

Recent Wins in the Mercury-Free Dentistry Movement

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The EU will ban dental amalgam use, manufacture and export starting January 1, 2025, setting a global precedent for phasing out mercury in dentistry
- › The Minamata Convention on Mercury Treaty aims to phase out dental mercury worldwide by 2030, with a vote scheduled for fall 2025
- › Mercury-free dentists play a crucial role in advocating for and implementing mercury-free dentistry, serving millions of patients and supporting the cause financially
- › As I do each Mercury Awareness Week, I will match dollar for dollar your gift to Consumers for Dental Choice made through Sunday August 25
- › You can support the mercury-free dentistry movement by donating to Consumers for Dental Choice and choosing mercury-free dentists for your dental care

In celebration of our 2024 Mercury Awareness Week, I invited Charlie Brown, founder and president of Consumers for Dental Choice, to share with us some of the recent developments in the fight for mercury-free dentistry. Charlie and his team have made monumental leaps in their advocacy, not just in the U.S., but worldwide as well.

Before their initiative started, only about 3% of dentists were mercury-free, and they were severely suppressed by conventional dentistry advocates, including the American Dental Association (ADA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"The American Dental Association owned patents on amalgam, the Food and Drug Administration refused to do its duty to regulate amalgam, and the state dental boards were horrible to the mercury-free dentists, actually shutting them down if they spoke out against mercury," Charlie recounts.

"We, starting in California and then here in Washington DC (our office), built a coalition of wise dentists, aware consumers and concerned environmentalists, and we educated government officials, too. And we have obviously ended amalgam use for many, many people."

They're now starting to see the fruits of their labor, as 50% or more of dentists have stopped using mercury fillings in their practice. Consumers for Dental Choice also grew, transforming from being a small nonprofit organization to founding the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry – a worldwide coalition of consumer, dental and environmental organizations working together to end amalgam use.

Charlie and his team are now getting closer to their end goal – to phase-out (not just to phase-down, but to completely eliminate) the use of mercury in dental applications worldwide.

"[M]illions of people don't get amalgam, but we have a long way to go. We want to finish. We want to make sure no child of any economic level, no soldier or sailor, no one gets mercury in the mouth," he says.

Mercury Awareness Week Donation Match

Since I ask you to step up and donate, I will step up first! I match every donation to Consumers for Dental Choice until Sunday midnight, August 25, 2024, up to a total of \$150,000. I believe in the mission of this nonprofit organization, and I have seen how efficient and effective they have been, both across the United States and worldwide.

DONATE TODAY

Major Win – The EU Will Ban Dental Amalgam in January 2025

Their greatest achievement in the global arena is in continental Europe, as the European Union, the largest assemblage of nations in the world (with 27 member countries) is set to ban amalgam, effective January 1, 2025.

The European Commission – the administrative arm of the EU – proposed the ban last year, and it fell in the hands of the Parliament and the Council, the two branches of the EU, for it to become law. In February 2024, the Council and European Parliament's negotiators struck a provisional political agreement on this proposal. According to a press release from the EU Council:¹

*"The provisional agreement will now be submitted to the member states' representatives within the Council (Coreper) and to the Parliament's environment committee for endorsement. If approved, the text will then be formally adopted by both institutions, following revision by lawyer-linguists, before it can be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force."*²

Charlie considers this a significant win, given the EU's history regarding dental mercury. In 2011, the EU was dead set against acting to stop dental amalgam, but after 13 years of tireless work on this campaign, Consumers for Dental Choice has finally made a meaningful dent.

"What the European Union has done is the prototype for the world. They've set a date. They said, 'We're done with amalgam.' They've of course benefited millions – more people live in the European Union than the United States and Canada combined. It's a huge populace. It's 27 countries.

So, they've stepped up to help benefit their citizens. They stepped up also by saying, 'We're not going to export. No company can export. You can't offload it. You're done. Don't think there's going to be something left over. You better stop making it this minute because you're not going to sell it anywhere and you're not going to sell it here either.'

And so, the ban means the EU will, as they've done over and over, step on the world stage at these Minamata conventions and say, 'Everybody can end amalgam. We did it. You can do it.' So, they are an advocate on the entire world stage in addition to helping their own people and being a prototype that we can look to."

