

MERCER DENTAL SOCIETY

Professional Dental Association of Mercer County, NJ



Presidents Address

It has been two years since the onset of COVID-19. Two years of rigorous efforts to keep our profession dignified. Two years of wearing masks, new patients just trusting you, while we are taking their temperature at every visit, old patients trying to remember. Two years of extensive infection control, two years of staffing shortage, two years of supplies getting more expensive, two years that made you think if this was worth it.....and finally we have the answer.

YES...Dentistry, our patients, our team members, our continuous struggle to keep up with COVID mutations and the changing CDC guidelines, everything has been definitely worth it.

We have learnt to live with the pandemic, we have learnt to prioritize our needs, we have become a more forgiving society, we have gotten more patient and we have learnt to cherish our friends and families and appreciate those who show up for work and most definitely our patients.

And in our daily struggle, organized dentistry has been a big part of keeping all of us sane, be it morning huddle emails from ADA to keep us abreast of any updates, the NJ new licensure requirements series as mandated by NJ state board of dentistry or the CE events organized virtually or in person by Mercer Dental Society to help members with the CE requirements.

On behalf of Mercer Dental Society Executive Board members, I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy new year.

I would also like to congratulate Dr. Cathy Hung for joining us as the secretary of Mercer Dental Society. Dr. Hung is an oral surgeon in Monroe. She has been practicing for 18 years now and a practice owner of more than 12 years. One of her biggest passions is writing and speaking, in the subjects of diversity and inclusion, and advocating for women leadership. She is a guest writer for ADA's New Dentist Now blog.

We would like to thank you all for your continued support. We are always in need of volunteers, you can reach us via email or phone to discuss these opportunities.

Have a fabulous year!
Dr.Priti Dagli, BDS,DDS,FICOI



NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

March Member Meeting:
"Orofacial Pain" Dr. David Thomas

Council on Dental Benefits Report:
Dr. Sid Whitman

Council on Government & Public Affairs Report: Dr. Fred Babinowich

Board of Trustees Report:
Dr. Janhavi Rane

MDS Executive Committee
MDS Sponsors
Glimpses from MDS Nov. 2021 meeting





Meet Dr. Cathy Hung, the new MDS Secretary

Dr. Cathy Hung is an AAOMS Fellow and the practice owner of Prospect Oral Surgery Center of Monroe Township, New Jersey. She is an alumna of the ADA's Institute for Diversity in Leadership (IDL) program and an author, speaker and coach and has spoken and written extensively on the topics of cultural competency and women leadership. Her first book "Pulling Wisdom: filling the gaps in cross-cultural communication" is currently available in the ADA bookstore as a practice management tool.

She recently published her second book, "Behind Her Scalpel: a practical guide in oral and maxillofacial surgery and stories by female surgeons' ', an IDL project in hope to address the gender gap in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

Outside her clinical practice, she is a certified professional life coach of Pulling Wisdom Coaching and Workshops, LLC to help women and/or minorities professionals with struggles to gain confidence and excel in the professional world. She was recognized by Benco Dental as one of the Lucy Hobb's Project's "Women who inspire" in 2020. She is currently the Assistant Chair of the Department of Dentistry at Centrastate Medical Center, Freehold, New Jersey.

Welcome on Board Dr. Cathy Hung!!





Tuesday, 3/15/22
Time: 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Location: TBD
2 CE

"Orofacial Pain"
Dr. David Thomas
Director of the Orofacial Pain Residency Program
Rutgers Dental School

Topic: "Orofacial pain: 12th ADA recognized dental specialty. Pathophysiology, etiology, prevention and treatment, including selected case studies".

Familiarize participants with the 12th ADA recognized dental speciality: Orofacial Pain(OFP).

Discuss the pathophysiology, etiology, prevention and treatment of OFP with discussion of anatomy and physiology.

Case presentations of typical and complex OFP patients : diagnosis and management.

Facilitate knowledge and awareness of the OFP residency program at Rutgers Dental School as an excellent resource for the membership It is a 2 year CODA accredited residency program and residents must pass the OFP Certification Examination.

Members: All Meetings and Dinners are Complimentary
Non Members: First Meeting is Complimentary after that \$65

Scan to Register or visit
www.mercerdentalsociety.com



Please email MDS Executive Secretary, Jolanta at
execsec.mds@gmail.com with any questions.



Tuesday, 5/17/22
***Diet Myths Debunked* Sari Greaves, RDN**

Spouse Event Time: 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm Location: TBD

Identify popular diet and nutrition myths
Separate fact from fiction regarding the role of dietary choices on:

Healthy aging
Weight Loss
Dental Health
Gut health
Sex life

Explore new meal ideas and recipes for busy dentists and their spouses.

Council on Dental Benefits

Sid Whitman



Aetna Medicare Advantage: Read the fine print if you sign up to be a provider. They have a variety of plans and it can be confusing as a provider. The fee will be based off your Aetna PPO schedule for your area.

