

# MERCER DENTAL SOCIETY

Professional Dental Association of Mercer County, NJ

FEBRUARY 2025



I hope everyone is staying warm this winter! At Mercer Dental, we had the pleasure of hosting an informative lecture last month with Dr. Julie Spaniel at our virtual meeting. She shared valuable insights on safe opioid prescribing for dentists. Thank you to everyone who attended! In Mercer Dental news, we are proud to announce that Dr. Jared Levine has been appointed to the NJDA Membership Council. Congratulations, Dr. Levine!

We also want to congratulate Dr. Janhavi Rane on her nomination for the NJDA Secretary position, which she will officially begin in May 2025.

Dr. Rane has been a key figure in our Dental Association, serving as the NJDA Trustee for the Mercer Dental Society for the past three years, and as Chair of the Membership Council for a second year. With over 23 years of membership in MDS and NJDA, and 20 years of experience as an MDS Executive Board member—including three terms as President of our Society—Dr. Rane’s leadership has been invaluable. We are excited for her new role and thrilled to have representation from our component.

Looking ahead, we’re excited to announce our next in-person meeting on March 18th, featuring Dr. Scott Peters, who will speak on "Oral Cancer and Premalignancy: A Guide to Diagnosis and Management in Your Practice." Additionally, we’re planning a New Dentist Social in April, and we’ll keep you updated with more details as the event approaches.

I look forward to seeing you all soon!



## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

**Tuesday, 3/18/25**  
**March Member Meeting:**  
**Dr. Scott Peters**

**Council on Dental Benefits:**  
**Dr. Sid Whitman**

**Council on Annual Session Meeting:**  
**Dr. Cathy Hung**

**Chair of Well-being Committee report:**  
**Dr. Cathy Hung**

**MDS PAC Committee:**  
**Dr. Michael Scalia**

**MDS Executive Committee**  
**MDS Sponsors**

**MDS Executive Secretary:**  
**Jolanta Matusiak Gora**

**Newsletter & Social Media:**  
**Geetu Gupta**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2025**

**6:30 pm**

**2 CEs**

**Dr. Scott Peters, Oral Pathology**



**Dr. Peters is an associate in Pathology and Oral Medicine at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. He is also an associate professor of oral and maxillofacial pathology at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine in Scranton.**

**Scan the QR code to register**



**Please email Jolanta at [exesec.mds@gmail.com](mailto:exesec.mds@gmail.com) with any questions!!**

**Council on Dental Benefits  
Dr. Sid Whitman**



**Dental Benefits/Committee on Medicaid:**

As published in the Star Ledger on January 1, 2025, starting on 1/1/25, insurance carriers will have tighter deadlines in the state to decide whether to approve a prescribed test, medication or treatment- 24 hours for urgent requests and 72 hours for non-urgent requests.

If an insurance carrier denies or limits a physician's request, the law requires the physician who denied the treatment must belong to the same medical specialty as the doctor who would typically manage the condition under the law. This law applies to dentistry as well.

This law affects state regulated insurance plans only, which are held by about one-third of the state's population. The State Health Benefits Program and the School Employees' Health Benefits Program are examples of covered programs.

The NJ Health Quality Institute conducted "secret shopper" research and called all 824 general and pediatric dental practices listed in the five Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) directories for children ages 0-6 to schedule an appointment. They asked for an appointment for a two-year-old. Only 49% of the listed practices would schedule an appointment.

\*37% of the dental practices said they did not accept the specific insurance even though they were listed as being in network.

\* 14% of the practices were unreachable, with no answer after two attempts.

The findings show that 51% of the time the MCO would not schedule an appointment.

Therefore, this indicates that the MCOs are not meeting their contractual obligation to the State and that NJ Medicaid is failing to enforce its contract with the MCOs.

The NJ Health Care Quality Institute has helped quantify the magnitude of the problems that many people knew long existed. The real question is where do we go from here?

The fact that general practitioners are reticent about seeing very young children has been known for years. The system is inadequately funded, needs more accountability, and improved oversight.

We all have a vested interest in improving the system.

## Dr. Janhavi Rane

**Congratulations to Dr. Janhavi Rane for being nominated for the NJDA Secretary position by the Council on Nominations. This is done by a majority vote by all the members of the Council.**

**Dr. Rane is currently the Trustee for the Mercer Dental Society and Chair of the NJDA Council on Membership. The House of Delegates will appoint all NJDA Officers in May 2025.**





## **Council on Annual Session Meeting Report by Cathy Hung**

**Last meeting was held virtually on  
December 9, 2024**

**The current working schedule of courses was reviewed. The Licensure Requirement Series will be offered on Friday which overlaps the HOD meeting for two hours in the morning. The exhibit floor opens from 8am- 5:30pm.**

**Events all happening on exhibit floor: breakfast, license reception, lunch, coffee break, prizes, RSDM reception in lounge. Saturday courses include half day of CE in 3 meeting rooms. Multiple course options to choose from and requesting the council's feedback.**

