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Reflections on the ADA House of Delegates



By Barry Taylor, DMD,
ODA Executive Director

I RECENTLY HAD A CHANCE TO SPEAK with Dr. Julie Spaniel about her experience as a first-time delegate at the 2023 ADA House of Delegates in Orlando.

Barry: Dr. Spaniel, thank you for taking your time to serve as a delegate at the 2023 ADA House of Delegates. It is encouraging to see the ADA truly making significant changes when we look at initiatives like the Strategic Forecasting Committee, which will “collaborate with the ADA Board of Trustees in setting the strategic direction of the Association in alignment with the Association’s vision and mission statements.” Then there are the multiple resolutions that were passed by the delegates. Anecdotally however, I too often hear from a non-member that they have dropped their membership because “the ADA doesn’t do anything for me.” Members such as yourself participate in the process and know that the ADA is working for us. However, how do we share that message with our own members, and how do we convince non-members that there is value in their membership?

Dr. Spaniel: As a first-time participant in the ADA House of Delegates, this was an actual learning experience on how much the ADA is doing for its members. The members on the periphery need to realize

what the national leadership is doing to assist us in our daily practice of dentistry. I was impressed by the diverse areas of action.

Communication is key to educating our members, but practitioners are busy. New and younger dentists have a short attention span.

- Short social posts with bullet points can be effective.
 - Short e-blasts (or text blast, if a member opts in) to all licensees to gain access to our non-member dentists could be effective.
 - Asking our current and involved members to spread the word to their colleagues.
 - The ADA could send a bullet point slide to all our components to have “your ADA world in 90 seconds.” Each component, nationwide, could give an update quarterly from the ADA to the “boots on the ground.”
- As I pursue the revitalization of our Washington County Component, I have been brainstorming ideas with our vibrant board on the best ways to communicate!

Barry: I think these are all great ideas. I believe the third bullet point in particular is very important and is motivation for the ODA to continue to assist leaders revitalizing our components much as you and others have done in Washington County. Member engagement is most active at the component level, and it is those conversations among members that

drive the direction of the ODA. Just as the best referrals to our practice come from other patients, it is when members are engaged that they will encourage other colleagues to join.

Dr. Spaniel: I agree, Dr. Taylor, effective communication at the component level is crucial. Ensuring that our members grasp the ADA’s significance is paramount.

When I was a new dentist burdened with student debt, joining the ADA seemed similar to joining a union. I knew I was connected to a national entity that would look out for my interests. I didn’t question the value of membership.

Today’s dentists, graduating with five times the debt I had, seek compelling reasons to invest in ADA membership. As component leaders, it’s our duty to highlight the daily benefits and showcase the value membership brings to their practices.

Our focus should be on informing, particularly the new generation, about the tangible advantages of ADA participation. Meaningful engagement for our members and potential members predominantly happens at the local and state level. Having observed the national efforts of the American Dental Association, advocating for members, it’s crucial to highlight the hard work and lobbying happening at the component level. This is the true value of the tripartite. 🎯

The opinions expressed in this editorial are solely the author’s own and do not reflect the views of the Oregon Dental Association or its affiliated organizations.

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Welcome to our newest members! Please reach out to these new members and welcome them into the ODA community.

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Marion and Polk Dental Society

Elizabeth Burgstahler, DMD, MS

Multnomah Dental Society

Bryan Clevenger, DDS

Southern Oregon Dental Society

Shannon English, DDS

Southern Willamette Dental Society

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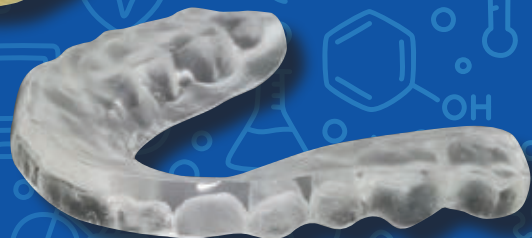


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Events & Education

Component CE Calendar

CONTINUING
EDUCATION

Calendar provided by Mehdi Salari, DMD

This calendar is current as of November 14, 2023.

Please visit the host dental society website for the most up-to-date information.

Date	Dental Society	Course or Event Title	Speaker	CE	Location	More Information
01/11/24	Lane	Peri-Implantitis	Dr. Brad McAllister	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
01/17/24	Multnomah	Cultural Competency	Dr. James Mason	2	ODA Building	Register: www.multnomahdental.org
01/23/24	Clackamas County Dental Society	AAE Standards of Treatment	Geoffrey Clive, DDS	2	Oregon City (PWFCC)	RSVP to executivedirector@clackamasdental.com
02/09/24	Lane	Cultural Competency	Healthcare Compliance Associates	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
02/27/24	Clackamas County Dental Society	Implant Site Development for Long-term Stability for Success	Dan Petrisor, DMD	2	Oregon City (PWFCC)	RSVP to executivedirector@clackamasdental.com
03/14/24	Lane	Retirement Planning Strategies for Dentists	Nathan Ricks, CFP, MS	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
03/19/24	Clackamas County Dental Society	Radiology	Kate Dubois, DMD	2	Oregon City (PWFCC)	RSVP to executivedirector@clackamasdental.com
04/19/24	Lane	Soft Tissue & Radiographic Pathology	Dr. Bryan Trump	4	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
04/23/24	Clackamas County Dental Society	Financial Planning	Retirement Advocates	2	Oregon City (PWFCC)	RSVP to executivedirector@clackamasdental.com
05/10/24	Lane	LCDS Golf Scramble	-	-	Junction City (Shadow Hills Country Club)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
05/15/24	Multnomah	Table Clinics	-	2	Portland (Kennedy School)	Register: www.multnomahdental.org
05/28/24	Clackamas County Dental Society	Annual Meeting - Elections			Clackamas County Dental Society	RSVP to executivedirector@clackamasdental.com
06/11/24	Lane	Retiree Luncheon	-	-	TBD	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
10/18/24	Lane	Suturing for Success: (Hands-on, Limited to 30 people)	Dr. Nabeel Cajee	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
12/06/24	Lane	Advances in Dental Pharmacotherapy	Karen Baker, RPh, MS	3	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE

Find this calendar online at www.oregondental.org. Click “Meetings & Events” > “Calendar of Events”.

Looking for additional ways to get CE? The American Dental Association has a large collection of webinars and on-demand video learning opportunities available, many of which are free to members. Visit adaceonline.org to catch up on the latest offerings on your own schedule. 🎧

What Screw Do I Use?

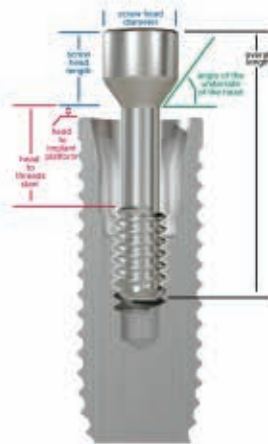


Alex Rugh, CDT
Team Leader Education, O'Brien Dental Lab

When a replacement screw is needed for an implant abutment, it's important to order the correct one. Unfortunately, multiple screws with different designs are available for each system.