Other European countries that are not members of the EU, such as Norway, Switzerland and Moldova, have also ended the use of dental amalgams. This is a significant victory, because once toxic products like mercury have been banned from progressive countries, it means that they cannot ship off these products to less-progressive countries. The ban includes not only the use but also the manufacture and export of dental amalgam.

"So, we're going to be done with amalgam in Europe very, very soon. And that's a huge factor. We've won other places across Asia, Europe, [and] Latin America. Saint Kitts and Nevis in this hemisphere bans amalgam; so does Nepal. So do the Philippines. India and Bangladesh ban it for soldiers and sailors. Vietnam, Mauritius, Tunisia [and] Tanzania, ban for children and pregnant women. Gabon bans it.

It's all kinds of activities going on around the world. Now let's bring it all together, because there is a place we're bringing it all together. And that's the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the treaty that we won."

The End Goal – Ban Dental Amalgam Worldwide by 2030

The Minamata Convention on Mercury Treaty has now shifted its focus from phase-down to total phase-out of dental amalgam. They will be reconvening in fall of 2025 to vote on an important decision – to phase out dental mercury by 2030 worldwide. "We are gearing much of our work to building the worldwide consensus that we're going to need to have by that time," Charlie says.

Working with countries that are more resistant to change has been a challenge for Charlie and his team, but they were able to succeed with the help of the wonderful

leaders who were willing to step forward and change the future of dentistry in their nation.

"[T]he chief dental officer of Tanzania [Msafari Kabulwa] contacted me many years ago and said, 'I want to end amalgam.' No one had done that before. No chief dental office of a government, nowhere in the globe.

Msafari and I worked together. I've been there now several times. They've ended amalgam for children [and] pregnant women now. There's an exit date at the end of the 2020s. No more amalgam.

It's a low-income country, but the willpower was there by the leaders. And those are the kind of things that we're just so excited to work with," Charlie says.

In 2022, the Minamata Convention on Mercury was amended to end amalgam use in children, pregnant mothers and breastfeeding women. Dubbed the Children's Amendment, it had an electrifying impact on their campaign, Charlie says. And they are now pushing the governments to follow it.³

"This is international law. It has to be implemented, and those things aren't automatic. I think we learn that as we get more aware of government operations. To pass a law is a wonderful thing, but it must be implemented. And so, we are working hard to implement it," Charlie says.

"Remember, Europe started with a ban on children before they did it all. We've now started with a ban on children, so when we go back to the Minamata Convention in 2025, we can say, 'You've done the children's ban. Now it's time to step up and let's finish the job for the rest of us.'"

Significant Updates Also Seen in the US and Canada

According to Charlie, the EU's move to ban amalgam is instrumental in making significant waves on this side of the Atlantic as well.

"When Europe banned amalgam for children, that's when [the] FDA sat down with us and said, 'Well, we better do something too.' They weren't doing anything. All at once the European Union made them look bad, so they stepped up to give the recommendations against amalgam," he says.

In 2022, two dental products manufacturers, Dentsply Sirona and Kerr (a subsidiary of Envista), announced that they would cease manufacturing amalgam products that contain mercury.⁴ While Charlie says there are rogue companies in the U.S. that are still using mercury in their products, having these two primary companies out of the amalgam business is a huge triumph for the mercury-free campaign.

However, the focus needs to be on stopping the imports of dental amalgam, because, ironically, the ADA continues to support amalgam use despite more and more consumers now seeking mercury-free alternatives.

"[The] American Dental Association has just been a horribly regressive force in America by being the chief advocate for mercury fillings with their patents [and] with their sham advocacy of silver fillings," he says. "All because they don't want to modernize their profession."

Despite these challenges, Charlie firmly believes they've "got the heat moving," with multiple programs now directed toward protecting communities from the dangers of dental mercury. One example is the Red River Declarations, which demands the U.S. Indian Health Service stop amalgam use among indigenous Native American communities.⁵

In Canada, Consumers for Dental Choice is also working closely with the grassroots organization Friends of the Earth Canada, to push the government to follow the EU's decision. In a press release, Friends of the Earth Canada CEO Beatrice Olivastri said:⁶

"We welcome the amalgam ban in the EU. We are concerned, however, that Canada's position is outdated. It still maintains that 'the use of dental amalgams is safe and that mercury exposure from dental amalgams does not pose a health risk for the general population.'"

