

## QuickBites

### Renew your Ohio Dental Association membership!

ODA membership dues are due Jan. 1, 2021 for the 2021 membership year.

Members can renew online at [www.oda.org/joinand renew](http://www.oda.org/joinand renew), by fax at (614) 486-0381, by mail to Ohio Dental Association, P.O. Box 734508 Chicago, IL 60673-4508 or by phone at (800) 282-1526.

Renew your membership to continue receiving access to all the Ohio Dental Association has to offer. The ODA is here for you - if you have a question, we have an answer!

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## ODA launches new website with members in mind

By Claire Kudika  
Whiteboard Marketing  
and ODA Staff

The Ohio Dental Association has recently launched a new website. Our new site is designed with our members in mind and has a strong focus on making it easier for members to find what they are looking for.

"I was thrilled to see the new website come to life! The ODA has done a tremendous job of putting their 'why' first in their new brand and website," said Dr. George Williams Jr., a member of the ODA Website Working Group that oversaw the design of the new website. "Perhaps, my favorite part of the website is the 'Check out our new look' page. It was enlightening and empowering to see all of the thought that went into modernizing our logo while honoring and building on the strong traditions of our past."

When creating our new website, we thought a lot about how we could best serve our members: how can we make it faster? How can we make it easier for you to find what you're looking for? Optimizing our efficiency and incorporating our refreshed brand identity (if you haven't heard all about our brand, go check it out at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org)) was absolutely crucial when building this website.

"The colors of the website POP! The four colored tabs found on the first page are a great touch and allow you to quickly access pertinent information," said Dr. Lori Fitzgerald, chair of the ODA Website Working Group. "New members should have no problem navigating all our website has to offer, and joining is just a click away from the top header."

We focused heavily on our navigation lay-



out to help achieve our goals of efficiency. Now, you'll be able to find anything and everything with ease so you can spend less time on the web.

Additionally, we dug into our past website's information to see what pages were receiving the most web traffic. Once we were able to determine the most popular pages, we put those in a prominent spot to make them easier for you to find.

One of our most popular pages on the site was our online classified ads section. We have updated this section as our new "Jobs and Ads Board" and made it easier to find and navigate.

Along with efficiency and saving time, we wanted all of our members to know just how important they are to us here at the Ohio Dental Association. All of your member benefits are now highlighted in big ways so that you'll be able to see just how many things the ODA can help you with.

No new website is complete without some cool new additions! The member portal has been updated so that you'll now be able to see your past payments and even take care

of your bills all within one website.

Finally, a fresh look and updated aesthetic were something we took heavily into consideration when building the website. In combination with our refreshed logo, the ODA is once again on the cutting edge of design to reflect that dentists are always one step ahead.

This new website is completely mobile optimized and secure. Your time is valuable, and we hope that our website design is able to help you save more of your time.

The website continues to include the features that ODA members love, such as dues renewal, information about events, resources for dental practices, employment posters, the ODA's regulatory compliance guide, a free opioid CE course for member dentists and an online version of the ODA Today.

Check out our new website at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org).

The new website was created by Whiteboard Marketing and overseen by the ODA's Website Working Group, which was appointed by the ODA Council on Membership Services in 2018.

## ODA members can obtain required opioid CE for free

By ODA Staff

The Ohio State Dental Board is now requiring all dentists to complete two hours of continuing education on opioid prescribing and related issues in order to renew their license. This requirement applies to all Ohio licensed dentists, whether or not they write prescriptions.

To help ODA members meet this requirement, the Ohio Dental Association is continuing to offer a free online CE course specifically for dentists, "A Dentist's Guide to Recognizing and Understanding Addiction and Engaging in Responsible Prescribing Practices." The two-hour course on opioid prescribing and other addiction-related information is available exclusively to ODA member dentists as a benefit of membership.

The course features Dr. Sharon Parsons, who is a general dentist from Bexley and was the 2019-2020 president of the ODA. Parsons has a compelling story of how the opioid crisis and addiction affected her and her family directly.

Dr. David Kimberly, an oral surgeon in private practice in Akron and the 2020-21

See OPIOID, page 3



ODA Staff

The Ohio Dental Association created a free online opioid CE course to help dentists meet a new dental board requirement. The course features ODA Past President Dr. Sharon Parsons, who has a compelling story of how the opioid crisis and addiction has affected her and her family. Photo taken at CE recording in 2019.

Take our free opioid CE course at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org)

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### The Director's Chair

David J. Owsiany, JD  
ODA Executive Director

Last month's column discussed the Electoral College's role in the election of American presidents. As I wrote last month, in creating the Electoral College, the American Founders viewed the new nation as a union of states under a federal system and, as such, wanted to preserve a primary role for the states in America's governance. The Electoral College was one way they did so by ensuring the states had a significant role in electing the nation's chief executive. This idea of federalism, which ensures a prominent role for the states in our nation's governance, has long been an important Constitutional value in our system, and the Electoral College embodies that value in our process for electing the president. Interestingly enough, this idea of federalism has also played a significant role in how dentistry is practiced in America as well.