Those design differences include:

- The length of the screw
- Length and diameter of the screw head
- Distance from the screw head to the implant threads
- Overall threadform, which includes the shape, angle, diameters, and pitch of those threads.



That threadform is the only constant when looking at different screws for the same platform. That's because the thread design is built into the implant itself. Any screw that's made to be compatible with a specific implant must have the same threadform as that implant's internal threads.



The good news about this is that even if you end up with the wrong screw - as long as it was made for that implant platform, you won't damage the internal threads of the implant by using it.

Every other aspect of the screw design is dependent on the design of the abutment. This is exactly why there can be so many different screws for the same implant platform.

A big part of this is because there are multiple manufacturers that make compatible abutments for common implant systems. Atlantis Abutments for example makes abutments for all of the major systems.

But even if an "original abutment" by the same manufacturer of the implant is used, there can still be multiple variations. For instance, a stock UCLA abutment might have a different screw design than a CAD titanium abutment.

For example, Straumann sells ten different screws for their bone level RC implant. Each of those ten screws has a different design that was engineered to work with a specific abutment type.



The bottom line is that ordering a replacement screw requires that you first know which abutment was used.

If your lab is the one that provided the original abutment for the case, the abutment type should be in their records. If, however, you are using a different lab, the best thing to do is to contact the original lab to determine what abutment was used.

The other option is to try to have your current lab identify the abutment and screw for you. This usually involves sending the current abutment and screw to the lab for evaluation and identification. Unfortunately, it's not always possible to identify the specific abutment and screw type. In that situation, you'll most likely have to start over with a brand new abutment.



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Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

Meeting Highlights

Oregon Dental Association

Board of Trustees Meeting

Friday, September 15, 2023

- The Board reviewed the resolutions that were brought to the 2023 House of Delegates on September 23, 2023.
- The Board approved the 2024 ODA budget.
- Dr. Emily Richard and Dr. Cameron Schwab were appointed to the ODA New Dentist Council.
- Dr. Yashar Sekhvatmandi was appointed to the ODA Wellness Committee.
- Dr. Teri Barichello and Dr. Phillip Marucha were appointed to serve an additional three-year term on the Dental Foundation of Oregon board. 🗣️



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The Value of a 401(k) Advisor

IN TODAY'S RAPIDLY CHANGING FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE,

individuals often rely on 401(k) plans as a cornerstone of their retirement savings. These employer-sponsored retirement accounts offer tax advantages and the opportunity for long-term wealth accumulation. However, managing a 401(k) effectively requires careful consideration, strategic planning, and expertise. Here are several compelling reasons why small business owners should seek knowledgeable professionals to help with their 401(k) plan.

• **Changing Regulations and Tax**

Laws: Tax laws and regulations related to retirement accounts frequently change. Keeping up with these changes is crucial to optimizing the tax efficiency of a 401(k) plan. Financial professionals are well-versed in the latest laws and can ensure that individuals maximize their contributions and tax advantages, avoiding costly mistakes and penalties.

• **Complexity of Investment**

Options: 401(k) plans often offer a wide array of investment options, including stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and target-date funds. Navigating this complexity can be daunting for the average investor.

Financial professionals have the expertise to assess the risk and return profiles of these options, helping individuals make informed investment decisions tailored to their specific financial goals and risk tolerance.

• **Diversification and Risk**

Management: Diversification is key to managing risk in any investment portfolio. Professionals can assess the existing investments within a 401(k) plan and recommend adjustments to achieve a well-diversified portfolio. By spreading investments across different asset classes and sectors, individuals can mitigate the impact of market volatility and enhance the overall stability of their retirement savings.

• **Performance Monitoring:**

Regularly monitoring the performance of investments is vital for long-term success. Financial professionals have access to sophisticated tools and analytics, enabling them to track the performance of a 401(k) plan's investments meticulously. By identifying underperforming assets and making timely adjustments, professionals can help individuals maximize their returns and achieve their retirement goals.

• **Financial Planning Expertise:**

401(k) plans are just one piece of the larger financial puzzle. Professionals can integrate retirement planning into a comprehensive financial strategy that considers other factors such as budgeting, insurance, estate planning, and college savings. This holistic approach ensures that individuals are making well-informed decisions that align with their overall financial objectives.

• **Behavioral Guidance and**

Education: Emotions often influence investment decisions, leading to impulsive actions during market fluctuations. Financial professionals provide valuable behavioral guidance, helping individuals stay disciplined and avoid making rash decisions based on short-term market movements. Their expertise fosters a long-term perspective, promoting financial stability and resilience in the face of market volatility.

Entrusting the review and management of a 401(k) plan to experienced professionals is a prudent financial decision that simplifies the responsibilities of the business owner and can improve the retirement outcomes for the employees. 🎯

Retirement Advocates is an ODA-endorsed vendor. With 60+ years of experience, they have the knowledge and capabilities to educate, counsel, and execute ideal solutions to help you with your retirement plan needs. They will provide you with a thorough review to ensure that your retirement planning maximizes your opportunities while minimizing your fiduciary and administrative burdens.

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Dr. Mark Mutschler, DDS, MS

By Barry Finnemore

AT AN EARLY AGE, MARK MUTSCHLER HAD an interest in working with kids. His first job in high school was as a janitor at a day-care center. Then he was promoted to preschool teacher. When he graduated from high school, he served as a junior assistant scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts.

He received his bachelor's degree in biology and a teaching credential from the University of California, Los Angeles, and worked for a time as a general science and biology teacher in middle and high school.

A health care career hadn't crossed his mind until a friend of his family suggested becoming a doctor because community college chemistry and zoology classes were particularly interesting to him. "I never thought I could be a doctor of any type, but I had the grades to do it and I always liked science."

Fast-forward to today, and Dr. Mutschler has built a practice over 28 years that serves children in offices in Oregon City and Southeast Portland. Dr. Mutschler credited Dr. Jerry Larsen, DMD, from whom he bought his first pediatric dental practice in 1995, with first encouraging him to get involved in organized dentistry.



"I like to be part of a group that serves the profession and looks out for other dentists' best interests," Dr. Mutschler said. "I feel good by participating in organized dentistry, especially when our efforts are appreciated."

Dr. Mutschler's guiding principles as a leader include establishing a culture in which others' ideas are heard, being willing to speak their mind, analyzing opinions, and building consensus.

Immediate Past ODA President Mark Miller, who met Dr. Mutschler more than eight years ago as trustees on the ODA's board, described him as a "very open person" who offers his thoughts and is willing to listen to others.

"He always helps to stimulate conversations, and I am confident he will continue to lead organized dentistry in Oregon onward and upward. It's all about the team of colleagues and our awesome staff at ODA working together for the betterment of our profession, which will benefit all of our patients. Mark will be a great ODA president, and I wish him, the board, and our staff all the best."

