

MERCER DENTAL SOCIETY

Professional Dental Association of Mercer County, NJ

NOVEMBER 2023



Dr. Cathy Hung
President
Mercer Dental Society

Greeting to friends and colleagues:

Corn, mums and pumpkins! Fall is here.

I am pleased that our first New Dentist Social held on October 6 at KC Prime Steakhouse in Lawrenceville was a huge success. Our New Dentist Committee Chair Dr. Sehla Wani, and committee members Dr. Sara Siddiqui and Dr. Bhumika Patel, had worked relentlessly throughout our "summer break" to make this event happen, marking the historically first New Dentist event in Mercer Dental Society. Our sponsorship chair Dr. Ruchi Batra had secured three sponsors to make this event happen: HTI, Sonendo Waves and GlobalLabsUSA, who generously donated their funds and time to MDS. Guest speakers Dr. Meha Sheth, NJDA's New Dentist Chair, and Jim Schultz, Director of Governmental and Public Affairs, spoke to our attendees about what is going on at the state and national level from SmileCon and the importance of membership and political advocacy.

The focus of discussion was licensure, shortage of workforce, and membership. MDS's New Dentist Social was featured on the recent Monday E-mail and you can find all the event photos, including officer visitation, on NJDA.org under "NJDA Paparazzi".

The NJDA Council on Annual Session held a virtual meeting on October 16. Next year's Annual Session will be held on May 8, 2024 at Mainland Hotel with a room block. Possibly 7 CEUs will be offered for the day on the non-licensing renewal year for the member pricing of \$275 and non-member price of \$475. There will be up to a total of 25 exhibitors and two levels of sponsorship at \$2500 (Gold Sponsor) and \$5000 (Platinum Sponsor) next year.

I strongly encourage members of MDS to get involved with organized dentistry. This is a great time to think about the possibility of donating your time to our dental community for next year's positions. Experience does not matter. Passion to serve, willingness to participate and diverse opinions will make our society #StrongerTogether. Mercer Dental Society is proud to be a diverse community. Your voice matters.

Come to our CE events curated for you, as this is part of your member benefits, and ask our Executive Board members about how to get involved. We appreciate your time.

Warmest regards and don't forget your sweater!!

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Tuesday, 11/14/23
Systemic Factors Influencing The Experience Of Pain
Dr. Davis Thomas

Tuesday, 1/16/24
Virtual Format
Lessons from the Future of Our Profession
Dr. James Lee

MDS Sponsorship Chair:
Dr. Ruchi Batra

New Dentist Committee:
Dr. Bhumika Patel

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

Council on Dental Benefits:
Dr. Sid Whitman

Board of Trustees Report:
Dr. Janhavi Rane

Treasurer's Report:
Dr. Michael Scalia

MDS Executive Committee
MDS Sponsors

Meet Dr. Ruchi Batra, the new MDS Sponsorship Chair



Dr. Ruchi Batra is a dedicated General Dentist with practice locations in Monroe Township and East Windsor, NJ. Dr. Batra earned her DDS degree from NYU in 2001 and has been in practice since then. She started her career in a private practice in Manhattan before starting her own dental practices in NJ.

Dr. Batra grew up in a family surrounded by medical doctors. Health care always fascinated her and she wanted to give back to the community one way or the other. This motivated her to pursue the dental field.

She makes every effort to stay on top of current developments in dentistry. To that end, she maintains the highest level of accreditation and routinely participates in ongoing education. Her scope of dental expertise includes all General Dentistry procedures.

Dr. Batra also spends time giving to the society by participating in charity health clinics, educating kids about dental hygiene in schools and running free screening days for patients in the underprivileged areas. She has visited and served many of those areas during her years in career.

Dr. Batra has been a resident of Monroe Township, NJ since 2007 and lives there with her very supportive husband and three beautiful children. When not in office, Dr. Batra likes spending time outdoors, traveling and participating in her kids' activities/ school PTA events as well as volunteering her time in adults communities by leveraging her singing and dancing skills with her music group.

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Mother Teresa



Dr. Bhumika Patel, member of Mercer Dental Society, New Dentist Committee, has been inducted as a Fellow of the International College of Dentists, which is the preeminent worldwide honor society for outstanding dentists who have demonstrated abiding interest and concern for their communities and profession through serving others with leadership, Integrity, and ethical behavior.



The qualifications of a Candidate are evaluated by the ICD USA Section Board of Regents during the screening process. Approximately four percent of USA dentists are offered fellowships in the International College of Dentists.

