



Michigan Dental Association
Unofficial Board Actions
December 6, 2019

Trustee Report: Dr. Christopher Gorecki

The MDA Board meeting started off with a wonderful “Holiday” themed dinner at the Urban Beat in the Old Town district of downtown Lansing. Several trustees elevated the festivity by adorning quite colorful, imaginative holiday wear! The most memorable aspect of the dinner was the “words of wisdom” that were given by the former MDA presidents. As a first-year trustee, it was the first time I experienced the tradition of the former presidents sharing their sage advice. It definitely continues my admiration of all that these leaders have done for organized dentistry. Their passion for dentistry and their patients continues long after their terms expire on the board. Thank you to all for a great evening of camaraderie.

The following day started early with a full agenda. One of the first discussions was an update on the ADA lawsuit against Delta; see the summary below for more information. Our MDA Board understands and supports the ADA’s action.

Michael Wilgus, Director of Strategic Relations of The Dentists Supply Company, gave an in-depth report on the status of the continuing rollout of the dental supply company. Even though there may be some “pain points” in the process, TDSC is a disrupter in the market. It is providing supplies throughout the U.S. and is increasing their in-office support. Please continue to explore your dental supply ordering with [TDSC](#). They are constantly providing more products and improving their delivery to our offices. This is a true member benefit that also generates non-dues revenue that helps to lower our dues.

There was a generative discussion on Evidence-Based Dentistry. Dr. Melanie Mayberry spoke on the curriculum at UDMercy and that EBD is not a prescribed process. It is a three “pronged” process, integrating patient autonomy, dentist experience, and science. Appraising the science is a key to patient treatment. It is also critical that the research is accurate. The MDA Journal is rolling out EBD topics that will be reviewed by experts that appraise the science that is being presented. This is another example of a great member benefit!

Nancy Maier, the executive director of the Michigan Dental Association Foundation (MDAF), and MDAF President Norm Palm gave an update that pointed out that the MDAF Scholarship interviews give us a great outlook on the future of dentistry. There were 92 applications, 20 more than several years ago, and all the students are top performers in their respective programs. 11 scholarships were granted for a total of \$13,500. Dr. Palm stated that the board is in a better place and governance is much improved. Fundraising has been emphasized and they are developing a planned giving campaign. Fundraising needs to be more sophisticated to target the “boomer generation” which will have more impact immediately. Recipient

testimonials demonstrate the needs of our communities which will enable fundraising to be carried to the next level. Another emphasis will be placed on corporate sponsorship. We have a dedicated board of 18 that has raised approximately \$65K. A discussion ensued to make a final push for donations to the MDAF. Please [visit the MDAF](#) to make your donation today.

In order to improve the national market share, the ADA is offering a Strategic Promotional Incentive again this year. SPI is a 50% dues reduction in which the 2020 incentive will offer non-members who are specialists, diverse women, or recently lapsed members from 2014-2019 a dues reduction. The Board accepted the membership committee's recommendation to also offer the incentive on MDA dues to these individuals, which will help Michigan maintain a membership market share over 75%.

The chair of the Component Work Group, Dr. Greg Maxson, presented an update for the board. The workgroup has offered some potential solutions to components that are finding it difficult to maintain the bare minimum standards of being a component. It is an evolving process to simplify those minimal standards of what a component should maintain and how to integrate assistance from the MDA. Another expectation is to maintain a delegate representation at the MDA level. This will eventually lead to a pilot project where some components may want to combine to reduce the administrative aspects of being a component, thus possibly being considered a "branch." It is fundamental to support members at the component level. Many members rate membership at the component level the main reason for membership. The components need to maintain a high degree of engagement so members find value.

The Board approved recommendations from CGIA's teledentistry workgroup that formulated guidelines for any future legislation that pertains to teledentistry. The workgroup decided that appropriate regulations should be put into place in order to protect patients. The MDA wants to be proactive on this important issue.

This introduction is a brief update on the major topics that were on the agenda, see below for more details. I want to thank the general membership for allowing me to serve as your MDA Trustee!