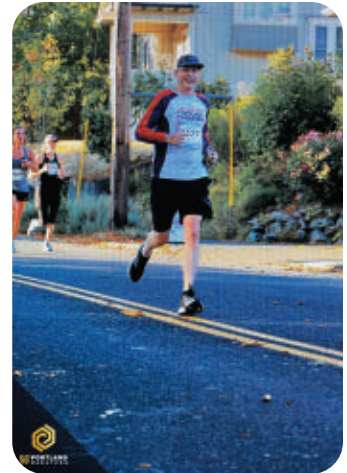


Dr. Mutschler, who recently served as the representative for the American Dental Association's 11th District on the ADA Council on Membership, said keeping organized dentistry's membership strong is among his top priorities. About 50% of dentists in Oregon are ODA members, down from some 80% in years past, and Dr. Mutschler is interested in more outreach and feedback to determine how the ODA can best serve young dentists.

He noted that many professionals just out of dental school decide against owning their own practice due to high student loan debt. One of his goals is to attract to the ODA more dentists just starting their careers who work as employees for large group practices. "My goal is to look for more ways to engage and benefit them," he said.

One way to do that could be via continuing education about professional and personal finances as well as continuing to help younger dentists connect and build camaraderie, Dr. Mutschler said. He pointed out that one of the invaluable ODA benefits is its Wellness Initiative, which provides up to eight complimentary counseling sessions for all dentists in the state, whether or not they are ODA members.

Raised in what he described as a blue-collar family in Southern California within a few miles of the beach, Dr. Mutschler had relatives – his dad and uncles among them – with good-paying union jobs who discouraged him from going to college. A family friend worked in the entertainment



industry and offered Dr. Mutschler a job as a Hollywood union studio projectionist.

He decided to try some college classes, and while taking classes during the day, at night he helped produce “dailies,” the unedited film footage taken on a movie set that helps directors know what scenes they need to shoot next. He also projected film while movie dialog was re-voiced, specialists added sound effects, and orchestras performed and recorded musical scores.

He was a part of making several blockbuster movies, including “Apocalypse Now,” “Top Gun,” “Beverly Hills Cop,” “Star Trek: The Motion Picture” and many of the Aaron Spelling 1980s TV shows like “Love Boat” and “Dynasty.”

After graduating from UCLA’s Graduate School of Education, his teaching career proved unrewarding, and he eventually found his way into dental school, earning his DDS at UCLA. He went on to earn pediatric dentistry and orthodontic specialty credentials and a master’s degree in oral biology at UCLA as well. He also squeezed in a general practice residency at a VA medical center in Long Beach, California.

In 1994, the Mutschlers moved to Oregon, where his wife, Dr. Fariba Mutschler, has family and where she had earned her undergraduate degree at Lewis & Clark College. They’ve



worked together for 25 years in a growing practice that now employs a dozen people.

Along the way, Dr. Mutschler has served in leadership positions, including as president of the Multnomah County Dental Society – an experience he called critical to understanding how boards and committees function. He also teaches part time at the Oregon Health & Science University School of Dentistry.

Dr. Mutschler said it’s rewarding to work in pediatric dentistry when kids who were afraid walking into his office offer a hug and a “thank you” on the way out. It can be both heartwarming and heartbreaking, however, given the financial and other challenges that families face and the detrimental impact of those challenges on patients’ health.

If patients express an interest in science, Dr. Mutschler talks with them about going into dentistry. Three of his patients, in fact, have gone to dental school.

When he’s not in the office, Dr. Mutschler travels about once each month to Southern California to spend time with his 10-month-old granddaughter. He and Fariba have two sons, Brian, 32, who creates mobile games art, and Michael, 28, a physical therapy assistant.

He also enjoys kayaking, motorcycling, bicycling, running, reading, and sculpting with clay. He’s completed the Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic, a half-dozen Cycle Oregon events, and nearly a dozen marathons.

“I enjoy anything that keeps me moving,” he said. 📍

ODA Leadership Profiles

WE OFTEN HEAR THE PHRASE, “POLITICS IS LOCAL.” In organizations such as the Oregon Dental Association, we are probably more likely to know who our component leaders are, and maybe we are familiar with some of the leaders at the Oregon Dental Association. However, many of us may not be aware of the effort and time commitment that several Oregon dentists contribute at the American Dental Association level. In addition to our ADA delegates, who serve at the ADA House of Delegates, these are four Oregon members who are leaders at the national level by serving on ADA councils. Their involvement and leadership on these councils contributes greatly to the value of membership.

The Council of Dental Benefit Programs (CDBP)

By Eddie Ramirez

THE COUNCIL OF DENTAL BENEFIT PROGRAMS oversees insurance and third-party payer topics, such as reimbursement and relations. In addition, we also look at publicly and federally funded program topics that revolve around Medicare and Medicaid. CDBP is also responsible for overseeing all CDT coding; we evaluate our current codes yearly, when we meet and add/modify/delete codes. Recently we added a sleep apnea coding section! Our current work is focusing on Medicare and expansion of dental benefits to certain medically compromised patients. In addition, we are evaluating the strengths and



Dr. Eddie Ramirez

weaknesses of our current coding system as it stands. Recently, our council proposed a resolution to the ADA House of Delegates supporting an *adult* dental benefit as *essential* in the ACA Marketplace – which passed! We know that we have other topics on the horizon connected to insurance, and as told by our executive director at a recent meeting, we have a lot coming in the next year and half! ●



Dr. Bruce Burton

The Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs (CEBJA)

By Bruce Burton

THE COUNCIL ON ETHICS, BYLAWS AND JUDICIAL AFFAIRS is the council at the ADA that I was blessed to serve the last four years and the last year as its chair. We are very lucky to have someone as talented as Scott Hansen taking over for me for the next four years. The 17 districts that make up the ADA all have one member on the council plus a new dentist and a dental student.

So, what does CEBJA do and why should matter to Oregon and you, its members? Like the name implies, it



Dr. Scott Hansen

has three main functions. The least exciting part but very important is it makes sure all the governance and bylaws are correct and written properly. The second function is to settle cases of member conduct and ethics violations. If a member wants to challenge a ruling from their state, they can take it to CEBJA for a hearing. It is taken very seriously with a fact-finding committee and

then a hearing panel. The council works extremely hard to be fair and just.

The third area we deal with is promoting the ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct. After all, ethics separate us from being just a trade to being a profession. CEBJA is dedicated to enhancing the ethical conscience of dentists by promoting the highest ethical and professional standards in the provision of oral health care to the public. The Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct of the ADA are made of the principles which are aspirational goals for the profession. The Code is an expression of specific types of conduct that are required or prohibited. Advisory Opinions are interpretations that apply to the code of professional conduct to specific fact situations.

Ethics are not often black or white; there are a lot of gray areas to them. We face many ethical dilemmas in practice and write ethic moments talking about how you may want to approach them using the principle of ethics and the code. 🗣️



Dr. Alayna Schoblaske

The New Dentist Council (NDC)

By Alayna Schoblaske

I AM IN MY SECOND YEAR of a four-year term on the New Dentist Committee. The NDC is comprised of 17 new dentists, one from each of the ADA's geographic districts. The NDC's main purpose is to advise the Board of Trustees on the needs, interests, and concerns of new dentists. (ADA defines

a "new dentist" as someone who graduated from dental school less than 10 years ago.) We meet twice each year in person, and three more times on Zoom. Additionally, every NDC member serves as a new dentist liaison to a ADA council that has its own meeting schedule. Last year, I was the liaison to the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and this year, I am on the Council for Advocacy for Access and Prevention with Dr. Zeller.