As I discussed last month, the concept of federalism refers to the division of power between levels of government. In the American system, power is divided between the national government and the states.

As you may recall from your high school American History class, in 1787-88, Founding Fathers James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay wrote a series of essays now known as the "Federalist Papers" arguing in favor of ratification of the Constitution. Madison wrote in Federalist No. 45 that "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite." This is sometimes called the doctrine of "enumerated powers" – that the federal government possesses only the powers enumerated or delegated to it by the U.S. Constitution. Closely associated with this limitation of the federal government's authority is the 10th Amendment which provides that "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

This complex division of authority between state governments and the federal government has been on clear display during the recent coronavirus pandemic. As you all know, it wasn't the federal government that placed restrictions on Ohio

## Dentistry offers a lesson in federalism

dental offices in March. It was the state of Ohio that issued the order to all health care providers – including dentists – to delay elective procedures and surgeries. And it was the state of Ohio that lifted that order thereby allowing dental practices to reopen and provide the full range of dental services beginning on May 1. The Ohio State Dental Board provided guidelines related to patient protections, social distancing and PPE for dentists to follow in reopening their practices.

The closure and reopening of dental offices played out differently in each state – and rightfully so. The pandemic hit harder and sooner in some areas, like New York, than other areas. Each state designed its own response to the pandemic based on its own situation and the preferences of the government officials in each jurisdiction. This is exactly what the framers of the Constitution intended.

Nonetheless, there was still confusion over who has authority over what. For example, on May 1, while the state of Ohio allowed dentists to provide the full range of dental services to Ohio patients, the CDC's guidelines still recommended that dentists only provide emergency care. Dentists were confused over which guidance to follow (the CDC guidelines have since been updated). As we explained at the time, the CDC's "Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Dental Settings During the COVID-19 Response" specifically stated that dentists "should regularly consult their state dental boards or other regulating agencies for requirements specific to their jurisdictions." The CDC, a federal government agency, acknowledged that while it was trying to provide useful guidance, state dental boards largely control the practice of dentistry in each state.

While the states have directed much of the response related to the coronavirus pandemic, including issuing stay-in-place orders to "flatten the curve" and then later phased-in approaches to reopening businesses, the federal government did play a role as well. For example, under the U.S. Constitution, the federal government has jurisdiction over immigration and regulating foreign travel and, accordingly, it acted to limit travel from China at the outset of the pandemic. The federal government also provided economic relief packages for small businesses and resources to support unemployed workers.

While the federal government has expanded its authority and reach over the last century, in many important areas, the states still retain policymaking authority that impacts our daily lives. This is especially true in dentistry.

Most of the laws impacting on dentistry

are adopted at the state level, not the federal level. Chapter 4715 of the Ohio Revised Code is known as the Ohio Dental Practice Act. This chapter is the set of laws that were passed by the Ohio General Assembly and signed by the governor. The first dental practice act was enacted more than 150 years ago. These laws are constantly updated and revised through the legislative process. This statute defines the requirements for licensure of dentists and dental hygienists, including required licensing fees and continuing education. The Dental Practice Act establishes the supervision requirements for dentists overseeing their staff, including dental hygienists, dental assistants and EFDAs. It defines the scope of practice for each dental provider in the office and how tele-dentistry may be utilized in Ohio.

The Dental Practice Act establishes the role of the Ohio State Dental Board, which issues licenses to dentists and dental hygienists and oversees and regulates the practice of dentistry in Ohio. The Ohio State Dental Board promulgates rules and regulations that also define the practice of dentistry in Ohio, including establishing standards for specialty recognition, advertising, patient and personnel protections, sterilization and disinfection.

Other state agencies that impact the practice of dentistry in Ohio include the Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Medicaid, Ohio Board of Pharmacy and Ohio Department of Insurance. State insurance laws impact on issues related to insurance company practices, including prompt payment of claims, provider credentialing, overpayment recovery and other issues.

In fact, the vast majority of laws and regulations that affect the practice of dentistry are set at the state level. And as the Electoral College and the recent coronavirus pandemic remind us, the states' primary role in the area of policymaking was by design in the U.S. Constitution.

Because the laws and regulations impacting dentistry are established at the state level, it is important for the dental profession to have strong state dental associations, like the ODA in Ohio, to make sure the interests of dentists and their patients are of paramount concern during the lawmaking process.

While you may not think of it in terms of the doctrine of "federalism," ODA member dentists seem to understand that dentistry is mostly regulated at the state level. For example, according to the recent ODA membership survey, "lobbying on behalf of the dental profession" is rated as the members' number one priority for the ODA. And member

See **FEDERALISM**, page 3



### President's Message

David Kimberly, DDS, MD  
ODA President

## Giving thanks for our profession of dentistry

As the leaves begin to fall, the afternoon shadows begin to lengthen and the daylight hours shorten, one becomes painfully aware that the winter months are

rapidly approaching the Buckeye State. Given that inevitability, the silver lining is 2020 will be drawing to a close. It is safe to say few if any will miss this past year. But before Jack Frost gets his icy grip on Ohio, and we gratefully ring in a "fresh start" we will all bask in the bounty of Thanksgiving.