Delta Dental Premier is decreasing fees. A discussion followed on the value of Delta being an endorsed partner of NJDA. Does it make sense? The reality is that most dentists participate with many plans.

The ADA Council on Dental Benefit Programs is proceeding with a new project to review and enhance the Code on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature (CDT Code) so that the ADA serves current and evolving needs for robust patient records and accurate claims submissions. The ADA is in the informational stage at this point. There will be 2 virtual listening sessions January 27, 2022 and February 22, 2022 both noon to 1:30 PM Central time. Register now for the sessions via email to dentalcode@ada.org. Capacity limited to the first 25 registrants. Does dentistry benefit? Does the patient benefit? A lot of questions.

Approximately 80 million lives are covered by Medicaid in the U.S. 48% are children. 50 % of the births in the U.S. are covered by Medicaid.

The number of people who are becoming eligible is increasing due to COVID and a downward economy. Medicaid is by far the largest payer for emergency dept. dental related visits, a very expensive way to access dental care.

Medicaid adults are largely accessing dental care for very episodic care and not prevention. This is in stark contrast to children covered by Medicaid who are receiving preventative care.

ADA is forming a Medicaid Task Force.

The dental Medicaid market is a 12.5 billion dollar business. Dental Medicaid makes up about 20% of all dental insurance plans. Therefore it is a large payer and may add value to a practice.

Discussion of Saliva testing for lead as a screening tool.

Dentists have a social contract with society as health professionals. If a health profession does not adequately meet the needs of the most vulnerable with reasonable and equitable care, the profession risks losing trust and status.

It has been well established that children provided a dental home early 6 months to 12 months save Medicaid dollars.

Reasons why there are barriers to care.

Low reimbursement

Administrative burdens that far exceed other dental plans

Unfair dental audit practices.

Lack of dentists understanding the social science of poverty and Medicaid rules.

Dental Medicaid does not address dental disease as a chronic condition that is linked to overall health for the most part.

Understanding the culture of poverty, oral health disparities, and dentists' role as advocates for the underserved population is generally not emphasized in dental education.

Social determinants of health for population served by Medicaid

Transportation challenges

Language challenges

Food and housing insecurity

Higher risk for abuse and neglect

Inadequate employment

Low dental IQ

Live far from a dentist who accepts Medicaid.

Board of Trustees Meeting Update

By Dr. Janhavi Rane, NJDA Trustee Mercer County Dental Society

Meeting took place on Zoom on 1/19/22

Various Councils and Committees gave their reports. Annual session will be all virtual now from March 1st to 31st with up to 24 CE's, \$199 for member dentists and \$99 for staff. ADA has created a task force to address Delta Dental reducing fees issue. NJPAC has urged all members to at least contribute \$500 so we can have a voice in Congress. Few programs are coming up including an NJPAC trip to Washington DC which will include site seeing and one on one meetings with congressional leaders. All members are encouraged to attend NJPAC events.



ADA is working on getting student indebtedness assistance and solving labor and workforce issues by possibly hiring outside company to set up apprenticeship and auxiliary programs in different states. The Vet smile program has been launched in NJ to give more access to care for veterans. NJDA has received a

grant of \$42000 from ADA to help with public and government affairs projects. Advocacy page will be expanding on NJDA website. Membership is looking up as of today by 152 members more compared to last year this day. RBC has submitted a better investment proposal that the finance committee will review.

NJDA will be launching a new video platform called NJDA on demand like its own you tube channel which will be linked to the website. The EBA's will be featured on it, so will some courses and help is needed from components for more content suggestions. There was a discussion about possible renaming insurance companies like Delta as an affiliate or sponsor rather than endorsed partner.

ADA has given us a \$6000 grant to run a new dentist course. Also the CPR Company that is running the course at NJDA can give you same rate if want to run it in your office so long as you have 6 members minimum. Zest will be starting a mastership program at NJDA headquarters with a member discount. All courses are virtual till April except CPR. NJDA is investing in more high tech equipment to host hybrid courses from April.

Give kids a smile is happening on a smaller scale in the Pandemic but Share a Smile program will have a list of pediatric dentists willing to see some kids in their office to complete treatments. The State Board is once again working with a low in person staff so licenses may be delayed but should not be an issue so long as you have applied for renewal on time you should be in compliance.