We have three priorities right now. First is creating a mentorship toolkit to help states and local societies create their own mentor programs (Oregon's pod-based mentor program is considered an exemplar and is being used as an example in this toolkit). Second is planning quarterly virtual town halls (see past town halls and sign up for future ones at www.ada.org/newdentistcommittee). And third is ensuring that the ADA's new membership model – launching in 2025 – meets the needs and interests of new dentists. 🗣️



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Dr. Mark Mutschler, Incoming ODA President (2023-2024), Address to the House

FEATURE

GREETINGS, HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

It is a privilege to address you today as the incoming president of the Oregon Dental Association. I take the responsibilities of this new role very seriously, so I promise to not burden our official proceedings with too many bad jokes. So, when does a “bad joke” become a “dad joke”? Well, when it becomes apparent.

You may be curious about me. Raised by a single mother who worked as a file clerk, college was not encouraged as much as union jobs were. I came to dentistry circuitously, first working on the sound stages of major Hollywood studios while trying out community college. As I did well in college, I became the first person in my family to graduate. Not knowing what career path to take, I tried working as a pre-school teacher, a middle school science teacher, and high school biology teacher. Burned out by low teacher pay and 7th graders, a family friend suggested I investigate dentistry. I applied and eventually arrived at a career in pediatric dentistry and orthodontics, a career that has continued to challenge and reward me throughout my more than 30 years of practice.

When I lift up my head from the daily grind of running a dental office and look around, I realize that dentistry has provided me with an abundance of good fortune. In fact, dental education produces at least three very proud people: the dentist, their mama, and their pauper.

This is because dental school can quickly make you a small fortune, but only if you start with a large fortune.



Dr. Mark Mutschler, incoming ODA president, (2023-2024).

Now, a real-life example of the joy of dentistry: I recently attended the wedding of two newly graduated OHSU dentists. As an OHSU pediatric dental instructor, I had worked with both students, but importantly, the groom had been my patient as a young boy all the way through college

and on into dental school. At the reception, his parents gave a speech of appreciation for the couple. To my surprise, they expressed much gratitude about my encouragement and mentorship, which eventually led to him meeting his soul mate in dental school and starting a fulfilling career

ODA STAFF

with his wife. Privately, his mother spoke movingly to me, with tears in her eyes, of the pivotal role I had played in her son's life.

I was caught totally unaware of the impact I'd had on this young man. Sure – I had spoken with him during his checkups about his life and possible career options, but I often do that as a pediatric dentist. When I learned that he enjoyed science, I suggested he consider dentistry as a career. During college, he shadowed at my office and found that he liked dentistry enough to apply. He was accepted into the OHSU School of Dentistry, where he met the classmate who would become his bride.

Since this wedding, I am more mindful of the impact I can have on the people I interact with every day. Now three of my patients have entered dental school, and another is preparing. Dentists should be aware of the profound influence we have on our patients – and on our community at large. It's easy to get tunnel vision when focusing only on the demands of work, particularly through the lens of 3x power loupes, but each of us has a role as a mentor... or dare I say, an influencer? I might be a better influencer if I was better at texting. I recently learned how to use emojis, but I am still a bit confused. I keep asking what "IDK" stands for and everyone keeps saying "I don't know"!

On a more serious note, the Oregon Dental Association is the place where we continually strive to make positive differences in our profession and for the oral health of Oregonians. Our successes make real positive change. One clear example is our 2023 legislative successes that directly save Oregon dentists much more than the cost of ADA and ODA membership. As Dr. Miller has discussed, two impactful bills passed through an extremely difficult session with the support

of our strong legislative team. One requires dentists to **opt into** receiving insurance payments via credit card (and paying 3% or more in credit card processing fees) and the other, a first-in-the-nation law, requires insurance companies to notify Oregon dentists of any change to their PPO panels (network leasing that might result in all PPO rates being paid at the very lowest rate) and, only if they approve, **opt in** rather than having to opt out. These new laws help employee dentists as much as owner dentists.

Another example of how the ODA is making positive change, as Dr. Spaniel discussed, is how the Oregon Dental Association has worked with healthcare partners to develop and implement a nationally recognized, cutting-edge, Wellness Program that keeps completely confidential any help that dentists receive for the many stresses of professional life – such as grief over the loss of a loved one, career burnout, financial burdens like student loan debt, substance abuse, significant health problems, and more. Peer counselors are available to listen to our members' concerns and then offer no-cost and completely confidential professional counseling that is now paid for by grants and soon to be funded by the Oregon Board of Dentistry. I add my voice to the chorus of approval and appreciation for the work that the ODA has done on this important resource and ODA's willingness to share our successful wellness model with other states and, possibly, nationally.

To continue our track record of success, we have important work to do. For example, it is critical that the ODA represents all our members throughout the state. However, about half our local dental component societies do not meet the legal requirements of non-profit

organizations. Many do not have regular meetings. Some have significant funds in bank accounts that they cannot get into.

One of my goals for this year will be to improve this situation by discussing restructuring our local Component dental societies, possibly by sharing the cost – and the benefits – of having a paid staff member for every Component, with support for administrative tasks through the ODA.

What do you call someone who always states the obvious? Many would say, "someone who always states the obvious"; however, my kids would answer – "DAD."

So, to state the obvious, we will grow membership in the ODA when dentists WANT to join! How do we do that? We need your help to find out! Because all the Oregon Components are represented today in the House of Delegates, I would like to hear from the non-staffed components to learn more about your thoughts and needs.

I see that the Oregon Dental Association faces several opportunities:

- As membership organizations nationwide lose members, our ODA could be a leader in becoming a vital resource and increasing our numbers.
- Specifically, we must take action to ensure the ODA is just as valuable and relevant to employed dentists as to owners of private practices.
- Our methods of communication must be improved to be more effective. We need to have focused discussions about how to capture dentists' attention and engagement when many of us are flooded with email and social media is a constantly moving target.
- We must generate more non-dues revenue, in a way that cements members to the ODA with essential benefits unavailable elsewhere; this is how we will ensure the ODA remains sustainable into the future.

- Overall, we need to improve, and highlight, the benefits of membership. It needs to be clear what ODA gives us that we cannot get elsewhere. We want dentists to want to be members! I need your feedback to learn what you want, so we can pursue getting it for you.

This is more than can be accomplished in one year. But I pledge to carry on the good work that has already begun and keep ODA improving! I'm excited to work in partnership with our Board and House of Delegates to make great forward strides in 2023-24.

I aim to be inclusive and generous, decisive and efficient, as hard-working, positive, and compassionate as I can be. But I'll need your help with feedback, follow-through, and by pursuing to completion the many good ideas we generate.

In closing, I want to give my thanks to the ODA Executive Board – Drs. Zeller, Miller, and Javadi.

Dr. Caroline Zeller, the new president-elect, who has worked in a variety of settings, exemplifies why our ODA Board is the most diverse in the ADA. She brings a fresh perspective and exemplary communication skills to share her exciting vision of dentistry.