Each family has their own holiday traditions. For the Kimberly household, it is a day filled with family, food and football, pretty much in that order. We all gather early in the day for the feast preparation. The house buzzes with activity and is quickly filled with the aroma of roasted turkeys and sweet potato casserole. The parade of pies soon arrives from both of my sisters' homes. It is a yearly competition, pecan vs. pumpkin. One quickly learns there can be no winner, ensuring the battle will continue for years to come. Weather permitting, the younger generations are outside playing games of tag football while we old timers sip our

beverages and watch professionals play the game we all love. We are blessed to have four generations together on this day to celebrate and give thanks.

After grace, the time comes for a toast. The hosting family will say a few words of thanks, chief among them health, family and friends. But for us, we also give thanks for our profession, dentistry. It has fed, clothed and educated our family for three of the present four generations, all while giving us a certain stature in the community. We give thanks because we are part of a profession that can quickly alleviate pain, cure disease and elevate a patient's self esteem for less cost than a cell phone. We do it not because of a government mandate, or an executive fiat, but rather because we can ... and THAT is worthy of our gratitude.

From all of us in the Kimberly household, we wish you and yours a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

## ODA TODAY

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## Legal Briefs

Eric S. Richmond, Esq.  
ODA Director of Legal &  
Legislative Services

In the world that we are currently living in there are very few people, if any, that can say they do not know someone who has COVID-19 or has had COVID-19. The virus has spread throughout the country and likely has had an impact on each of us. Having said that, and with the current spread of the virus, we have been receiving phone calls about patients, employees and dentists who have contracted the virus. Even with these positive tests, at the time of print we have still not heard of any contraction of the virus within a dental office and there have not been any cases of an outbreak coming from a dental office. So the good takeaways from this are that dental offices across the

# How to respond to COVID-19 positive cases in your office

state are taking the precautions necessary to prevent the spread of this virus, and if someone in your office tests positive for COVID-19, there are other cases to look to as examples of how to respond to that situation.

Hearing that a staff member or a patient in your office has tested positive for COVID-19 can be alarming. However, if you receive that news, the best thing to do is take a deep breath and think before you react. In any scenario where you have a positive test in your office you will need to contact the local health department for guidance. There is a chance that the local health department has contacted you at this point if they are doing contact tracing for the patient or employee. Either way, the conversation with the health department should be an encouraging one because of the steps you have already taken to ensure that the virus is not spread in your office.

Yes, you read that correctly. The conversation with the health department should be an encouraging one. If they reached out to you or if you are reaching out to

them, it is an opportunity to explain the steps you are taking in your office to ensure safety of all patients and staff. Your local health department is fielding plenty of inquiries from all types of businesses. This is your opportunity to let them know that your dental office is taking the right steps to fight the virus. Inform them about the guidelines put in place by the Ohio State Dental Board and specifically what you are doing in your office to follow them. Inform them about what your waiting room policies are, about the survey you are giving to patients to screen for symptoms or possible exposures to the virus, that you are taking temperatures and monitoring any symptoms of every person that enters your office. Tell them all of that and then tell them about the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you and your staff are wearing.

Over the past few months and through all of the phone calls on this subject, it has been apparent that dental offices are prepared to fight against the spread of this virus. The phone calls that we have received after a dentist has had a conver-

sation with the health department have been very positive. The health departments realize that dental offices are taking the right precautions. So having a patient or a staff member test positive does not automatically mean that the office must close. Wearing PPE and following the Dental Board guidelines are working.

However, a question that has raised concern from the health departments are regarding lunch breaks. It is important to have a policy for your office for cases where they are not wearing PPE. The only situation that I have heard consistently where an employee could have exposure to another without PPE is during a lunch break. The health department may have questions regarding lunchroom policies. They are asking these questions to understand if other employees could be exposed in close contact for more than 15 minutes without PPE. Having said this, offices should have lunch room policies that minimize the risk of spread.

Learning of someone testing positive that has been in your office is alarming. However, each office is doing everything they can to follow guidelines and minimize the risk of spread. By understanding the policies and procedures your office is implementing, you can take steps to stop the spread and speak with authorities about why your practice is safe. If you encounter any of these issues in your practice and would like to discuss, please call the ODA at (800) 282-1526 and also discuss with your personal attorney.

## OPIOID, from page 1

president of the ODA, explains how the addiction crisis has impacted his approach to prescribing pain medication in his practice.

Dr. Kumar Subramanian, an endodontist in Pickerington and a part-time educator at Nationwide Children's Hospital, also speaks in the CE course. He is currently serving as the president of the Ohio State Dental Board (OSDB) and worked closely with the Opioid Committee in drafting prescribing rules for the state of Ohio.

The ODA has seen a positive response to the course, with over 1,000 members taking the course so far.

ODA members can access the free online CE course to fulfill the OSDB's requirement at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org).

