

## QUICKBITES

### ENROLL IN THE ODA HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN

Open enrollment for the ODA's health benefits plan, the ODA Wellness Trust, is available from Oct. 15 through Nov. 15.

The ODA Wellness Trust is available exclusively to ODA members and their staff and features a more extensive provider network than most individual health insurance plans. It also has a wide range of deductible options to fit many different needs. Plus, most offices are able to save money on health benefit costs by joining the plan.

To learn more about the ODA Wellness Trust and to request a quote, visit [www.odawt.org](http://www.odawt.org) or call (800) 282-1526 or email [insurance@oda.org](mailto:insurance@oda.org).

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## ATTENDEES CONNECT WITH FRIENDS, LEARN AT CE AND EXCEL WITH TECHNOLOGY AT ODA ANNUAL SESSION

Annual Session, Events & CE

By Jackie Best Crowe  
ODA Managing Editor

The 2022 ODA Annual Session featured 64 CE courses presented by local and national experts, 152 vendors in an expansive Exhibit Hall, special events and thousands of dental professionals.

"Annual Session is a tremendous benefit of ODA membership," said Dr. Laura Martin Miller, a general dentist in Kent. "I know I can count on quality CE every year. Annual Session provides the House of Delegates to ensure a positive future for our profession. I especially always enjoy catching up with classmates and colleagues at the social events. Members get discounted rates. The ODA also helps new dentists by providing further discounts on CE and they offer fun events each day throughout the weekend!"

More than 2,700 dental professionals registered for the 2022 ODA Annual Session, including 850 dentists.

"I loved meeting and learning with new dentists as well as spending time with my co-workers outside of the office," said Dr. Paige Durkin, a general dentist in Martins Ferry. "In addition, it was awesome watching my boss, Dr. John Kramer win a well-deserved award!"

ODA Annual Session featured many hands-on workshops, team building courses, front office courses and more.

"I feel the ODA always provides quality and clinically useful CE that I can imple-



Photo by Kyle Widder

The ODA Subcouncil on Diversity and Inclusion hosted a new event at ODA Annual Session this year, *Cuisine + Colleagues From Around The World*, where attendees could experience food and beverages from different regions around the world throughout the Exhibit Hall.

ment at our practice," Martin Miller said. "My favorite speaker recently has been Dr. Ashleigh Briody. She offers a phenomenal oral pathology course. If you haven't taken it - you must!"

Some of the most popular courses this year included:

- "Opioid Use, Misuse, Abuse and Addiction: Appropriate Opioid and Non-Opioid Prescribing" presented by Dr.

See ANNUAL SESSION, page 7

## A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

# ODA HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN FEATURES COMPETITIVE RATES, RICH BENEFITS, EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Endorsed Products & Discounts

By Dr. Thomas Paumier  
ODA Wellness Trust Chairman

It's safe to say that the past few years have presented new difficulties, obstacles and changes to all of our lives. We want you to know that in these unpredictable times, it has confirmed the importance the ODA placed on developing a private, member-owned health care option several years ago. The ODA Wellness Trust Board is dedicated to supporting all aspects of your health and wellbeing to help you through challenging times, such as COVID-19, and has implemented a number of offerings to enhance your health journey.

The ODA Wellness Trust currently provides coverage to over 3,500 individuals and continues to grow each year. Open Enrollment is your once-a-year opportunity to choose benefits for the coming year that meet your own personal wellbeing and financial needs. Your membership in the ODA provides you access to a private health care plan, which includes the following:

**Competitive Rates** - U.S. health care costs continue to increase overall each year. The ODA Wellness Trust is committed to



OPEN ENROLLMENT IS  
OCTOBER 15 - NOVEMBER 15

Request a quote at [www.odawt.org](http://www.odawt.org)

keeping costs as affordable as possible for its subscribers. As a self-insured plan, the ODA Wellness Trust is exempt from many state and federal taxes which instantly saves its subscribers money. In addition, the ODA Wellness Trust is only available to members of the ODA. Historically, dentists are one of the healthiest populations when various trades are examined. As an enrollee in the ODA Wellness Trust, your claims are pooled with other dental offices which determines the rates for the plan. No longer are other associations or insurance carrier populations used to determine the ODA member rates.