Dr. Cyrus Javadi, our secretary/ treasurer, has juggled running a successful private practice, monitoring the ODA's financial health, being an Oregon State Representative, and even tolerating my questionable sense of humor.

Dr. Mark Miller for capably carrying the torch as president, and handing me a healthy, well-functioning organization – that was no small task to accomplish.

In addition to being an instructor at OHSU, some may not know that

Dr. Miller might have been called up to the Oregon Zoo to examine a honey bear with terrible periodontal disease. After the bear had been sedated, he examined its teeth and probed its gums, then solemnly proclaimed that the honey bear would soon become a gummy bear.

My great gratitude to Dr. Barry Taylor, our executive director, for the help he has given me so far, and for all the future support I'll need from him this coming year!

To our ODA staff: You are the best. I look forward to accomplishing great things with you this year.

I VERY MUCH want to thank the House of Delegates with us today for being members, for showing up, and for doing what you can to make the world a better place.

And most of all, to my business partner and life partner, Dr. Fariba Mutschler, DDS; I owe it all to you.

Thank you very much. 🍷



Orlando or Bust!

ODA Members Reflect on the 2023 ADA House of Delegates

IN OCTOBER, NINE ODA MEMBERS TRAVELED TO

Orlando, Florida, to take part in the American Dental Association House of Delegates. The American Dental Association is a membership-driven organization that ultimately turns to its members to decide how it should operate, what it should spend its money (including your dues) on, and what positions it takes when lobbying at the national, state, and local levels. Because we do not have all-member elections, the annual House of Delegates is a chance for members from each state to gather annually and make decisions on behalf of all members. There are a total of 484 representatives. These representatives are called delegates, and are all members of the American Dental Association. This year, Oregon sent seven delegates and two alternate delegates. Some of the delegates shared their reflections on the experience.

You will see a few references to the “Lovin’ Eleventh.” The ADA is split into 17 geographic districts, and Oregon is part of District 11 with Alaska, Idaho, Montana, and Washington. We are well-known for our Pacific Northwest hospitality and welcome all of our members with plenty of love! 🍷

Bruce Burton

I WAS PLEASED TO SEE THE ADA HOUSE choose to go with a president-elect (Dr. Brett Kessler) who is a change agent. The House also chose to add diversity to the ADA Board of Trustees by electing a second vice president (Dr. Edwin del

Valle-Sepulveda) from Puerto Rico. District 11 has terrific leaders who represent you extremely well. It is very motivating to get to be around such talented and dedicated leaders.

The most moving moment was our very own President Dr. Linda Edgar’s speech to the House. It was insightful, touching, and included some humor, too. Linda, the fifth woman president in 160 years, is someone who is very special.

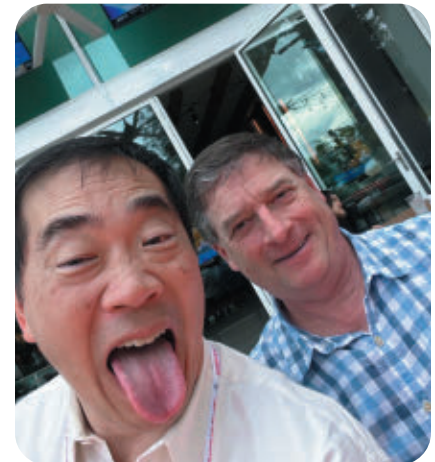
The last special moment was at the end of the House of Delegates when Dr. Scott Hansen went up to the front of the room with 900 people watching to let the speaker of the house [Dr. Mark Donald] know how much he appreciated his efforts of running the House after having a stroke a few months before. He told him he knew he wasn’t at his very best but knew he would be next year. Once again, Scott demonstrated why we all love and admire him so much. Maybe next year, he could lend the speaker some of his dad jokes to use.

This was my last House of Delegates meeting, and I want to thank you for the honor to represent you over the years. Our executive director, Dr. Barry Taylor, is second-to-none with his support of the Lovin’ Eleventh. 🍷

Scott Hansen

THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY HOUSE OF DELEGATES experience in Orlando – besides being trained how to run more efficient meetings by professional parliamentarians, people you do not want to sit by at dinners – was watching the delegates of the 11th District. Amazing that

dentists from five different states with ideas and opinions all over the place get along and do what is best for our profession. The respect, the willingness to listen, and the genuine friendship shown by all was proof to me that people can come together and make good decisions if they leave their egos at the door and work together. 🍷



Mark Miller

THE LOVIN’ ELEVENTH MONIKER IS SO TRUE! Respecting others’ opinions while working together – what a concept! The House of Delegates kicked off with a keynote speech that was inspirational and provided a boost.

Oregon did a great job hosting the District 11 suite for our delegates with lots of yummy Oregon treats! Thanks to all who helped pull it off!

In these polarized times, I was skeptical about setting foot in such a politically charged state as Florida. But the ADA rose above that atmosphere. I am looking forward to Linda’s reign and then Brett’s. 🍷



Mark Mutschler

THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES WAS INTERESTING to me for a couple of reasons. The contentious resolutions were surprisingly different from what I thought they would be. Budget items always get a lot of attention, and this year we have the new Strategic Forecasting model, which asks the House to decide on how to prioritize our organization's projects, while the Board of Trustees decides how best to spend our budget based on priorities. The Board recommended a dues *DECREASE* to demonstrate that they felt they could accomplish all the priority items without increasing dues. Some ramifications of this were echoed in discussion of another resolution that proposed funding a new ADA staff position dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). This

resolution was defeated over the argument that instead of a dues cut, those funds could instead be used for funding this position, because the House felt that existing ADA staff members could accomplish the important DEI work.

Another budget item that garnered discussion was tying the reimbursement for travel expenses to the cost of living in Chicago, as most meetings are held there.

Having Dr. Linda Edgar as the incoming ADA president was a distinct honor, and we were treated to her sitting in on our 11th District caucus meetings when she had free time.

Elections for the new ADA president-elect were exceptional because a candidate who was not a sitting ADA Board member ran with the platform that running for office during your term as trustee distracted the candidate from their Board of Trustees duties. This was a compelling argument to me, but she nevertheless did not prevail, and Dr. Brett Kessler from Colorado won the president-elect position.

The office of second vice president was also a three-way race, and the underdog candidate from Puerto Rico won, perhaps due to widespread support of the ADA's interest in growing diverse voices in the ADA board room. ●

Eddie Ramirez

MEDICARE, MEDICARE, MEDICARE! When attending this year's House of Delegates, it became clear how many of our members have differing interpretations to the



current Medicare system. Sitting on the Council on Dental Benefit Programs, I know it's one of the most complex things that exists, but I think it's important that our members can understand it at a basic level. That being said, I hope that we can move forward on my council to provide more education to our members on the subject. To the members who are concerned about Medicare, please know we are sitting at the table and are part of the conversation with CMS. ●



Alayna Schoblaske

THIS WAS MY FIFTH HOUSE OF DELEGATES, and at each one, I am impressed with how well-prepared our delegates are. With over 500 pages of material to read in preparation for the meeting, and about 100 more pages distributed during the meeting, it is amazing to see our delegates stand up and testify with wisdom, poise, and pith. This year, I noticed that more and more of those delegates were new dentists, bringing a fresh perspective to the House.