Staff members who need to receive opioid CE can do so through the ODA Virtual Annual Session, which is available online through Dec. 31. Learn more and register at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org).

## FEDERALISM, from page 2

dentists give the ODA high marks for its advocacy at the Statehouse. For example, the membership survey reveals that 89% of the respondents report being "very satisfied" (57%) or "somewhat satisfied" (32%) with the ODA's efforts related to "lobbying on behalf of the dental profession." The main reason for our advocacy successes is that dentistry continues to be a united profession.

So as you renew your membership for 2021, remember that the ODA continues to work on your behalf – including in our advocacy at the Statehouse as envisioned by the U.S. Constitution – to protect the dental profession and promote the oral health of all Ohioans.



“What's the new normal?”

We can help.

We are here to help you during these uncertain times.

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## ODA offers several ways for members to pay their dues

ODA Staff

Membership dues statements and electronic renewal notices were recently sent out to ODA members. Members who indicated previously that they prefer to receive membership communications electronically will not receive a paper statement in the mail and will only receive e-notifications.

Dues are due Jan. 1, 2021, for the 2021 membership year.

### Renew your membership

Members can renew online at [www.oda.org/joinandrew/](http://www.oda.org/joinandrew/), by mail to Ohio Dental Association, P.O. Box 734508 Chicago, IL 60673-4508, by fax at (614) 486-0381 or by phone at (800) 282-1526.

### Pay your dues using the installment payment program

The ODA will be offering an installment payment program, where dentists can pay their 2021 membership dues over the course of several months. Payments will begin in December 2020 and will be divided into five payments concluding in April 2021. To utilize this payment option, dentists need to complete an in-year dues installment payment program form, which is included with dues statement mailings.

### Recently retired? Update your membership status

Ohio Dental Association members who have retired from the practice of dentistry can receive ODA benefits at a fraction of the cost of active membership.

ODA members with Retired Membership status pay 25 percent of ODA active dues but receive 100 percent of the benefits. To qualify for Retired Membership, dentists must no longer earn an income of any kind by means of their dental license. Dentists must also submit an Affidavit for Retired Membership, which is then reviewed by the dentist's local component society, the ODA and the American Dental Association.

Dentists who are interested in obtaining Retired Membership status should contact the ODA Membership Department at (800) 282-1526 or [membership@oda.org](mailto:membership@oda.org).

### Update your contact information

Any members who have moved, changed their email address or changed any other contact information should contact the ODA by calling (800) 282-1526 or emailing [membership@oda.org](mailto:membership@oda.org) to ensure they receive their dues statements.

Renew your membership at [www.oda.org/renew](http://www.oda.org/renew)

### Change of address?

Contact the ODA Membership Department if you have moved your home or practice, changed your phone number, changed your name or changed your email address.

Via email: [membership@oda.org](mailto:membership@oda.org)  
By phone: (800) 282-1526

## Watch your inbox for 'ODA Today' readership survey

By ODA Staff

The ODA is currently conducting an "ODA Today" readership survey. An email was recently sent to ODA members from the Ohio Dental Association with a link to the readership survey.

The ODA regularly surveys members about all of the ODA's activities, events and programs so we can continually evaluate our performance and better meet our member dentists' expectations.

Our surveys typically rate the provi-

sion of information as one of the most valued benefits of belonging to the ODA. One of our primary vehicles for providing information is the "ODA Today," so we regularly conduct a readership survey to gauge our members' attitudes toward various aspects of our flagship publication.

The ODA values your feedback, so please take the time to complete this important survey. The information we gain is absolutely critical to allowing the "ODA Today" to remain a valuable resource for members.

We will utilize your feedback to deter-

mine what topics to focus on and how to improve the publication.

Members who complete the survey will have an option to be entered into a drawing to win one of three \$50 Amazon gift cards for completing the survey. The deadline to complete the survey is Nov. 30.

If you did not receive an email with a link to the survey and would like to complete the survey, please contact ODA Managing Editor Jackie Crowe by emailing [Jackie@oda.org](mailto:Jackie@oda.org) or calling (800) 282-1526 to make sure we have your correct information on file.

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### Practices for Sale

NE Cleveland Suburb: Collecting \$380K/year. Mix of FFS/PPO patients. Low overhead. 3 ops. Eaglesoft. Seller retiring.

N. Central Ohio: Small but profitable practice in great downtown area. Grossing \$150K. Motivated seller.

Columbus: 100% FFS practice. Operating part-time, collecting \$180K per year. Desirable location on west side. 6 ops.

NE Cleveland Suburb: Grossing \$220K/year. Mix of FFS/PPO patients. Paperless. Digital PAN. CBCT. Recently remodeled.

NE Cincinnati Suburb: Collecting \$530K+ per year. Mix of FFS/PPO. 1200 pts, 15 new pts./month. Paperless & digital.

Dayton Area: General practice with 2 locations. Mix of FFS and PPO with collections over \$750K. 4 ops per location.