**Rich Benefits** - Over the years, we have found that ODA members have unique needs when it comes to health benefits. While other populations are being forced into high deductible plan options that place most of the health care cost on the member, the ODA Wellness Trust maintains several "Gold" level plans that have low deduct-

ibles and out of pocket expense. These rich benefits are coupled with Medical Mutual's SuperMed Plus network of providers that offer access to nearly every health care provider in Ohio and 99% of the hospitals.

**Customer Service** - One of the primary reasons for the success of the ODA Wellness Trust is the member support the ODA Services Corp. provides to members of the plan. First, ODA Services Corp. staff help dentists and staff decide which benefit option is best for their health care needs and budget. Our staff is salary-based, instead of commission-based, so they always have the ODA members' best interest at heart. Secondly, as an enrollee in the ODA Wellness Trust, you and your staff are urged to direct all questions to ODA Services Corp. for a quicker, more helpful response. No longer will you need to wait on hold or navigate automated directories with insurance carriers.

See HEALTH, page 7



ADA American Dental Association®

## Give Kids A Smile!

Register your GKAS event by Nov. 15 to receive free products!

<https://oda.org/community-involvement/give-kids-a-smile/>

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR OHIO STATE DENTAL BOARD POSITIONS

OSDB

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 possible dentist board member openings on the Ohio State Dental Board (OSDB), which may be vacant in April 2023. The board member positions are for general dentists and a dental specialist.

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 include:

- 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, 2022 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 michelle@oda.org.

## MEDWORKS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR FREE DENTAL CLINIC

Community Involvement

Medworks Inc. is holding a free dental clinic on Nov. 18 and 19 at the Huntington Convention Center in Cleveland.

The event is seeking dental professionals and community volunteers to help provide free dental care to patients of all ages. Services include dental screenings, cleanings, extractions, fillings, temporary partials for adults and sealants for children.

Medworks is a nonprofit organization that holds large scale health care and dental clinics to provide free care for those in need.

For more information, visit <https://medworksusa.org/dental-clinic/>.



Follow the ODA on Twitter!

@OhioDentalAssoc

## E-PRESCRIBING LAW WENT INTO EFFECT SEPT. 23

Legal Issues

A new Ohio law mandating e-prescribing went into effect Friday, Sept. 23. The law requires prescriptions for schedule II-controlled substances to be done electronically, however, those prescribers who write 50 or fewer schedule II prescriptions per year are exempted from the requirement. There are also exceptions in situations where it is impossible to write an e-prescription, such as dealing with power outages or internet connection issues.

For those dentists who plan to write 50 or fewer schedule II prescriptions and do not plan to use e-prescribing, it would be prudent to track the prescriptions written in case proof is required that the exception has been met. Dentists who prescribe more than 50 schedule II prescriptions in a year and do not do so electronically could be subject to a fourth degree misdemeanor.

For additional information, please contact the ODA legal department at (800) 282-1526.

### SAVE 30% ON E-PRESCRIBING APP

The Ohio Dental Association has negotiated a discount with iPrescribe, a mobile e-prescribing solution, to help you meet this new requirement. iPrescribe enables you to prescribe any drug from your smartphone. This app will allow you to meet Ohio's e-prescribing mandate, which went into effect Friday, Sept. 23.

The app provides a simple and convenient way to meet the e-prescribing mandate and allows secure communication with pharmacists.

You can register for iPrescribe from your mobile phone or on your desktop computer.

Visit: <https://account.iprescribe.com/registration/welcome> to get started or download directly from the Apple App store or Google Play store.

For a limited time, ODA members will receive 30% off their first year subscription saving you over \$100. Enter Code ODA during the registration process.

Please note it is typically taking about 2-4 weeks for providers to be fully on boarded for EPCS.