Mercer Trustee Report, Sep. 2023 BOT Meeting Highlights Dr. Janhavi Rane



- **NJDA Budget presented and approved by BOT. Will now go to Delegates meeting in November to be approved.**
- **Peer Review Program was reviewed....should be a member benefit and non-members will be charged possibly an annual membership fee.**
- **NJDA's Council on Peer Review is responsible for oversight and administration of the system, while local peer review committees conduct the actual review. The council is composed of a chairman and one member from each of the twelve component dental societies, as well as each of the specialty societies. The council's duties include setting policy standards for the individual peer review committees and hearing appeals of the committee decisions. Administrative duties involved with each case are performed by the council staff at the NJDA headquarters. Each component society has a peer review committee to review cases involving general dentists in its component area. Disputes concerning specialists are referred to the appropriate committee.**
- **Refer to <https://www.njda.org/for-the-public/peer-review---new> for more details.**
- **The Compact Act was voted in favor of by BOT, will be presented to Delegates in Nov. Navigating the various state licensing requirements, rules, regulations and fee structures can present significant challenges for workers. To address these challenges, states and professions have turned to occupational licensure interstate compacts. These compacts create reciprocal professional licensing practices between states, while ensuring the quality and safety of services and safeguarding state sovereignty. To date, over 40 states and territories have adopted occupational licensure compacts for nurses, physicians, physical therapists, emergency medical technicians and psychologists.**
- **If the dentist or dental hygienist meets the requirements set forth in the compact (CODA degree, national boards, clinical exam, background check, any required jurisprudence), they are authorized to obtain compact privileges in any other compact state. There is no process whereby the remote states can “block” a licensee from practicing in their state if they meet all of the eligibility criteria.**
- **Kindersmile Foundation is seeking sponsors for their Oct 21st event.**
- **Please look at the wellness resources page on NJDA website.**
- **The 2024 Annual Session will be held on May 7, 2024 – May 10, 2024 at the Mainland Hotel and Hotel LBI.**
- **4416 total members as of 9/11/23. 11 more paid members. Mercer has one of the top 2 renewal rates at 95%. 15 for 12 deal went out last month.**
- **Please donate to NJPAC.**

Council on Dental Benefits 9/13/23 Dr. Sid Whitman

Medicaid Report

NJ Family Care currently has over 2.3 million enrollees. During the Public Health Emergency, states could not disenroll Medicaid participants. Since the end of the COVID-19 PHE, NJ has been working to re-credential and re-enroll all eligible participants. All children regardless of immigration status are eligible if they qualify financially.

The ADA is promoting the idea of more dentists seeing Medicaid patients and increasing the capacity of those dentists already seeing the participants. They have chosen 6 states for a pilot project. The states selected are Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Maryland, South Dakota and Ohio. Dr. Whitman expressed his concern over Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Legislative & Regulatory

The NJDA Dept. of Governmental and Public Affairs is focused on the upcoming NJ November elections. 120 NJ legislative seats are up for reelection. 30 of these seats have no incumbent running, making 2023 the largest change in legislators since 1991.

Several bills have been proposed. Bill A4913 requires payers to offer health care providers reimbursement by all reasonably available methods of payment. This legislation is focuses on payment methodology as a whole, rather than only a Virtual Credit Card. Another bill prohibits carriers from precluding dentists from billing a covered person under certain circumstances. Another bill would authorize health care providers to negotiate with carriers regarding fee and non- fee related matters. One of the features of the bill will allow for dentists to negotiate jointly under state oversight from the Attorney General.

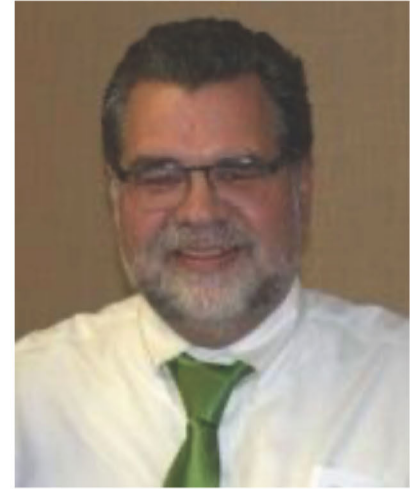
New ADA claim forms were introduced. The major change of note is the area for locum tenants' doctor information. You need to contact each company.

A discussion took place concerning the ADA's new Third- Party Payer Concierge. There was a discussion concerning the need for to have someone at NJDA who members can discuss dental benefit issues with. NJDA discussed the option to facilitate and coordinate a series of dental benefit FAQs and/or a podcast/webinar. Medical Loss Ratio was discussed as it relates to dentistry.