- **The Periodontal Ligament Injection: The How and Why- Say Goodbye to the Mandibular Block for Most Restorative Care**
- **The Next Generation Botox and Filler Treatments for Facial Esthetic Dentistry and TMJ/Orofacial Pain Therapy**
- **Course being designed for us- didactic to get experience, it will not satisfy a Botox certification.**
- **The Gum Builder Filler Shot to Reverse Gingival Recession, Hypersensitivity and Fill Black Triangles**
- **The Future of Office Based Anesthesia - Patient Centered Care and Innovations**
- **Implant Treatment Planning Simplified: A Lecture and Hands on Exercise**
- **Registration launched December 30th on NJDA's website. There is no parking fee at the hotel. A-la-carte and package pricing were voted via email poll the day after the council meeting as follows:**
- **Exhibit Floor Pass \$55: includes breakfast and lunch. Anyone registered for HOD will have access to the exhibit floor and food with no additional charge.**
- **Licensure Requirement Bundle \$245 which Includes 7 credits, exhibit floor, breakfast and lunch.**
- **Pharmacology A la Carte \$150**
- **Ethics A la Carte \$55**
- **Opioids A la Carte \$55**
- **Infection Control A la Carte \$95**
- **Medical Updates for Dentists \$95**
- **Oral Surgery for the GD \$95**
- **Magic of Behavior Management \$125**
- **Dental School Curriculum \$55**
- **Ransomware Practice \$95**
- **Sedation course \$215**
- **Botox \$325**
- **Gum builder \$195**
- **Injections \$215**
- **Implants \$345**
- **Hands-on**
- **NJDA Celebration \$135 individual**

## Chair of Well-being Committee report by Cathy Hung

The newly established well-being committee is waiting to kick off the first meeting with members. At the HOD meeting on January 15, a verbal report was given to the BOT regarding future directions of the Well-being Committee. This brand-new committee is intended to enhance the well-being of dentists aligning various topics such as ergonomics, stress and burnout, mental illnesses, suicidal prevention, and other areas concerning wellness. Ideas would be promotional activities in the wellness area designated at the Annual Session.

President Dr. Elisa Velasquez suggested Partnership with NJ Society of Teen Suicide Prevention. Other potential future opportunities may include a wellness resource day with panel experts. It will be crucial to have open Conversations with other state associations that already has wellness initiatives in place, such as Texas, Oregon, and Washington. This year I will be speaking at the Pennsylvania Dental Association's Annual Session which is wellness-themed "Be Well". It would be a great opportunity to converse with leaders from other state for ideas. Wellness is hand-in-hand with advocacy for licensure application and renewal questions to rid of potential stigmatizing questions. Orville Morales, Director of Advocacy and Health Affairs, is currently reviewing these questions from the NJ State Board of Dentistry. I will be working closely with the current ADA Wellness Ambassador and NJDA Secretary Dr. Maria Ambrosio, who is also faculty at Rutgers dental school, to potentially craft wellness initiatives for the students, potentially in the future.

**2025 NEW JERSEY DENTAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION** FRIDAY, MAY 16 - SATURDAY, MAY 17

*Coming to Central NJ for the First Time Ever!*

- NEW LOCATION
- NEW EXHIBIT FLOOR
- NEW WORKSHOPS
- NEW EVENTS

Register by scanning QR code

*Bridgewater Marriott (Convention Venue)*

*AC Hotel & Bradford Rooftop (NJDA Celebration Venue)*

This convention is supported by **MRL** MANTELL ROSSI LEUNES Accountants and Advisors

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**Tuesday, May 20th, 2025**

**6:30 pm**

**Nicole McGrath- Barnes, DDS FACD  
Founder & CEO**

**KinderSmile Community Oral Health Center Trenton  
"Giving Kids A Dental Head Start in Our Community"**

Dr. Nicole McGrath-Barnes is the Founder and CEO of KinderSmile Foundation, which she established in 2007 following a personal story of a patient in her own community of Montclair NJ, and reaffirmed after the heartbreaking death of Deamonte Driver, a 12 year-old boy from Prince George's County, MD, who died from a tooth infection that traveled to his brain. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, KinderSmile Foundation's mission is to provide underserved children and families with access to comprehensive dental care and educate underserved children and their families about the importance of dental hygiene, envisioning a future where every child has access to a dentist and dental diseases are eradicated.

## MDS SPONSORS



**Nicholas Malvasi**



**Mike Massotto**



# **NJDA PAC Match Program**

**Dr. Michael Scalia  
Treasurer  
Mercer Dental Society**

**Dear MDS members and friends, wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2025. As I've been discussing for the last six months the need for donations to the NJDA political action committee is greater now than has been in recent years. Please consider donating by simply scanning the QR code below which will take you directly to the donation page on the NJDA website. This will only take a few minutes of your time. I truly believe that a donation of any amount will only help our profession and our patients as we will be able to better educate legislators about issues relating to our profession. We, being NJDA and its members, are the only way legislators will learn about dental issues from our perspective. Otherwise they're learning from third-party interests that may not have goals aligned with ours. Again, please donate.**



**One other item of great note.....Dr. Leslie Hayling is stepping down as the Mercer Dental Society representative on the NJDA PAC board. Dr. Hayling has given many years of his time and effort facilitating donations to the NJDA PAC and himself has donated to the PAC very generously. Please join me in honoring and thanking Dr. Hayling for everything he has given to Mercer Dental Society, to the NJDA, and to organize dentistry over the years. Dr. Hayling, you are an example to be followed. THANK YOU so much for everything you've given over the years!**

## **NEW JERSEY DENTAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

- Supports a Profession, Not a Political Party.**
- Builds Relationships That Drive NJDA's Advocacy.**
- Supports Candidates Who Support Dentistry.**
- Contributions Are Not Part of NJDA Dues**

**CONTRIBUTE TODAY**



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MDS LINE OFFICERS		2024-2025	PHONE NUMBER
President		*Roena Romero	609-759-0019
Past President		*Cathy Hung	609-860-6369
Vice President		*Sara Siddiqui	301-466-4216
Secretary		*Bhumi Patel	201-873-9620
Treasurer		*Michael Scalia	319-594-1599
*Has Executive voting rights			