*This discount does not constitute an endorsement by the Ohio Dental Association or ODA Services Corp.*

## OHIO MEDICAID NEXT GENERATION LAUNCHED OCT. 1

Medicaid

The Next Generation of the Ohio Medicaid program went live on Oct. 1. Effective Oct. 1 all provider enrollment applications must be submitted using Ohio Medicaid's new Provider Network Management (PNM) module. The PNM module is the single point for providers to complete provider enrollment, centralized credentialing and provider self-service.

For more details, visit <https://managedcare.medicaid.ohio.gov/providers>.

## AT A GLANCE: IMPORTANT DATES & EVENTS

### Dates & Deadlines

10/15-11/15	ODA Wellness Trust Open Enrollment
11/24-11/25	ODA Closed for Holiday

### Events

10/21	Life in the Real World - Columbus
11/4	Life in the Real World - Cleveland

### Meetings

10/17	Subcouncil on New Dentists
11/3	Executive Committee
11/3	ODA Services Corp. Shareholders
11/4	ODA Services Corp. Board
11/9	Dental Education and Licensure Committee
11/10-11/11	Annual Session Committee
11/15-11/16	Council on Dental Care Programs and Dental Practice
11/18	ODA Foundation Board
11/18	Council on Membership Services
11/30	Subcouncil on Diversity and Inclusion

## ODA TODAY

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**David J. Owsiany, JD**  
ODA Executive Director

THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

## 20 YEARS

In his classic song "Like a Rock," Bob Seger, a member of both the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, wrote the following:

Twenty years now  
Where'd they go?  
Twenty years  
I don't know  
I sit and I wonder sometimes  
Where they've gone

Those lyrics come to mind as I celebrate my 20th year as the ODA's executive director. Where did that time go?

I was honored that the ODA leadership recognized my 20th anniversary as ODA executive director during the ODA's Annual Session last month. I was showered with gifts and well wishes. Perhaps most rewarding was that many ODA leaders made donations to the ODA Foundation in my name to fund the David Owsiany/Darryl Dever scholarship for worthy dental students who have an interest in advocacy.

As many of you know, Darryl Dever was the ODA's brilliant consulting lobbyist for more than 30 years and served as a mentor to me before his untimely death in 2015. So, I am humbled to have my name associated with Darryl's for an ODA Foundation scholarship.

It has been an amazing run over the last 20 years. When I started as executive director, the ODA was a very strong organization but had some issues that needed to be addressed. At that time, my goal and the goal of the volunteer leadership was to provide complete transparency so that

all members had trust in their state professional association and a clear understanding how we are efficiently managing precious resources to advance our members' interests and oral health in Ohio. To this day, that commitment remains strong. Every year, the ODA president and I visit as many component dental society meetings as possible to give the ODA Update and answer members' questions.

Over the years, our advocacy has ensured that the dental profession continues to thrive free from unnecessary government interference and we have consistently been a source of reliable and accurate information for dental practices. Nothing illustrates this more than the COVID pandemic. When state government began shutting down businesses to "flatten the curve" and save PPE, the ODA advocated to ensure dental offices could stay open for emergencies and then successfully advocated to ensure dental offices were opened back up for the full range of dental services quickly, far sooner than most other states. During that time of uncertainty, the ODA was the source of accurate and timely information for our member dentists related to COVID-related regulations, infection control, PPE, SBA loans and a myriad of other issues. We handled thousands of calls from our members and hosted several webinars that were viewed by thousands of ODA members.

I am proud that throughout the last 20 years, thousands of ODA member dentists have benefited from ODA products and services, including health insurance and other discounted insurance products, discounted dental supplies, regulatory compliance and practice management information, ethics training, CE, leadership development programs, and much more. During that time, the ODA and its members have also worked to expand public service opportunities delivering much-needed dental care services to hundreds of thousands of underserved Ohioans through programs like Give Kids a Smile and Dental OPTIONS.

Our most recent membership survey

reveals that ODA member dentists value our efforts on their behalf.

- 94% of ODA members report being satisfied with ODA's efforts in "providing members with information about issues affecting the practice of dentistry."
- 89% of ODA members report being satisfied with the ODA's efforts related to "lobbying on behalf of the dental profession."
- Three out of four members say they are satisfied with the ODA's efforts in "monitoring the dental insurance industry and advocating for dental insurance benefits."