North Central Ohio Orthodontic: Started from scratch in 2015. Revenue over \$300K on 10 days a month. 100% FFS. 4 chairs.

Butler County: Primarily FFS with over 1000 active pts. \$185K in collections. Digital Pano. Real estate available.

Cincinnati: Over \$430K in revenue. 2500

active patients; 40 new patients a month. 5 ops, room to expand. Building for sale.

NE Cleveland Suburb: Grossing \$400K. 4 ops. Mix of FFS, PPO & Medicaid. 2500+ active patients, 40 new patients monthly.

Stark County: Grossing over \$600K. Mix of FFS and PPO. Digital with 7 ops, room to expand. 1400 active patients.

Clermont County: Grossing \$480K. 3 ops with room for expansion. Paperless with digital x-ray and digital PAN.

NW Ohio: Collecting \$325K per year on 3 days/week. Paperless and digital. Refers many procedures out. Very low overhead.

Columbus: Grossing \$325K/year on 3 days a week. Mix of FFS & PPO. 4 ops with room to expand.

SE Ohio: Mostly FFS. \$188K in revenue. 2200 active pts, 20 new patients a month. Located on busy street.

Dayton: Grossing \$360K on 2 days/week. Mix of FFS, PPO and Medicaid. 3 ops, room for expansion. 1400 active pts.

North of Columbus: \$300K/year in revenue. 1500 active patients, 28 new patients/month. 3 ops, room to expand.

NE of Akron: All FFS. \$350K in revenue. 4 ops with room to expand. Real estate available. Located on busy road.

SE of Toledo: Revenue of \$700K. Free standing building, high visibility. 3100+ active pts, 50 new pts/month. 5 ops.

Stark County: Collecting \$480K/year. Mix of FFS and PPO. Eaglesoft. 4 ops. Digital xray & PAN. Great visibility. Seller retiring.



**Dr. Charles Moorehead has acquired the practice of Dr. Varsha Desai Lebanon, OH**

800-516-4640 | [www.bridgewaytransitions.com](http://www.bridgewaytransitions.com) | [info@bridgewaytransitions.com](mailto:info@bridgewaytransitions.com)

## Nominations sought for Ohio State Dental Board positions

A call for nominations is now extended for dentist board member positions on the Ohio State Dental Board.

The Ohio Dental Association has the opportunity to recommend nominees to the governor of Ohio for a possible dentist board member opening on the Ohio State Dental Board (OSDB), which may be vacant in April 2021. The board member position is for a general dentist.

The ODA Executive Committee is seeking potential candidates who are interested in serving on the Ohio State Dental Board. The term of office for Ohio State Dental Board members is four years and the board meets on average eight to nine times per year.

Criteria that the ODA Executive Committee is seeking in candidates to the Ohio State Dental Board includes:

- Being in practice at least five years.
- Being familiar with Ohio's Dental Practice Act.
- Having knowledge about regulatory issues related to dentistry.
- Having a history of support/involvement with ODA governmental affairs and activities such as ODPAC membership, grassroots efforts, etc.

Nominations for the Ohio State Dental Board member positions are due by Dec. 31, 2020 and should include a letter of nomination and the nominee's curriculum vitae. Please submit nominations to: Ohio Dental Association, Attention: David Owsiany, Executive Director, 1370 Dublin Road, Columbus, OH 43215, or to david@oda.org.

## Dental societies: Apply for a 2021 recruitment grant

The ODA Council on Membership Services is excited to announce that a rolling application cycle is available for the 2021 recruitment grant program.

Applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis until funds run out to allow dental societies more flexibility to target recruitment efforts in specific market segments as they are identified in membership data throughout the year. The first deadline for receipt of 2021 recruitment grant applications is Dec. 31, 2020. The 2021 grant program will be a reimbursement program with funds being distributed after completion of the program.

The proposed program must be a recruitment initiative with the goal of gaining new members, and 25 percent of the total cost of the program must be funded by the component dental society. Events cannot be purely social and must have designated time to present the benefits of membership. A maximum of \$2,000 will be awarded per grant.

Events must be held by Dec. 31, 2021, and societies receiving grants are required to report the results of their efforts to the ODA Council on Membership Services quarterly.

For more information and to apply, visit [oda.org](http://oda.org) and under "Member Center" click on "Component Dental Society Resources."

## ODA Meeting & Event Calendar

**Nov.**

- 4 Dental Education and Licensure Committee
- 6 Executive Committee
- 6 ODASC Shareholders
- 9 ODPAC Board
- 13 ODA Foundation Board
- 13 Council on Membership Services
- 20 Council on Access to Care and Public Service
- 26-27 ODA closed for holiday

**Dec.**

- 7 Annual Session Committee
- 24-25 ODA closed for holiday
- 31 ODA closed for holiday

*In order to limit personal contact, these meetings are tentative and will likely be conference calls if they are held.*

## Looking to hire a new staff member? Post an ad on our new Jobs & Ads Board

The Ohio Dental Association is excited to announce a new section of our website to place job postings for dental staff members. We recently updated our online classified ads section as our new Jobs & Ads Board and made it easier to find and navigate. Along with this change, we will be launching a new section on Dec. 1 for dentists to post ads for staff member positions.

