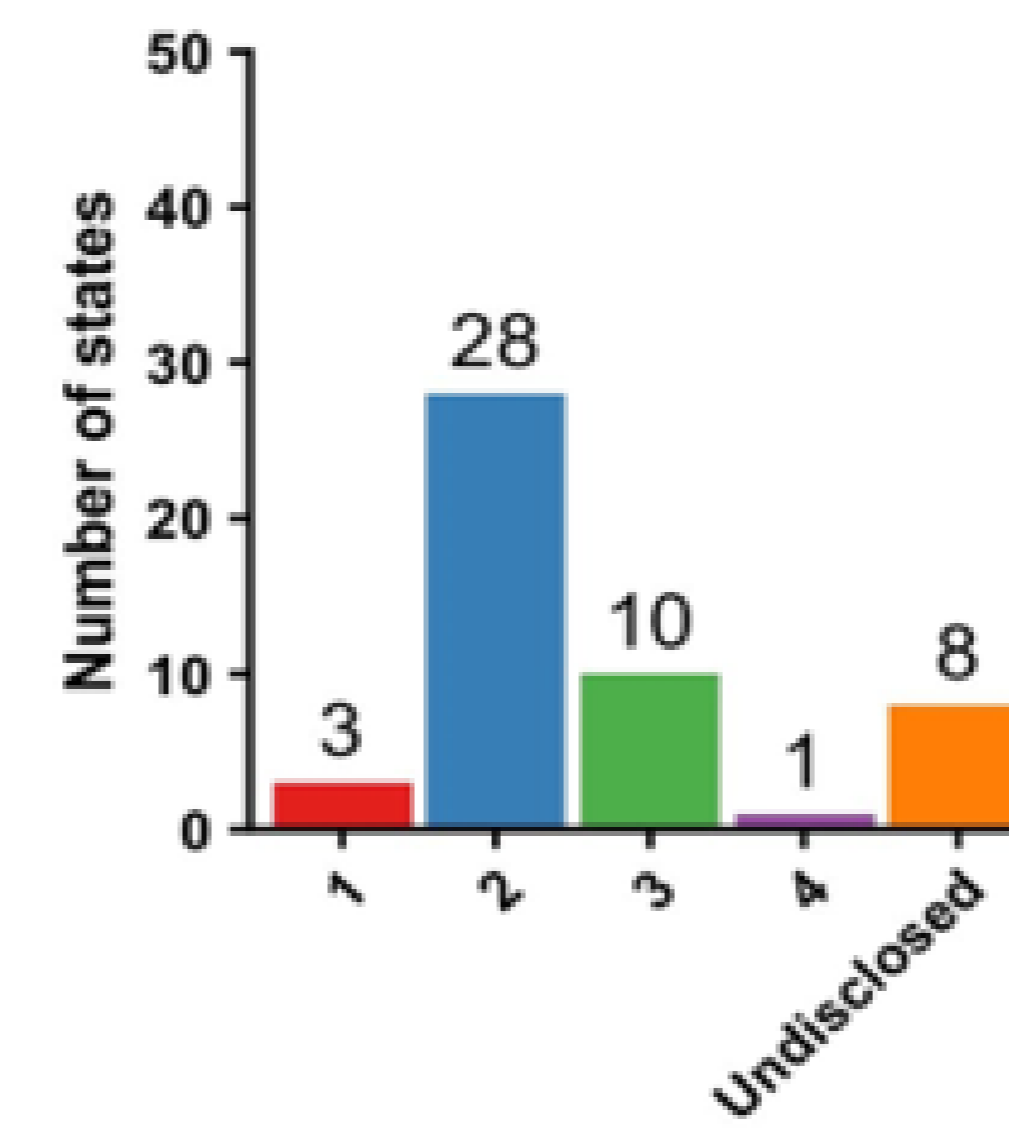


Figure 2. Number of monitoring personnel required for moderate enteral sedation procedures in the 50 US states