In assessing the value of membership in the ODA, 36% of members rated the ODA was an "excellent" value and 42% rated ODA membership as a "good" value. An amazing 93% of members say the ODA is "moving in the right direction."

While I receive generous compliments about the ODA's performance, the reality is that this level of performance is the result of the efforts of many people, not just a single individual. The ODA has an incredible professional staff in Columbus working on behalf of its dentist members every day. Moreover, hundreds of passionate and dedicated dentists volunteer to serve as the ODA's officers and on committees and councils and in the House of Delegates, directing this association and ensuring we continue to focus on membership service and advancing the dental profession.

In closing, I want to thank all of you, the loyal members of the ODA, for your continued support of and involvement in organized dentistry. Many of you have heard me say over the years that I am truly in awe of the dental profession. Dentistry is different than most other professions. And I firmly believe that one of the reasons dentistry is so special is because organized dentistry at all levels - the ADA, the ODA and local component dental societies - foster and protect the dental profession so that dentists can focus on what they do best: deliver world class care to their patients.

I have enjoyed the last 20 years and look forward to continuing to serve the dental profession in Ohio.



**Lori Fitzgerald, DDS**  
ODA President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## FITZGERALD'S CHRONICLES

Membership Benefits, Annual Session

Wow! My first article as president. This has been such an incredible journey thus far and I am so excited to get to work for all of my colleagues.

I have been brainstorming on how I might best showcase to all Ohio dentists how membership is invaluable to all of us. I realize that the majority do not know of nor are privileged to see all of the behind-the-scenes efforts of the ODA. Many never see the little flames that are put out because those flames are never given the opportunity to become fires. Nor do our members see how organized the ODA team is at preparing our volunteer dentists for meetings, keeping us on task, following through with requests and bringing our directives to fruition. And there are the calls that come into the ODA fielded by pros like Chris Moore that never go unanswered.

I would like to make my monthly column a journal of sorts of my presidency so as to chronicle the inner workings of our well-oiled machine.

My first entry is that of our recent Annual Session meeting. Success!!! Suzanne Payne Brooks, Amy Szmania, Michelle Blackman, and Karli Hill are all SUPERSTARS! It is a talent to make event planning look "easy." Just as I watch a hockey player skate with blinders on while pushing a puck on the end of a stick in one hand and a mob of angry fighters with the other hand and I naively think "hmm, that looked easy," these women make the Annual Session planning and hosting look easy.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Incredible CE offerings and speakers, wonderful venue, fun events, well deserved honors awarded to admirable individuals, and well-orchestrated House of Delegate meetings were all flawlessly presented to us. A memorable event as always.

If you have never attended our Annual Session, I encourage you to mark your calendar for next year and attend. Most states envy our event; it is truly one to experience, witness and behold first-hand.

I am so very proud of our ODA and honored to be able to serve and give back.

I want to thank all of those who spoke to me after my address to the House of Delegates and for sharing your kind remarks regarding my message and encouraging comments for the upcoming year.

I am ready to get to work and to see what we can accomplish together. Stay tuned for next month's edition, "Fitzgerald's chronicles."



## REGISTER YOUR GIVE KIDS A SMILE EVENTS BY NOV. 15 TO RECEIVE FREE PRODUCTS

Membership Benefits, Community Involvement

By ODA Staff

Registration for 2023 Give Kids A Smile events is now open. Dentists, their staff members and others planning to hold Give Kids A Smile events any time in 2023 should plan to register those activities. Events registered between Oct. 1 and Nov. 15, 2022 will qualify to receive free products to support their events such as toothbrush and toothpaste giveaways and dental supplies to perform screenings, cleanings, fluoride application and sealants.

Give Kids A Smile is one of the ODA's biggest access to care and oral health education efforts in Ohio, but it is made up of individual events planned by dentists, dental team members, dental societies and others. Events range from oral health education in schools to a free day of preventive care in a private den-

tal office to a large-scale event at a dental school.