My highlight was working with a national group of dentists who work in Federally Qualified Health Centers to update language in an



existing resolution that was belittling to our colleagues in community dentistry. We were able to make these changes, which updates ADA's policy to encourage collaboration between the public health and private practice sectors. I love that the ADA's governance structure allows delegates to affect real-time change at the House – it reminds me of the Margaret Mead quotation, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." 🗣️



Julie Spaniel

AS A FIRST-TIME DELEGATE, this was a true eye-opener. I am on the ADA Dental Wellness Advisory Council, and I've always kept up with the *ADA News*. It was an honor and real learning experience to be involved on the House of Delegates floor, in the middle of the action. Voting for my dear friend, Dr. Brett Kessler, and seeing him win the vote for president-elect was



a huge highlight and so meaningful for the work I do in mental health and wellness for dentists. As president of the Washington County Dental Society, working at the component level and involved at the ODA state level, this was an incredible opportunity to see the full tripartite working together. I encourage you to keep an eye out for a document all about "what has the ADA done for (me)mbers lately." Together, we thrive! 🗣️

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Insurance Transparency “Opt in” Policies Begin Jan. 1, 2024

OREGON DENTISTS WHO HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED by insurers with unexpectedly low reimbursements will have increased transparency and protection from these practices beginning in January.

Thanks to ODA’s advocacy efforts during the 2023 legislative session, House Bill 3008 will go into effect on the first of the year, allowing dentists to opt into various insurance practices rather than having to opt out.

On January 1, 2024, Oregon will become the first state in the nation to enact a law requiring dentists’ active consent before a network lease can occur, in addition to requiring dentists’ consent to being reimbursed by insurance providers via credit cards.

The common practice of insurers leasing out provider panels often leads to surprise and frustration for both dentists and patients, as

copays or reimbursement rates can be completely different for different provider networks. And often, dentists are unaware that their services have been leased out to a different network. This new law will ensure provider network transparency by prohibiting dental insurers from leasing provider networks without a provider’s consent.

This new law will also increase transparency in the claims reimbursement process. Beginning in January, dental insurers in Oregon will be required to allow providers to opt in to receiving payment reimbursements via credit card, rather than having to opt out. It also requires insurers to notify providers of any potential fees associated with payment processing and offer an alternative. As many ODA members know, these fees can often add up to thousands of dollars in lost

reimbursements due to credit card processing fees.

So, what do these changes mean for you?

Oregon dentists still have the option to actively opt in to both the leasing of your services to other provider networks, and to the processing of insurance reimbursements via credit cards. However, if you choose not to proactively opt in, you and your patients will be protected from unexpectedly low reimbursement rates.

“The increased transparency in insurance practices resulting from HB 3008 will prevent surprise business expenses, protect access to care, improve oral health outcomes, and promote public understanding of health care costs, all critical elements of improving patient care,” said Oregon Dental Association Past President Dr. Mark Miller, DMD, MAGD.

Keep in mind that while the law goes into effect on Jan. 1, it specifies that providers will receive the protections in HB 3008 “when a contract is entered into, renewed or extended,” meaning that it will not apply to existing contracts, only contract renewals. If you renewed your provider network contracts prior to Jan. 1, the opt-in policy will not apply to your current contract and will go into effect upon the renewal or extension of the contract.

If you have questions about what this new law means for your practice, we encourage you to reach out to your provider networks or call the Oregon Dental Association at 503-218-2010. 📞



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OHSU Alumna Serves as Role model, Inspires Young American Indians to See Themselves as Dentists.

Republished article from OHSU Foundation, written by Anna Lageson-Kerns, MS

WHEN RACHEL MEEK, D.M.D. '22, BEGAN STUDYING at the OHSU School of Dentistry, she had no American Indian dental role models with whom she could identify. Meek is a member of the Cherokee Nation

of Oklahoma. She felt fortunate to connect with an upper-class student mentor who was also a member of the Cherokee Nation. Like her, he was attending school on an Indian Health Service (IHS) Scholarship. “Once he



Rachel Meek with her husband, Jacob, and dog, Bobo.



graduated, I didn’t really know anybody else,” Meek says.

Meek found community support after Mark Mitchell, BS, MA, former associate dean of admissions of the School of Dentistry, suggested she attend a conference of the Society of American Indian Dentists.

“That has been like my home,” Meek says. “Many of my amazing mentors and friends come from the Society of American Indian Dentists. I didn’t even know about it until Mark Mitchell gave me the opportunity to go and make those connections.”

Meek has completed one year of her three-year IHS commitment to deliver health care to the underserved American Indian population. As a staff dentist at the Siletz Community Health Clinic, she is excited to push herself and grow in her abilities.

Meek practices minimally invasive dentistry whenever possible by focusing on managing dental disease rather than on simply restoring a damaged tooth. She prefers to offer non-invasive medicaments and education to her patients as a first option; she applies silver diamine fluoride, places glass ionomer cements and prescribes

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"If I can see a 14-year-old who's got a lot of cavities but tell their parents and that patient that we can try something first where we don't need to use a drill, I prefer it," Meek says.

The Siletz dental clinic is in a remote location with no dental specialists nearby, leading Meek to push herself to become comfortable handling more complex care when a minimally invasive approach falls short. She has presented treatment plans and personally handled restorative dental procedures including restoring implants, dentures, root canals, crowns and bridges.

In the past, the Siletz Community Health Clinic, like many tribal and IHS clinics, has been served by dentists who are not American Indian dental practitioners. When Native patients were being seen by someone who didn't share their background, culture or goals, it often led to mistrust, misunderstanding and poor experiences for the patients.

"I'm not Siletz," Meek says. "But when my patients share something about their ancestor, I let them know how much my ancestors are important to me, and that builds a little bit more trust."

Meek has more flexibility practicing at the Siletz clinic than a private office allows. One of her favorite responsibilities is working with preschoolers through the Head Start program. She often invites her young patients to come to the clinic for a "happy visit."

On one visit, she'll invite children to sit in the exam chair. On another visit, Meek will perhaps tilt the chair back, all in an effort to help children gain comfort with the clinic before they have their first exam.

Along with her successes, Meek also faces challenges. Many of the children she cares for are foster children who regularly move on to new locations, making it difficult to establish consistent dental care. Among her adult population, many of her older patients have spent time in prison or have a history of

substance use disorders and recovery treatment. Meek often manages patients who are on a pain contract.

Adequate staffing for the patient population can also cause stress. There are only two dentists, both Native, who work in the clinic, so Meek presses to see as many patients and complete as many procedures as possible each day.

"I'm not leaving every day super energized. I'm pretty tired," Meek says. But she adds, "I'm excited about caring for this community."

Meek feels strongly that the American Indian population needs more access to Native health care providers. She is encouraged by plans to bring the Northwest Native American Center of Excellence's Wy'East Medicine program to the OHSU School of Dentistry in 2024. Dean Ron Sakaguchi, DDS, MS, PhD, MBA, and Senior Academic Dean for Academic Affairs Gary Stafford, DMD, have invited Meek to serve as a volunteer faculty member for the program.