This new section of our site will be available for dental staff members to search for job postings. Staff job postings will be available online only.

Members can place a 40-word job posting on the site for one month for a discounted rate of \$55 (compared to \$88 for non-members), with each additional word costing \$1.

Once the staff job positions launch on Dec. 1, the ODA plans to market the postings on Facebook and to Ohio dental hygiene and assisting schools.

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Dr. Frank R. Recker practiced general dentistry for 13 years and served as a member of the Ohio state dental Board before entering the legal profession, where he has been serving dentists exclusively for over 25 years.

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By ODA Staff

Dentists and team members can log in to the ODA Virtual Annual Session at their convenience until Dec. 31 to earn up to 28 hours of CE through 13 courses and visit the Virtual Exhibit Hall.

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- “Practical Regulatory Compliance for the Ohio Dental Office,” which fulfills the annual exposure control training requirement mandated by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.
- “Antibiotic Prophylaxis, Appropriate Antibiotic Use for Dental Infections and Antibiotic Stewardship,” presented by Dr. Thomas Paumier.
- “Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office,” which meets the Ohio State Dental Board’s criteria for dental hygienists, expanded function dental auxiliaries and dental assistants to practice under general supervision.
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To download the posters, visit [www.oda.org/member-center/resources/employment-posters/](http://www.oda.org/member-center/resources/employment-posters/). These posters are only available to ODA members.




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## Dental Insurance Corner

# ODA disputes Aetna Dental PPO fee cuts

By Christopher A. Moore, MA  
ODA Director of Dental Services

The Ohio Dental Association has written Aetna Dental PPO to express its concerns with a recent decision by Aetna to substantially reduce network dentists' reimbursement.

The ODA's action is in response to a number of ODA member dentists who contacted the ODA after receiving a letter from Aetna Dental PPO that it would be utilizing a new fee schedule effective Dec. 16, 2020. All of the dentists who contacted the ODA reported the new fee schedule would result in an approximately 20% fee reduction to the discounted PPO fees that were already in place. Aetna's communication constituted the 90 day notice that changes were to be made to the contract as prescribed by the terms of its current participating provider agreement.

Aetna justified its position to the dentists who received the letter by stating it had "conducted a thorough analysis of the dental costs in your area. With employers demanding lower costs for all their benefits including dental benefits and to remain competitive in the industry, we must balance the needs of all stakeholders. For this reason, we are changing our Fee Schedule to lower the payment for certain providers in your geographic area for certain services." Aetna did not mention COVID-19 anywhere in its correspondence as a specific reason for its actions.

It is unclear the scope of Aetna's actions relative to number and/or geographic area of dentists involved, general dentists vs. specialists, etc. The letter also did not provide any insight to any other actions Aetna was taking to "balance the needs of all stakeholders" and only spoke to the fee cuts that affected dentists would take in order to remain in the PPO network.

The Aetna letter went on to offer dentists a lump sum payment "for choosing to accept the revised Fee Schedule." In order to receive the payment, however, the dentist must agree to remain in the PPO for three years or risk having to refund the payment for leaving the plan early. If the dentist revokes their agreement to accept the new fee schedule or terminates their participation in the PPO, then the dentist will have to repay Aetna the full lump sum payment if the termination comes within less than 12 months, two-thirds of the lump sum if the termination comes between 12 to less than 24 months and one-third of the payment if the termination comes between 24 to less than 36 months.

Aetna also required the dentist to acknowledge that the agreement and fee schedule are "proprietary information" under the terms of the dentist's participating provider agreement and therefore must be held confidential.

Based on the calls to the ODA, Aetna did not offer the same lump sum payment amount to all of the dentists who received Aetna's letter. While terms of the payment were the same, the lump sum amount

Aetna offered to pay the dentists varied very widely from dentist to dentist.

Aetna requested the dentists to sign and return the letter and the accompanying fee schedule within 10 business days of receipt. The insurance company indicated the new fees would go into effect on Dec. 16, 2020 and that it will issue the dentist's lump sum payment within 14 days after that. The new fee schedule will still take effect on Dec. 16 whether the dentist agrees to accept the lump sum and its terms or not. It is also slated to take effect if the dentist does not respond to Aetna in any way.

While stating it "must balance the needs of all stakeholders," Aetna's letter did not provide details relative to how the other stakeholders' (e.g., Aetna itself, employers, subscribers, patients, insurance brokers, etc.) needs were being balanced, including whether any were being asked to make sacrifices comparable to what Aetna was imposing upon its network dentists.

"Whether COVID-19 is part of the reason for Aetna's actions or it's simply employers wanting to pay less for their dental benefit, the ODA believes it is inappropriate for dentists to solely bear

the burden of the costs that are necessary to provide responsible and safe dental care," said Dr. Manny Chopra, chairman of the Ohio Dental Association Council on Dental Care Programs and Dental Practice. "We recognize that all sectors of the economy have been impacted by many factors and are willing to work with those affected to develop equitable ways to address cost of care issues."