Dentists who already provide free dental care days to children or who send their staff to local schools for oral health education presentations are encouraged to sign up those activities as GKAS events. Registered events benefit from free products, ODA staff support and volunteer CE credit for dentists and hygienists providing free clinical care. The GKAS Ohio program is also stronger when more events are registered and reported.

Registration opened Oct. 1 and dentists or their staff who are interested in GKAS can contact Skyler Lesser-Roy, ODA manager of public service, at skyler@oda.org or (800) 282-1526 to learn more about GKAS and to determine if they are already holding GKAS-qualifying events. For more details and to register an event, visit [www.oda.org/get-involved/in-your-community/give-kids-a-smile/](http://www.oda.org/get-involved/in-your-community/give-kids-a-smile/).

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

## LEGAL & LEGISLATIVE

# THE ELECTION, ADVOCACY AND LAME DUCK

Advocacy, ODPAC & Legislation

The election, advocacy and lame duck, this is what the legal and legislative department of the ODA will be doing for the remainder of 2022. Two of these items I am sure you are aware of; if you are around any type of media from social to your local news station you are well aware of the upcoming election in early November, and advocacy is something that all ODA members understand as an integral part of membership. However, lame duck may not be something that everyone is familiar with. Lame duck is not an injured waterfowl or a bland dish at a local restaurant, instead it is a fast-paced legislative period following an election and before the end of a legislative period.

The upcoming November election will set the 135th Ohio General Assembly, which will begin January of 2023. This means that every single (99) Ohio House of Representatives seat and half of the Ohio Senate seats are up for grabs. Along with the legislature, all of the statewide elected officials are being contested from governor to secretary of state. Also, on the federal level all 15 House congressional seats are being contested and one Senate seat. This election in Ohio has been hotly contested throughout the last year due to the discussion about the legislative districts and the make-up of the legislature. When voting takes place on Nov. 8 the districts that are on the ballots will be from the third set of legislative maps given to the Supreme Court of Ohio by the re-districting committee. If you remember, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that map unconstitutional earlier this year. However, due to timing issues and needing to have an election, the federal court ruled that those maps would be used for this election. So, what does this mean for dentistry? The one thing it means for sure is that these elected officials will be the ones making decisions for Ohioans in the next two years. So, as always, this means get out and vote!

Election season always reminds those people working in and around the Statehouse of how quickly things can change. Each House member is only guaranteed a two-year term (four years for senators) before they are up for reelection. This is why advocacy from the ODA is so important. The entire lobbying team at the ODA from our professional staff to each one of our member dentists must continue to remind legislators of the ODA's legislative priorities. With short terms there will be many new faces around the Statehouse come January. Bad ideas like dental therapists can catch on quickly for new legislators who have only heard one side of the story. That is why during the first month or so of the

new General Assembly we will meet with every new legislator and old to go over the ODA legislative agenda. This gives us the chance to become a resource to the legislature and make sure that if a dental issue comes up the ODA is the first group to get a phone call. If you have a relationship with a legislator or would like to start building one please contact the ODA at (614) 486-2700 and ask to speak with me. Having a dentist in each legislator's district that they can reach out to is a goal of the ODA.

One more thing to discuss in this article is what exactly happens in lame duck? As I stated earlier this is a period between the election (Nov. 8) and the end of the General Assembly (Dec. 31). It is called lame duck because there are legislators that will be serving out their term but did not win re-election

for the next term. The idea being that in this period politicians who are not returning to office may try to get as much as possible done before the end of the term or do nothing at all. Having said that it can be an interesting time because any pending bill that does not get finished before Dec. 31 is officially "dead" and will have to be re-introduced in 2023. In this time period from November through December the ODA lobbying team will be reading through many bills to ensure that no issues for dentistry are being amended into other bills in hopes of getting them passed. Further, the lobbying team will continue to race against the clock for our non-covered services bill (House Bill 344) to be passed before the end of this session.