"That's exciting and an important thing for me to do," Meek says. She is eager to be a mentor for Native students. "I can be that person who can validate experiences and feelings and give advice and suggestions."

Meek is proud to be an OHSU School of Dentistry alumna and hopes programs like Wy'East will help support more American Indian students to consider joining the profession.

"I think about all the careers I didn't choose because I didn't look like I could do that," Meek says. "But if I saw someone who looked like me, I might have considered it."

Meek is optimistic about the future of dentistry for American Indian patients and dentists.

"I'm confident, especially with more and more people to look up to, more and more mentors, people to get engaged in programs like this, it's going to change," Meek says. "I think we're going to see a lot better access and acceptance of care too." ●

DS1 Success Program

ON AUGUST 31, 2023, THE ADA MANAGING DEBT AND WEALTH program was presented to first-year dental students at Oregon Health and Sciences University by member dentist Alysa D'Ambrosia, DMD, a 2013 OHSU graduate. This program is one in a series of success programs on topics most relevant to students today. The students enjoyed an ODA-sponsored lunch while listening to sage advice from Dr. D'Ambrosia. The success programs are presented at no charge to students or dental schools by the American Dental Association and/or state and local dental societies. The Success program helps students prepare for life as a dentist – good choices now, great dentists later. 🗣️



September Fall Kick Off/Tailgate Event

By Lora Mattsen, Multnomah Dental Society Executive Director

WE DID IT AGAIN! OUR SECOND “ANNUAL” Fall Kick Off/Tailgate event was a huge success! The ODA parking lot was transformed into a festive fall tailgate party, including food and beverage carts, bonfire, games, and lots of people just hanging around having fun.

It was great to see so many new faces along with the familiar and friendly faces that continue to support our organization. We had members from many components, non-members, residents, dental students, and vendors gathered together for a great way to kick off the season.

The components participating included MDS, CCDS, WCDS, MPDS, and YCDS. There was representation from all five local components. The awesome ODA staff was on hand to provide membership information and answer questions, *and* we got four new members signed up. That was the best part!

Gift baskets and other donated items, including AirPods and a \$100 Amazon gift card, were raffled off

throughout the evening as attendees moved around the parking lot and caught up with each other while eating Ricky’s Tacos and gourmet sausage dogs cooked up fresh from Beez Kneez.

There was ample tap beer and cider provided by the Social Goods and fresh mini doughnuts generously being served up by Mythical Doughnuts. Nobody went hungry or thirsty!

We could not continue to provide these gatherings without the generous support of our sponsors. They are so important to our organization and can’t be thanked enough for their unwavering support. **Thank you, Artisan Dental Lab, Assured Dental Lab, Astra Practice Partners, BNK Construction, Columbia Bank, Fluence, Heritage Bank, TDIC, and WeoMedia.**

Our goal is always to make sure our members feel welcome, have an opportunity to engage, and hopefully get a few new members to join!

We thoroughly enjoyed seeing everyone having a great time! 🍷



It Really Does Take a Village!



ADJ TEAM MEMBERS

THE DENTAL FOUNDATION OF OREGON'S TOOTH TAXI program launched in 2008 to provide critical dental care for children onsite at schools across Oregon using a then state-of-the-art 38-foot mobile dental clinic.

Since its arrival, the Tooth Taxi has served schools across the state for one week at a time, and the dental services we provide allow children to become better students by eliminating pain and enhancing their self-image. Teachers work even harder to manage classrooms when they have students who are suffering with dental pain. With the absence of oral health issues, students can focus during instructional time, absenteeism improves, and teachers encounter less teaching disruption. The overall stress level in the classroom improves significantly!

For the past 15 years, The Dental Foundation of Oregon and our Tooth Taxi program have steadfastly adhered to its mission to advance oral health education, provide charitable care, and coordinate resources for Oregon's children and vulnerable communities. We are proud to share the positive impact of the Tooth Taxi program!

patients seen in the last four years and is reflective of the patient demographics of our entire tenure of service to Oregon youth.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
White	40.10%	48.50%	33.10%	37.40%
Hispanic	41.50%	36.90%	45.80%	39.40%
Black	8.20%	7.60%	9.30%	9.70%
Asian	3.30%	3%	3%	2.60%
American Indian	2.90%	1.90%	2%	0.70%
Other	4%	2.10%	6.80%	10.20%

The Dental Foundation of Oregon is set to retire our first mobile clinic, which has traveled over 90,000 miles within the borders of Oregon, providing care onsite at schools. We expect to welcome a brand-new replacement mobile clinic as this marks an exciting new chapter in the history of the program, and with that comes new opportunities yet to be realized!

Throughout the years, the generosity of our dental, philanthropic, and community partners have ensured that all children are free of dental pain, ready and able to learn in the classroom, and enjoying increased confidence in the appearance of their smile! 🌟

25,613
Patients screened

15,455
Unique appointments on the van

25,785
Students received classroom oral hygiene education

\$8,816,047
Value of services

2023 Giving Tuesday

JOIN US ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023, as The Dental Foundation of Oregon celebrates its 10th year of participation in Giving Tuesday, a



global generosity movement unleashing the power of radical generosity. Giving Tuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do

good. Since then, it has grown into a year-round global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

Support our movement and give your time as a volunteer on the Tooth Taxi, make a financial or donation of stocks, or simply use the power of your voice in your local community to promote the mission of The Dental Foundation of Oregon, which is dedicated to advancing oral health education, providing charitable care, and coordinating resources for Oregon’s children and vulnerable communities.

Learn more at GivingTuesday.org and SmileOnOregon.org.



2023 BottleDrop Give

HELP SUPPORT THE DENTAL FOUNDATION OF OREGON and the Tooth Taxi program through the 2023 BottleDrop Give matching funds and social media program this holiday season! From November 15 through December 2, **GREEN BAG** accounts receive a 20% match from BottleDrop Give on funds raised.

Last year, over 5,000 BottleDrop Give nonprofits like The DFO received over \$5 million for causes and communities all across Oregon. We are constantly inspired by the support our donors provide to support our mission, which is dedicated to advancing oral health education, providing charitable care, and coordinating resources for Oregon’s children and vulnerable communities.

Visit <https://bottledrop.com/holiday-give/> to learn more about this year’s fundraising event and how you can support The Dental Foundation of Oregon!



Rip City Rally

THE DENTAL FOUNDATION OF OREGON TOOTH TAXI staff joined The Portland Trail Blazers and Moda as they went Red, Hot, and Rollin through southern Oregon, September 18-22, for the 9th annual Rip City Rally!



Bringing big Blazers energy and family fun in advance of the tip off of the 2023-24 season, thousands of Oregonians came to the Rip City Rally fairs for free contests, games, giveaways, and the chance to meet Blaze the Trail Cat, Douglas Fur Blazer Dancers, and other special guests.

Everyone enjoyed visiting La Pine, Lakeview, Klamath Falls, Medford, and Cottage Grove!

#GoBlazers #NBACHampions #ToothTaxi #BrushYourTeeth #DontForgetToFloss

Are You Looking for an Exciting Career Opp Traveling Oregon?