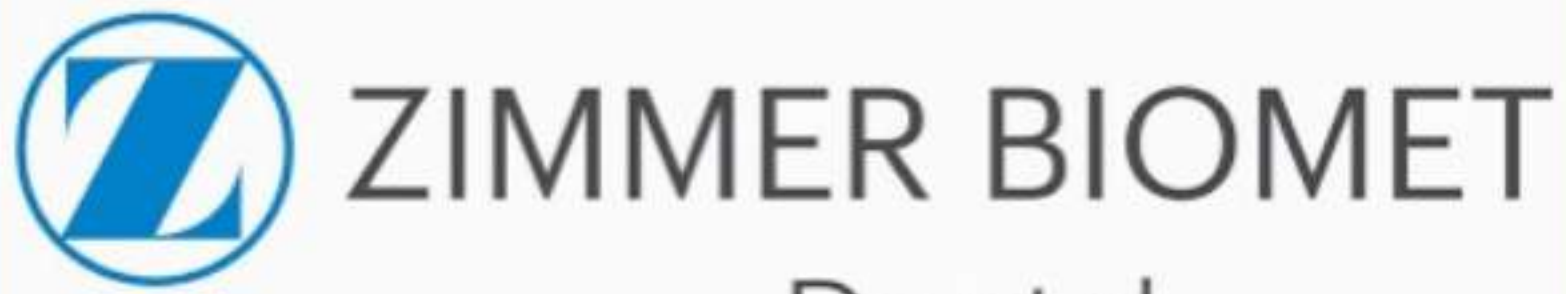
Finally, NJDA has also formed a committee to address staffing issue and they are reaching out to high schools etc. to get students interested in dental auxiliary and hygiene programs.

Council on Governmental and Public Affairs

Fred Babinowich



- 1. Statewide Elections:** There were significant changes in the State Legislature. While democrats held on to the majorities in both houses, republicans picked up seats-the most since 1993-gaining a net six seats in the Assembly and one seat in the Senate. In total there are 17 newly elected Assembly persons and 7 newly elected Senators.
- 2. Disallow Legislation:** Presently we are waiting action by Assembly Appropriations Committee. Carriers are still opposed to the legislation but Horizon and Met Life have gone on record as being neutral to the legislation. NJDA has been in negotiation with Delta Dental which is still opposed to the legislation but primarily as it relates to laboratory choice. The legislation has been referred to the Appropriations Committee where it has not been posted for a vote. The committee is meeting on a limited basis because it has lost its chair person. If the bill does not get posted before January 10th it will need to be reintroduced and the legislative process starts again.
Note: the legislation would all for a dentist to charge the patient his normal fee if the procedure is disallowed by the insurance company.
- 3. Consumer Credit:** This bill has been signed into law on November 8th. This makes NJ the first state to require insurance carriers to provide a credit or rebate to policyholders for unused dental benefits during the shelter in place requirements at the beginning of the pandemic.
- 4. Dentist Vaccination Authorization:** This bill has been signed into law. NJ now becomes the 4th state to enact a law that enables dentists to vaccinate for influenza, HPV, and other emergency immunization (like covid-19) aged 18 and older. While the act takes affect immediately, the State Board along with the state Board of Medical /examiners must enact regulations outlining the requirements dents must follow before being allowed to vaccinate. The law does not impede the current emergency state vaccination authorization given to qualified dentists and hygienists under the Emergency Vaccination Plan.
- 5. Branch Office Requirement Removal:** This bill has been introduced into the Assembly and NJDA is looking for sponsors. Much has been made about the significant problems regarding licensure as a result of the pandemic. The NJDA is making licensure reform a priority for the 2022-2023 legislative session. NJDA legislation introduced to eliminate the branch Office registration requirement imposed on dentist working in multiple offices to help streamline on piece of the licensure process. NJDA is working cooperatively with other organizations that are experiencing similar licensure issues.
- 6. Telehealth Reform:** Bill was veto by the governor and concurred by the Senate. The bill would have made modifications in NJ's approved telehealth law clarifying payment parity so long as providers followed strict guidelines established int he law. Most of the law does not apply to dentists however there is a strengthening in the language regarding the need for patients to have adhesion to a brick and mortar facility (contrary to Smile Direct) to ensure payment parity.
- 7. Federal Legislation-Build Back Better Plan:** The Biden's Administration Plan originally would add a dental benefit to Medicaid Part D. The ADA opposed a dental benefit in Part D because it would dilute a benefits and not help those most in need seniors. ADA proposed a part T benefit that provided care to the most vulnerable seniors and did not impact the majority of seniors who have dental benefits via Medicare Advantage. In the finalized plan dentistry was not included in the overall package chiefly due to the bill's total cost and the ADA's opposition.
- 8. Legal Update on issues in NJ:** Art Meisel informed the committee that the Life Hazard Use fee is now before an Administrative Law Judge. At the center of this case is the imposition of a large annual fire hazard fee that some municipalities are charging dental offices due to the inability for patients to be ambulatory withing the office setting in car of a fire.
- 9. The president of NJDA Dr. Ghisalberty is convening a Dental Auxiliary working group to address the workforce shortages being experienced in NJ.**
- 10. Third party payer intrusions continues to be an issue. NJDA is looking at several new actions to address payer issues NJ dentists are experiencing.**



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Are you a dentist looking for employment with or without the option to be a partner?

Do you need a dentist as an employee?

Do you want to buy or sell a practice?

Do you have dental practice issues?

Contact Dr. Herb Gutentag

(732) 233-5620

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Students from @rsdm_dental with MDS EC members Dr. Saad, Dr. Rane and Dr. Reinhardt



MDS
Nov 2021
Meeting



Meet the MDS Board 2021-22



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609-716-7100



Past President
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