Needless to say the next few months are going to be very impactful on the

## AT A GLANCE

- 🦷 Get out and vote Nov. 8! All House members and half of the Senate is up for election.
- 🦷 Lame duck is the period following the election and before the end of the legislative period.
- 🦷 The ODA lobby team will be hard at work during lame duck and introducing the ODA to new legislators in January.

political scene in Ohio. The results of the election will shape the legislative path for the next few years. This will also give us opportunities to build new relationships and strengthen existing ones moving in to the new General Assembly. Please continue to be involved in the legislative process in Ohio by attending Day at the Statehouse, contributing to ODPAC, and maintaining contact with the policy makers in your district. If you have any questions regarding the election, legislators or advocacy, please contact me, I would be happy to speak with you.



**BECOME AN ADVOCATE!**

Your involvement in grassroots legislative efforts is extremely important to delivering organized dentistry's message at the Statehouse.

Learn more by visiting the  
Advocacy page of [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org)

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## 2022-23 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE INSTALLED

Governance

By ODA Staff

The ODA installed new Executive Committee officers for the 2022-23 term on Sept. 16 during the House of Delegates meeting.

The Executive Committee is the managing body of the ODA. The committee administers the policies established by the ODA House of Delegates and the Ad Interim Committee.

The 2022-23 ODA Executive Committee officers are:

- President: Dr. Lori Fitzgerald, Canfield.
- President-elect: Dr. Manish Chopra, Cincinnati.
- Vice President: Dr. Hal Jeter, South Point.
- Immediate Past President: Dr. Thomas Kelly, Cleveland.
- Secretary: Dr. Brett Pelok, Toledo.



Dr. David Kimberly, past president of the ODA, installs the 2022-23 Ohio Dental Association Executive Committee. From left: Dr. Kelly Roth, speaker of the House of Delegates; Dr. Kyle Bogan, treasurer; Dr. Hal Jeter, vice president; Dr. Brett Pelok, secretary; Dr. Lori Fitzgerald, president; Dr. Manish Chopra, president-elect; and Dr. Thomas Kelly, immediate past president.

- Treasurer: Dr. Kyle Bogan, Delaware.
- Speaker of the House of Delegates: Dr. Kelly Roth, Canton.

## ODA PRESIDENT DR. LORI FITZGERALD LOOKS AHEAD AT HER TERM

Governance

Dr. Lori Fitzgerald began her term as Ohio Dental Association president at the ODA House of Delegates in September. In this Q&A with “ODA Today,” Fitzgerald looks forward to her term.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES YOU EXPECT THE OHIO DENTAL ASSOCIATION TO FACE DURING YOUR PRESIDENCY? HOW DO YOU THINK THE ODA SHOULD ADDRESS THESE ISSUES?

I know membership will continue to be a hot topic. In my opinion we are incredibly fortunate to have the numbers we currently have; several associations and groups across the country outside of dentistry have lost members and folded in this new culture we live in. The work of our current members and ODA team has served us very well, however we need to redirect in order to sustain. We need to welcome all dentists from all practice models. Inviting dentists from DSOs to the table is a first step; engaging them, warmly receiving them and working with them is now the next.

### IF YOU COULD STATE ONE MESSAGE TO NEW ODA MEMBERS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Welcome and thank you for valuing our profession.

Being a member is incredibly valuable to you and to the future of dentistry. Our profession is incredibly vulnerable to the whims of politicians (and insurance companies) and therefore the care delivered to the public, our patients and our family members lies in the balance. We all took an oath to do no harm to our patients, and advocacy through membership protects our oath, it is our duty.

### WHAT, OR WHO, HELPED YOU MAKE THE DECISION TO PURSUE DENTISTRY AS A PROFESSION?

I began school with aspirations of becoming a business student at Indian University School of Business. I spent a big part of my first year traveling home to visit my orthodontist and oral surgeon. I had a crossbite, class III malocclusion (aka gnarly mouth). I underwent a bilateral sagittal split osteotomy (glad my dad sprung for the chin implant ... inside family joke). I was in awe of the workups and coordination of treatment and fascinated by the technology (30 years ago technology). I was hooked and was encouraged by my mom to pursue a career in dentistry.