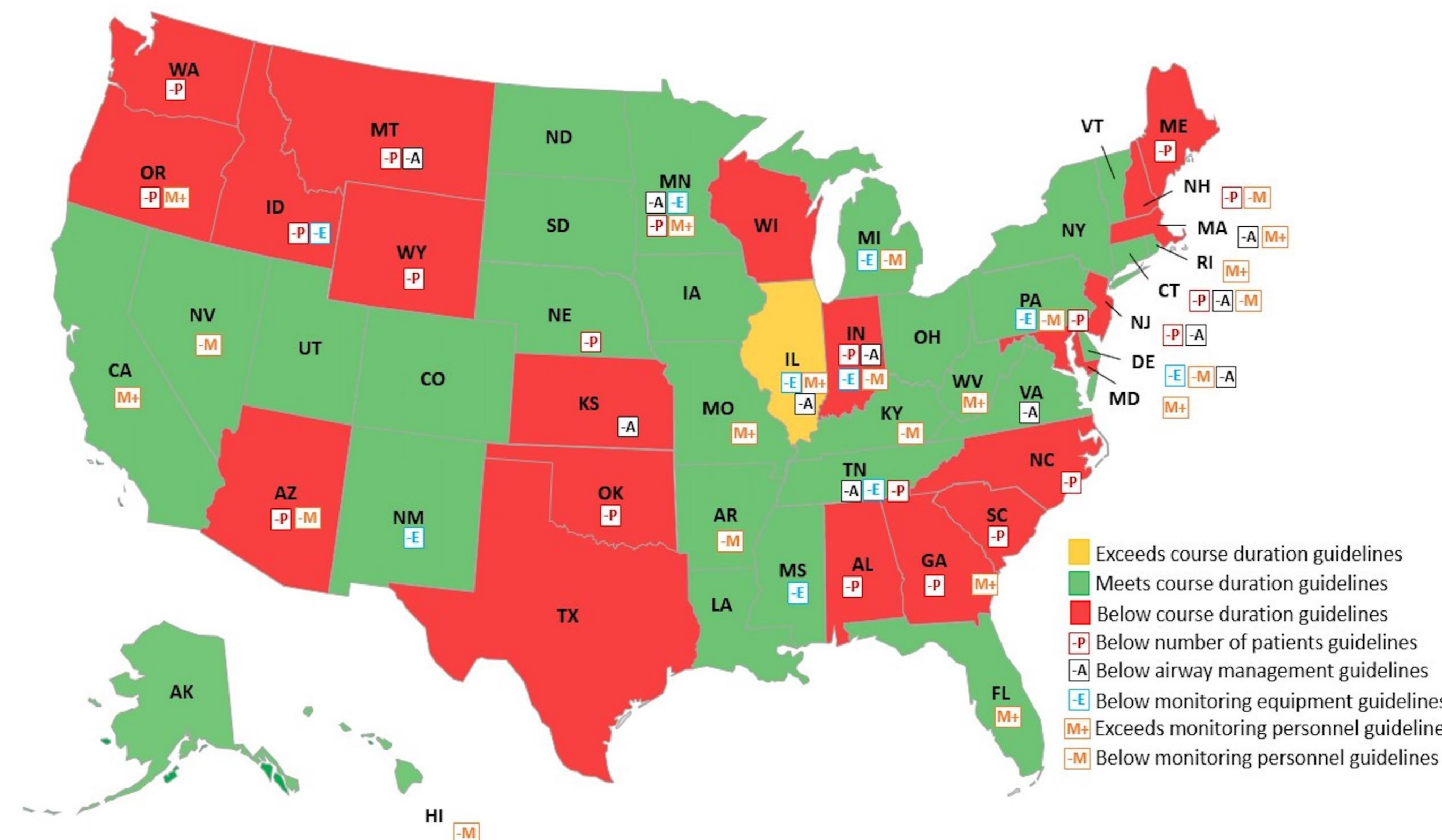


Figure 3. Geographic distribution of US states' alignment with national moderate enteral sedation guidelines

Results

- 48 states (96%) require a permit for moderate enteral sedation
- 31 states (62%) combine moderate enteral/parenteral sedation under one permit, 17 states (34%) maintain separate permits
- Most common renewal interval: 2 years (58%)
- ~67% of states require 1–5 CE hours annually
- 20 states (40%) require a pediatric endorsement
- 70% specify the age of pediatric patient as ≤ 12 years
- 98% mandate providers to obtain advanced life-support training for moderate enteral sedation of pediatric patients
- 64% require an initial site visit
- 50% require regular simulated emergency drills
- Most common education requirement is 60 didactic hours, 20 clinical cases

Conclusions

1. There has been an increase in the number of state dental boards regulating moderate enteral sedation.
2. The structure of permitting varies. States should align with the ADA guidelines and define sedation by depth of sedation
3. There has been an increase in the number of states that meet or exceed the educational requirements established by the ADA since 2011.
4. The number of states requiring advanced life-support training has risen since 2011, with nearly all states now requiring it.
5. There is a need for increased standardization and unambiguous guidance regarding pediatric moderate enteral sedation

References