Mercury-Free Dentists Are the Real Heroes of This Movement

Charlie praises the mercury-free dentists who participate in their initiatives, saying that without their support and donations, all the victories against dental mercury would be unachievable. He says mercury-free dentists are not only staunch supporters of their events and are present during hearings, but they are also the ones going out into the communities to spread the word about mercury-free alternatives. According to Charlie:

"[T]hey are servers of mercury-free dentistry to the millions of Americans. They are thousands, now it's millions because there are so many of them. They are the advocates and they are donors.

The thinking dentists, the wise dentists, the compassionate dentists, the ones we work with, donate to us and are serving for everyone. Not just, 'OK, well I don't pay attention to this low-income child.' They aren't that way. It's 'no mercury for anybody.' So, I salute the mercury-free dentists, and I'm grateful that so many of them have just, throughout their careers, donated to us every month or every year."

He also highlights that conventional dentists and dental workers must advocate for the removal of mercury in dental applications, as they are in grave danger from being exposed to this harmful heavy metal in the workplace for long hours, day after day. Female dental workers who also plan to conceive or are pregnant are particularly vulnerable, as mercury exposure during pregnancy poses health problems for both mother and child.⁷

A 2024 study from India, published in the journal *Work*,⁸ examined the effects of mercury vapor exposure among dental workers in Delhi. The researchers looked at the mercury vapor concentrations in dental clinics and found that they are above the prescribed safe levels, potentially posing a health risk to employees working in these settings.

They also studied the health profile of these employees, and found that high mercury concentrations may be associated with health issues such as forgetfulness, confusion, muscle spasms and tremors, fatigue, insomnia, arthritis and cardiovascular dysfunction.

According to the researchers, "This may be due to Hg [mercury] exposure during the handling of elemental Hg while preparing amalgam."⁹

The researchers warned that the bioaccumulative nature of mercury may also predispose dental workers to a higher burden of this heavy metal, potentially leading to a variety of adverse health outcomes later in life.

*"We can conclude from our study that the Hg concentration in dental clinics may be above the prescribed safe levels posing a definitive health risk to dental healthcare workers. To reduce the impact of Hg vapors, proper ventilation of the clinics should be maintained," they said.*¹⁰

Help Keep the Momentum Going by Donating to This Worthy Cause

No other organization in the world has been so dedicated to eliminating dental amalgams than the Consumers for Dental Choice. It is so inspiring to see that after tirelessly and persistently campaigning for more than a decade, we are finally seeing a tremendous shift both in the U.S. and all over the world.

But the fight is far from over; they need your support now more than ever to keep the momentum going. One of the best ways to show your support is to give a monetary donation to their organization during our Mercury Awareness Week. During this week, I am going to match the donations dollar for dollar, up to \$150,000.

DONATE TODAY

I encourage you to participate and join me in supporting what I believe is a very noble cause, not only for yourself and your family, but for future generations.

The next step you can take, if you haven't done so yet, is to switch to a mercury-free dentist. As Charlie says, thousands of dentists have now made the choice to eliminate

dental mercury from their practice.

"There are mercury-free dentists in your community. It was hard to find at one point; now they're not hard to find. I would just encourage everybody to be a one-person campaign for mercury-free dentistry with your dollars for you and your family, and say, 'We will only go to mercury-free dentists.' That is a step you can take as a consumer," he says.

"Dentistry is in radical shift mode. It's very exciting. We want to go all the way, get everybody mercury-free, and any of us can play a role by that kind of personalized advocacy and education."

Resources to Help You Find a Mercury-Free Dentist

To help you locate a mercury-free dentist, you can visit the Consumers for Dental Choice's website at Toxicteeth.org. Their [Find a Dentist Portal](#) allows you to search for a mercury-free dentist in your area by entering your state.

They have also worked with other holistic dental organizations that can give you access to mercury-free dentists both inside and outside the U.S. Below are some resources that can help connect you with a holistic dentist who can provide you with trustworthy, professional services, such as if you have dental amalgams and would like to have them safely removed.

- **The Holistic Dental Association (HDA)** – Offers a searchable database of their local and international members. You can search by state or by a dentist's last name.
- [The International Academy of Biological Dentistry and Medicine \(IABDM\)](#) – Their directory of biological dentists and allied health professionals provides local and international listings. Just select your location from the drop-down menu.
- [The International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology \(IAOMT\)](#) – You can search for their members based on their IAOMT certifications. They provide listings for local and international holistic dentists as well.

Sources and References

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