Chopra added, "Aetna's current actions are both unfortunate and troubling. We are concerned that Aetna's actions will make it increasingly difficult for network dentists to make the economics work within their practices to provide optimal oral health care to Aetna Dental PPO covered patients. We are also concerned that while many insurance companies have already done something to assist dentists, we've seen no indication or report that Aetna has provided financial assistance to dental practices or positively addressed dental fees in light of the higher cost of providing care due to COVID-19. Aetna's actions do not appear to be those of a

See PPO, page 11

ODA members who would like to submit a dental insurance related question, problem or concern may do so by sending the appropriate information to the ODA Dental Insurance Working Group, 1370 Dublin Road, Columbus, OH 43215, or 614-486-0381 FAX, or [chrism@oda.org](mailto:chrism@oda.org). To see past issues of the Dental Insurance Corner, visit [www.oda.org/news](http://www.oda.org/news) and choose the category "ODA Today" and subcategory "Dental Insurance Corner."

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## Rising Star Award: Dr. Brian Gallagher

By Jackie Best Crowe  
ODA Managing Editor

Dr. Brian Gallagher is dedicated to giving back to his community and the profession of dentistry. In recognition of his efforts, he will receive the 2020 Ohio Dental Association N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award.

"Establishing yourself in a private dental practice setting right out of school is challenging enough on its own," wrote Dr. Michael Gallagher in his nomination letter. "It takes a certain individual to go beyond patient care to reach out into the community and volunteer your skills, time and leadership."

Dr. Brian Gallagher said he was honored and surprised to receive the award.

"Any time there's an honor like that, it means a lot, especially coming from the ODA – the organization for dentists in all of Ohio," he said.

Gallagher was exposed to dentistry from a young age because his father is a dentist. Growing up, he spent time at the office helping out and doing yard work, but he never thought he would become a dentist. In college he started out on a pre-med track and had the opportunity to shadow a few other dentists, and he liked the patient interaction and being able to help people almost immediately.

"I always knew what my dad did and that he helped people, but seeing it from a second perspective solidified it for me, that dentistry was something I want to do and be a part of," Gallagher said.

Gallagher attended dental school at the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine and graduated in 2016. After graduation, he went into practice with his dad in Cleveland.

"I love working with him every day," Gallagher said. "He's a great resource clinically, I'll ask him anything, and we'll bounce ideas off of each other."

Gallagher said his dad has been a role model because he is very involved with the community through volunteering, coaching and serving on boards.

"Dentistry doesn't have to just be that you're with patients in a chair in your office, you can do a lot more with what you have to give," Gallagher said.

Gallagher said his favorite part of being a dentist is the relationships he forms with his patients and other dentists. He said he enjoys getting to know his patients and their families, and seeing patients grow up in his practice.

In 2018, Gallagher co-founded a study club for young dentists in Cleveland.

"I wanted to have a forum where young dentists could ask questions they would not likely ask in larger setting," Gallagher said. "We talk about cases and bring in presentations, and it provides an easier, more laid back format to learn."

Gallagher said one goal of the study club is for dentists to grow together



Dr. Brian Gallagher is the 2020 recipient of the Ohio Dental Association N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award.

and help each other out rather than be competitive.

He also serves on the St. Joseph Academy Health Sciences Board, which aims to expose the students to health sciences. Gallagher said students at the all-girls school can participate in the program where they follow a certain curriculum

and hear from health care speakers like dentists, dermatologists, anesthesiologists and others, and go on field trips to learn about different opportunities in health care. Gallagher said he's also had several students come to their office to shadow them.

Gallagher has also provided custom fitted mouth guards for the St. Joseph Academy Rugby team.

"The girls were so appreciative, and we're happy to help the community," Gallagher said.

Gallagher joined the Ohio Dental Association and Greater Cleveland Dental Society right out of school. He is a member of the Greater Cleveland Dental Society Board of Trustees, and this year, he served as a delegate to the ODA House of Delegates for the first time.

"It's been eye opening in a good way being part of these meetings with GCDS and with ODA and seeing what we can do to help dentists," he said. "Before I didn't really know what went into getting stuff done, but being part of it I realized we can

change things and make a difference."

Gallagher said he thinks organized dentistry is important so that dentists can look out for each other.

"Organized dentistry is about dentists helping dentists," he said. "We can all have a voice. We have to look out for each other, otherwise who will?"

Outside of dentistry, Gallagher enjoys running, playing volleyball and basketball and bike riding. He has also coached cross country and is a Cleveland sports fan.

Gallagher practices with his dad, Dr. Mike Gallagher, and his mom, Cathy Gallagher, serves as their office manager. He has two sisters, Mary and Kelly.

The Rising Star Award recognizes a young leader in dentistry with outstanding leadership and initiative and a strong commitment to volunteerism within the community and the profession. This person must demonstrate promise for continued and future accomplishments within the dental profession, and must have been in practice for 10 years or less.