Council On Government and Public Affairs Dr. Fred Babinowich

The first order to business was electing the President Elect of the ADA. This individual is not yet the president but will be in one year. During that year period he or she learns the duties of the president. The House elected Brett Kessler from Colorado. The other two candidates were Craig Armstrong for Texas and Susan Doroshov from Illinois. The interesting thing about these three candidates was their stand on Medicare. Armstrong strongly opposed any participation of dentistry in Medicare. Susan Doroshov felt that we owed it to the people who do not have dental coverage and are 65 and older to include dentistry with Medicare. Brett Kessler felt that we should wait to first see what the government would pay for procedures before making any decisions.



The second order of business was voting for the second Vice President. Once again this individual will not be Vice President until next year. Dr. Edwin del Valle-Sepulveda from our own 4th district won the contest.

The third order of business was voting on over 100 resolutions that were presented to the House of Delegates. Listed below are the resolutions that the House of Delegates spent a lot of time discussing.

Resolution 201: Comprehensive Policy on Dental Licensure:

This resolution had multiple parts but two parts that were contentious. The first part involved establishing provisions for freedom of movement across state lines for all dental professionals to provide quality oral health care for the public. This resolution was being driven by the Department of Defense. The DOD was concerned that when personnel are transferred to another state, the spouse who is a dentist, is unable to practice in that state. This resolution would support the formation of licensure compacts between state dental societies and state dental boards. If your state is a member of the compact and you would like to move to another state in the compact and practice dentistry you would be allowed to do this if you were an individual member of the compact. You would have to pay a fee for this privilege. On the other hand if you have no intention on moving to another state you would not have to join the compact and therefore there would be no fee. Individual state boards of dentistry would not lose any power under this program and incoming dentist would have to abide by the rules of that state. An advantage to the concept is that any disciplinary action of a dentist by another state in the compact would be available to all states in the compact. The discussion on this resolution involved concern over the power of individual state boards of dentistry. Also on there was concern in the cost of setting up these compacts. Lastly some dentists felt that this resolution would be helping dentists in DSO organizations rather than dentist in individual practices.

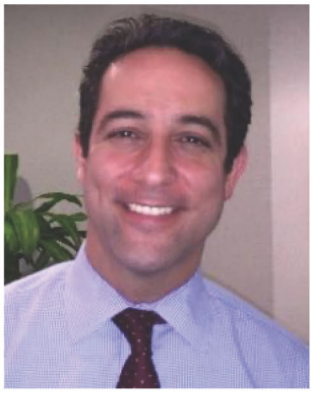
The second part of this resolution involved eliminating of patients in the clinical examination required for licensure. The reason involved ethical and psychometric concerns. Needless to say some delegates were concerned with not requiring dental students to work on real life patients.

The House voted to refer this resolution back to committee for further review.

Resolution 305: To allow payment for dental services for medically compromised individual under Medicare when the dental procedure is intrinsically linked and integral to the health outcomes of the covered medical procedure:

An example of how this resolution would be applied is that if a patient 65 or over needs to have a knee replaced and dental clearance is required and this dental clearance requires certain dental services, payment for these services would be provided by Medicare. Dental CDT codes would be used along with dental claim forms when submitting to Medicare. The reimbursement rate would be such that 80% of the dentists within each geographic area receive their full fee.

At face value this resolution seems to be good idea for dentistry. Unfortunately some delegates myself included expressed concern with the resolution. I told the house that once the government establishes a reimbursement value for a dental procedure what is to stop insurance companies from using the same reimbursement value. Considering Medicaid's level of reimbursement for dental procedures I felt that the Medicare level of reimbursement would not be at the fair market value. Individuals responded to this statement by saying we need to keep our seat at the table when the government is discussing dental coverage with Medicare and this resolution allows for this to happen. I responded that I did not feel we would be looking at a seat but instead we would be the main meal. After some extensive discussion the house decided to adopt this resolution.



Treasurer's Report

Dear Mercer Dental Society members,

I hope that you are all well as we step into Autumn. By the time you are reading this you've likely received an email regarding our 2024 budget. To reiterate, please review the budget attached to that email so that we can all vote on the budget at our November member meeting. Should anyone have questions about the budget please feel free to email me (smilemichael@me.com) or call me (319-594-1599) or bring them to the November meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone at our November meeting.

Kind regards,
Michael



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