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE that The Dental Foundation of Oregon through its partnership with MODA is seeking two Traveling Sterilization Technicians to join our new dentist as you work to support our Tooth Taxi program.

The Tooth Taxi is our marquee program, having served thousands of children throughout Oregon. Since 2008, we have provided more than \$8 MILLION in free dental and oral health care services to Oregon's most underserved populations.

If you or someone you know is looking for an exciting and challenging career opportunity, visit/apply through the Career page at MODA and search for Traveling Sterilization Technician, Tooth Taxi!

#LetsDoThis #MakeYourMark
 #HelpOregonChildren
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The Oral Malodor–Periodontal Connection: Banish “Bad Breath” and Beyond!

By Kristy Menage Bernie, MS, RDH, RYT; Oregon Dental Conference 2024 – April 4th from 2-5 p.m.

Introduction

Oral malodor, commonly known as bad breath, is a pervasive issue that affects a significant portion of the population. For our speaker at the 2024 Oregon Dental Conference, Kristy Menage Bernie, MS, RDH, RYT, a dental hygienist who is actively involved in continuing education and facilitating sessions for dental professionals, understanding the connection between oral malodor and periodontal health is pivotal. In this article, we will delve into the intricate relationship between oral malodor and periodontal disease, exploring the causes, consequences, and effective strategies to banish bad breath and promote overall oral health.

The Anatomy of Bad Breath

The Role of Bacteria: Oral malodor primarily arises from the presence of specific bacteria in the oral cavity. These bacteria produce volatile sulfur compounds (VSCs), foul-smelling gases such as hydrogen sulfide and methyl mercaptan. VSCs are a natural byproduct of bacterial metabolism, and their presence is exacerbated when certain oral conditions prevail.

The Role of Periodontal Disease: One of the most significant factors contributing to bad breath is periodontal disease. Periodontal disease encompasses a range of conditions, from gingivitis to severe periodontitis, which involves the inflammation and infection of the gum tissue and supporting structures of the teeth. As dental professionals are well aware, these conditions are frequently encountered in dental

practice. The link between periodontal disease and bad breath lies in the increased bacterial load associated with these conditions. Gingival pockets and diseased periodontal tissue provide a perfect environment for bacteria to thrive and produce VSCs, resulting in the characteristic foul odor.

The Oral Malodor–Periodontal Connection

Plaque and Biofilm: Dental professionals are well-versed in the importance of plaque and biofilm removal in the prevention and management of periodontal disease. These bacterial communities on the teeth and gingiva not only contribute to the development of periodontal disease but also play a significant role in bad breath. Plaque and biofilm accumulate in hard-to-reach areas, providing a constant source of VSC production. Proper oral hygiene practices, including brushing, daily “cleaning between,” and professional interventions, are indispensable in reducing both periodontal disease and oral malodor.

Inflammation and Tissue Damage: Periodontal disease is characterized by inflammation and tissue destruction. This inflammatory response, fueled by the presence of bacteria and their toxic byproducts, further intensifies the bad breath. The inflamed tissues become a reservoir for VSC-producing bacteria, and the breakdown of connective tissue can lead to deep pockets where these bacteria can thrive. Thus, the relationship between periodontal disease and bad breath is not merely coincidental but rather a direct consequence of the pathological processes at play.

Additional Causes of Oral Malodor

Diet and Lifestyle: For dental professionals, it is crucial to educate patients on the dietary and lifestyle factors that can contribute to bad breath. Certain foods, such as garlic and onions, contain volatile compounds that can lead to transient bad breath. Additionally, tobacco use and alcohol consumption can exacerbate oral malodor. Promoting healthier dietary choices and cessation of harmful habits can significantly improve breath odor.

Dry Mouth: Xerostomia is another common cause of bad breath. Saliva plays a critical role in neutralizing acids and washing away bacteria in the mouth. A lack of saliva allows bacteria to multiply and produce VSCs. Dental clinicians should educate patients on the importance of maintaining proper hydration and managing conditions that can cause dry mouth, such as certain medications and systemic diseases.

Effective Strategies for Banishing Bad Breath

Periodontal Therapy: Periodontal therapy, including quadrant scaling and root planing, can significantly reduce oral malodor associated with periodontal disease. Dental clinicians agree, these procedures aim to remove bacterial biofilm and calculus from below the gumline, reducing the bacterial load and inflammation. In doing so, they not only improve periodontal health but also contribute to fresher breath. This session will overview the concept of full-mouth disinfection or accelerated periodontal instrumentation as a replacement for traditional quadrant scaling and root planing and include an overview of periodontal disease classifications.

Daily Care and Maintenance: Clinicians should educate patients on the importance

of a consistent home care routine. Emphasizing the use of mechanical biofilm removal, chemotherapeutics, and tongue cleaning to target bacteria that contribute to bad breath is key in banishing oral malodor. Proper brushing and cleaning between techniques/technologies should also be reinforced. This session will include the latest in technology and concepts to maximize compliance with daily care routines.

Nutritional Guidance: Providing dietary guidance can be a powerful tool in addressing bad breath. Encourage patients to incorporate foods that promote saliva production, such as crunchy fruits and vegetables. Avoidance

of odor-causing foods and beverages is also essential.

Management of Systemic Factors: For individuals with systemic conditions contributing to oral malodor, dental professionals should work in tandem with healthcare providers to address these underlying issues. This may involve medication adjustments or medical treatment.

In conclusion, oral malodor is a multifaceted issue with strong ties to periodontal health. Dental professionals who work with patients suffering from bad breath must understand the oral malodor-periodontal connection to provide comprehensive care. By addressing the root causes of bad breath, including periodontal disease, and implementing effective strategies, we can banish bad breath and improve overall oral health. The role of dental professionals is pivotal in empowering patients to achieve fresh and odor-free smiles, ensuring their confidence and well-being. ●

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Want to learn more?
Kristy Menage Bernie, MS, RDH, RYT, is presenting on April 4th from 2-5 at the 2024 Oregon Dental Conference!
 Kristy invites you to submit questions in advance via email, info@educationaldesigns.com or LinkedIn; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristy-menage-bernie-rdh-ms-ryt-049a0426/> for this session and for “Crushing Candy: The Mental Health Pandemic”. Attendees will enjoy access to resources for both sessions via QR codes and consensus building activities! Her full CV, bio and available CE courses can be found at www.EducationalDesigns.com.
Mark your calendar and plan to attend!



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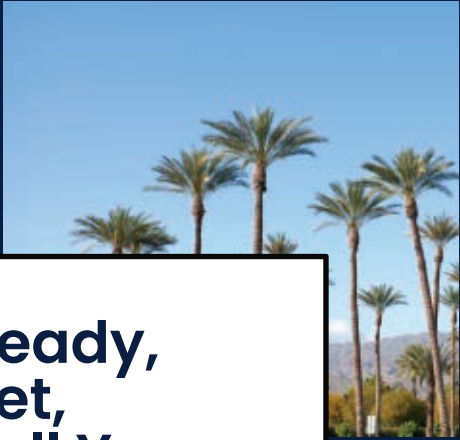
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