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We applaud The Day's efforts to explore the issue of foreign-produced dental products. ("Lead in dental work prompts fears about Chinese-made crowns, bridges," April 20). If a practitioner authorizes crowns, bridges or other prostheses to be made by a foreign dental laboratory, one must be diligent that materials and methods used meet FDA standards.

Lead should not be used as an ingredient in dental crowns and bridges; however, with sophisticated technology it is possible to detect minute amounts of lead in virtually everything, including water and air. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the trace amounts of lead at the levels found in foreign-made crowns tested in Ohio, "are extremely unlikely to cause adverse health effects."

The CDC also states it does not recommend that individuals defer dental treatment or have existing dental crowns, bridges or other prostheses removed. The American Dental Association has taken this discovery seriously and is conducting its random, objective tests on domestic and foreign manufactured crowns. It will be sharing the results with the FDA, CDC, dental profession and the public.

The Connecticut State Dental Association is not taking this lightly either. It is urging members to seek assurances from dental laboratory suppliers that only FDA-approved materials are used in dental prostheses, and has been working with the Connecticut Dental Laboratory Association for months to address this issue.

It is essential that dentists know, in advance, where prostheses, components or materials are manufactured. Some U.S. dental laboratories are outsourcing crowns and bridges to foreign labs without notifying dentists or labeling where the crowns and bridges are made.

Members of Connecticut's State Dental Association consider patient health and safety to be of utmost importance; that is why we will continue to address the issue of foreign-made materials in patients' dental work.

Editor's note : *The writer is president of the Connecticut State Dental Association.* ■