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The Explorer

Matthew J. Messina, DDS  
Executive Editor

## Thanksgiving

We are rapidly approaching my favorite holiday. As a kid, I looked forward to Christmas and my birthday. As a young adult, New Year's Eve, Memorial Day, Labor Day and the 4th of July were prime holidays. I do have to confess that I have never warmed to Halloween, but I know it's become quite the event these days for many people. Then Denise's birthday, Valentine's Day and our wedding anniversary emerged as important events to celebrate. As parents, our children's birthdays were always circled on the calendar, as well as the return of Christmas as a blessed highlight! We continue to celebrate Buckeye football Saturdays and opening day in baseball around our house. However, the older I get, the more I appreciate Thanksgiving! Of all the holidays, Thanksgiving is exclusively about two things I cherish, food and family!

I recently saw a mock movie poster that said:

"2020". Written by Stephen King. Directed by Quentin Tarantino.

That pretty accurately sums up the way that this year has felt. I wish I wouldn't have gone to the theater to see this feature and I certainly hope they don't do a sequel. But, I can't walk out of the movie. We have to see it to the end. I still intend

to cook Thanksgiving dinner and plan for a safe celebration of family togetherness. Instead of big turkeys, Thanksgiving 2020 could well be the year of individual roasted Cornish game hens! COVID has taken many things from us this year, but I refuse to allow it to rob me of my sense of gratitude. We will always give thanks in our house. Even in a crazy year, there remains so much for which to be thankful!

I've spent a great deal of time thinking about the value of a culture of gratitude in life, so I offer you the following reflections as you prepare for your Thanksgiving celebrations.

American self-help author Melody Beattie wrote: "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough ... and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. It turns problems into gifts, failures into successes, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. Gratitude makes sense of our past, peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

Robert Nelson Jacobs, Academy Award nominated screenwriter for "Chocolat," said, "I think that we can't go around

measuring our goodness by what we don't do – by what we deny ourselves, what we resist and who we exclude. I think we've got to measure goodness by what we embrace, what we create, and who we include."

Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel said, "For me, every hour is grace. And I feel gratitude in my heart each time I can meet someone and look at his or her smile."

Charles Dickens reminded us to "reflect upon your present blessings, of which everyone has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some." Even singer Willie Nelson agrees, as he admits "when I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."

President John F. Kennedy challenged us that "as we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

America's favorite cartoon loser, Charlie Brown, put it so simply when he asked, "What if today, we were just grateful for everything?"

When you love what you have, you have everything you need. It is not happy people who are thankful. It is thankful people who are happy! Remember, there is always ... always ... something to be thankful for! I'm thankful to be on this journey with you! Happy Thanksgiving!

Dr. Messina may be reached at [docmessina87@gmail.com](mailto:docmessina87@gmail.com).

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**PPO, from page 8**

good partner to the affected network dentists.”

Legal review of the Aetna Dental PPO participating provider agreement that member dentists provided to the ODA indicates that Aetna does have the contractual authority to make the revisions to the agreement that it announced in its letter to the dentists. Participating providers are largely left with the options of doing nothing and having the new fee schedule take effect (with or without the lump sum payment), terminating their contract or trying to negotiate more favorable terms with Aetna.



Chopra noted, “Aetna’s actions have the potential to put its own participating providers in a bad spot. While Aetna may have the legal authority to act as it has, that does not make it right for them to do so. We sincerely hope Aetna will reconsider its actions.”

Separate from this issue with Aetna, ODA member dentists are also encouraged to utilize the free of charge Contract Analysis Service before entering into a participating provider agreement with an insurance company, PPO, dental health maintenance organization (DHMO), etc. The Contract Analysis Service assists member dentists in understanding contractual terms and contractual obligations before the dentist finds himself/herself legally bound by them. It takes contract legalese and translates it into easy-to-understand language that enables dentists to make informed contracting decisions.

The service identifies potentially problematic contract provisions and their possible impact on the dental practice. This information can help the dentist either negotiate more favorable contract terms or at least have a fuller understanding of what to expect as a result of entering into the agreement.

To utilize the Contract Analysis Service, ODA members simply need to contact the ODA Department of Dental Services at 1-800-282-1526 and request an analysis for whichever contract they are considering. If the contract has already been analyzed, then its analysis will be sent to the member as a benefit of membership. If the contract has not been previously submitted to the ODA for review, then the dentist will be asked to send the ODA an unsigned copy of the contract. The ODA will then forward it to the American Dental Association where the ADA’s attorneys will analyze it. The ADA will return the completed analysis to the ODA which will then provide it to the member dentist as a member benefit

Dentists are also advised that it is a good idea to review the contract and its analysis with their professional liability carrier and, if necessary, legal counsel.

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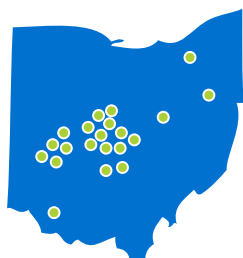
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