Highlights from the Board of Trustees Meeting

Board Development

The Board of Trustees held a generative discussion on evidence-based dentistry. According to the American Dental Association, "Evidence-based Dentistry (EBD) integrates the dentist's clinical expertise, the patient's needs and preferences, and the most current, clinically relevant evidence. All three are part of the decision-making process for patient care." Background information noted that EBD informs the standard of care. The Board reviewed and discussed the ADA EBD website, which includes systematic reviews, critical summaries, plain language summaries, and an evidence database, as well as guidelines for patient care on specific topics. It was noted that it is important for dentists to keep up to date and consult the scientific literature when making patient care decisions.

Editor Smiley noted that in 2020, the MDA Journal will publish EBD information, beginning with four monthly feature articles to build understanding of EBD concepts and serve as a reference for members. There will then be an ongoing series entitled “10 Minute EBD” that will address clinical questions posed by members to provide guidance and demonstrate the EBD process to promote implementation by readers with clinical questions that arise in daily practice.

The Board also reviewed a leadership development video from leadership expert Lars Sudmann titled “Great Leadership Starts with Self-Leadership.” The takeaways focused on the importance of self-awareness, self-reflection, and self-regulation.

ADA Lawsuit

The Board of Trustees received an update on the ADA class action lawsuit. The American Dental Association has filed a class action lawsuit against Delta Dental Plans and the Delta Dental Plan Association. The complaint alleges that Delta has engaged in anticompetitive conduct and violated federal antitrust laws by allocating territories of operation and dividing the national market in order to restrict competition and reduce reimbursement rates to dentists.

The complaint goes on to allege that Delta’s anticompetitive acts hurt both dentists and their patients by limiting the choices of dental care available to patients and making it more difficult for dentists to deliver the care that patients need and want.

In addition to the ADA’s complaint, individual dentists have filed several class action complaints against Delta, also alleging antitrust violations. In these complaints, the ADA and the individual dentists are requesting that the court certify the proceedings as a class action. The court will rule on that request in the coming months. We cannot predict the timing of the proceedings, including when the court will decide whether to certify this as a class action, but antitrust cases such as this often take years to be resolved.

The MDA understands and supports the ADA action. The MDA does not meet the definition of a “class member” and will not be able to join this lawsuit as a plaintiff. MDA members who meet the “class member” definition (i.e. those who have participated with Delta Dental in the last four years) will have the opportunity to be included in the class (and be a plaintiff) if and when the court certifies the case as a class action. The Board will be monitoring it on an ongoing basis.

Membership and Member Benefits

ADA Strategic Promotional Incentive (SPI): The Board agreed to match the ADA SPI, which offers a financial incentive to non-members to encourage them to join. The incentive is offered January to June, and in 2020 will target three non-member groups, including: specialists, diverse (under-represented ethnic/diverse and women) or recently lapsed members (most recent membership years of 2014-2018).

TDSC: Michael Wilgus, director of Strategic Relations for the Dentists Supply Company (TDSC), gave an update on the company's expansion. The MDA Insurance & Financial Group entered into a strategic alliance with TDSC and became the customer service center for the eastern section of the United States. Mr. Wilgus reported that TDSC is now operational in all states and has affiliations with 37 constituent dental societies. Since its launch by the California Dental Association in 2017, TDSC has saved ADA members over \$7 million on dental supplies. Over 40,000 products are offered on TDSC.com, and only ADA members may be customers. A 90-day buying opportunity for nonmembers has resulted in new members for organized dentistry.

Governance

Component Workgroup: The workgroup was appointed to advise the Board on ways to help components succeed by evaluating the existing structure, governance, and member service of the MDA component societies, identify challenges, and propose options to address those challenges. Dr. Greg Maxson, chair, presented a report on the workgroup's progress. Surveys and interviews showed interest in greater support from the MDA for components. There was also an interest in potential merging of multiple small component societies into one larger component, with the smaller organization becoming a branch of the larger one in order to maintain local social and CE meetings. This option would reduce administrative redundancy while maintaining local ties. The workgroup will meet in January with a report to the Board in February.

Faculty Awards: The Board approved the concept of providing an annual award for a faculty member at each Michigan dental school. The guidelines will be developed and reviewed by the Board at its February meeting.

Policy

MDA Conflict of Interest Policy: The Board reviewed the MDA Conflict of Interest policy in relation to Board members that serve on dental benefit boards or are paid employees of dental benefit companies. The following amendments to the policy will be effective in May 2020:

- No member of the Board of Trustees or member of the Committee on Governmental and Insurance Affairs shall serve simultaneously as an officer, director, employee, agent or consultant of any insurance company offering dental coverage or any third-party payer of dental benefits.
- Retiring Board members shall not seek employment or board service with any dental benefits company for two years following completion of MDA Board service.
- Elected and appointed officials must promptly report to the MDA President any situation in which a potential conflict of interest may arise.

Policy on Interprofessional Education: The Board approved policy supporting opportunities for Interprofessional education and collaboration with other healthcare professions to improve the understanding of oral and systemic health. Medical-dental integration is receiving a growing amount of attention and there are a number of initiatives active in Michigan focused on improving communication and coordination between dentists and primary care physicians.

Policy on Treating Pregnant Women: The Board approved policy that acknowledges that preventive, diagnostic and restorative dental treatment to promote health and eliminate disease is safe through pregnancy and is effective in improving and maintaining the oral health of the mother and her fetus. The MDA continues to promote to members the need to adopt current guidelines for treating pregnant women.

Legislative

Surprise Billing Legislation: The Board discussed proposed “surprise billing” legislation. This legislation is primarily focused on out-of-network fees imposed by behind-the-scenes providers functioning in an Emergency Room or other hospital environment. Evaluation showed that this legislation comes with a heavy administrative burden for dentists with minimal, if any, benefit in this setting. As a result, the Board agreed to oppose this legislation unless dentistry is specifically excluded.

Teledentistry: The Committee on Governmental and Insurance Affairs established a Teledentistry Workgroup to evaluate and make recommendations for teledentistry regulation. The Board approved draft legislation as a guide to advocate for regulations to ensure that teledentistry is used appropriately to enhance access to care within the standard of care and scope of practice.

MDA Foundation

The Board received an informational report from the Foundation, which noted that fundraising for the year-end campaign was up compared to last year. 100% of MDA Board members have given to the Foundation this year, and the Board set a stretch goal for additional giving by the end of the year. The Board was informed that the Foundation had 92 scholarship applicants this year and gave a total of \$13,500 to 11 students.

Awards and Appointments

MDA Foundation Board of Directors: The Board approved the following directors of the Michigan Dental Association Foundation for a one-year term: *Community-at-Large Directors* (Lori Barnhart, CDA, RDA, FADAA, Cameron Elrod, Nancy Harmon, RDH, Ted Schumann, CPA, CFP, Kevin Stutler, Audrey Wadel, RDH, BSDH, Nicholas H. Vander Veen), *Dentist Directors* (Drs. Gary Asano, Nathalie Dube, Anantpreet Grewal, Alexandra Martella, Daniel Miller, Michael Nichols, Norman Palm, Yessica Escutia Ponce de Leon, Daniel Peters, Beth Rosenberg, Shelly Jones).

MDA Dental PAC Board of Governors: The Board approved the following as directors of the Dental PAC Board of Directors for a 3-year term to begin January 2020: Drs. Thomas Goodsell, Elizabeth Ralstrom, Saranna Flemming, Hassan Yehia and Riley Schaff. In addition, it approved the following officers: Dr. James Cantwil, chair, Dr. Elizabeth Ralstrom, vice-chair and Dr. Charles Palumbo as secretary/treasurer.

2020 MDA Awards: The Board approved award recipients for the John G. Nolen Meritorious Award, the Emmett C. Bolden Dentist Citizen of the Year, the Matt Uday New Dentist Award, the Public Relations Award and the Public Service Award. It also approved two Donated Dental Services awards, recognizing an Outstanding Volunteer Dentist and an Outstanding Dental Laboratory. The names will be announced once all of the recipients have been notified.