### ANY CLOSING REMARKS?

I am excited about the upcoming year. “Mom is rolling up her sleeves” ... I am ready to get to work for one year, which is not a lot of time.

## 2022 ODA HOUSE OF DELEGATES WRAP-UP

Governance

By ODA Staff

The Ohio Dental Association House of Delegates met Sept. 15 and 16 in conjunction with the 2022 ODA Annual Session in Columbus.

During the meeting, the House of Delegates adopted several resolutions, including:

- Updating the association’s policy, “Statement on Preventive Coverage in Dental Plans,” to include language that addresses limitations on the number of covered exams.
- Adopting the association’s policy on “Bundling and Downcoding” to prevent insurance claims payment abuse.
- Adopting the association’s policy on “Assignment of Benefits” related to a patient’s dental benefit plan and payments to dentists.
- Adopting the association’s policy relative to insurance credential-

ing and payments to yet-to-be-credentialed dentists.

- Updating the Ohio Dental Association’s Bylaws to align with the ADA by eliminating the 25% waiver of dues and 75% waiver of dues.
- Approving the allocations for ODA officer stipends for their service to the association during the 2022-2023 term of office.
- Adopting the association’s position to support a requirement that a subscriber’s dental benefit plan information is provided to the dentist.
- Updating the Ohio Dental Association’s policy on “Legislation Concerning Children with Dental Birth Defects” to update the association’s entity overseeing the implementation of the policy.
- Adopting a proposal for the Ohio Dental Association to develop and implement a dental staff recruitment campaign.
- Updating the Manual of the Ohio

Dental Association regarding the association’s ADA Seventh District Trustee election procedures.

- Directing the Ohio Dental Association’s Council on Membership Services to investigate different classifications of membership for various dental practice models.

Delegates also heard addresses from Dr. Ray Cohlmiya, executive director of the American Dental Association; Dr. Mark Bronson, second vice president of the American Dental Association; Dr. Thomas Kelly, president of the Ohio Dental Association; Dr. Lori Fitzgerald, president-elect of the Ohio Dental Association; and a report from David Owsiany, ODA executive director, among other presentations.

The House of Delegates meets every year during Annual Session and is the policymaking and supreme authoritative body of the ODA.



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# ODA 2022 ANNUAL SESSION

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2022

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See ANNUAL SESSION, from page 1

- Harold Crossley.
  - “ABC’s of Oral Pathology” presented by Dr. Ashleigh Briody.
  - “Working the Life-Work Balance and Living Your Best Life” presented by Dr. Gina Dorfman.
  - “Do Dentistry, Not Prison Time: Clinical Records Prevent Criminal Records” presented by Dr. Roy Shelburne.
  - “Every Dental Professional’s Toolkit in Successfully Interpreting a Patient’s Medical History” presented by Tom Viola, R.Ph, CCP.
- “My favorite part of the ODA was the various classes offered and the longer lunch that allowed our staff to eat together,” said Dr. Norm Sommers, a general dentist in Norwalk. “The courses I attended, especially Drs. Dan Ward and Nate Lawson, provided information I am utilizing; real world information that each dentist faces.”

Durkin also said she learned information she’s able to use in her practice. “As a new dentist, I tried to absorb as much information as possible,” she said. “In the dental compliance course, I learned many resources that the ODA provides to assist owners such as the Regulatory Compliance Manual. In addition, I took an endodontics course and learned a ton about diagnosing and managing dental emergencies.”

Annual Session also featured several social events, including The New Dentist Social, Dinner with the Speakers, Morning Yoga, MATCH @ ODA Annual Session, the Callahan Celebration of Excellence Honoring ODA President Dr. Thomas Kelly, Night at the Columbus Clippers, and The Bash!

“I attended the Night at the Ballpark event,” Durkin said. “It was such a cool atmosphere to have fun and network with new dentists and employees of the ODA!”

Martin Miller also attended several special events.

“I look forward to celebrating with old friends each year and meeting new ones! The ODA does a great job catering to new dentists and I encourage other young dentists to become involved in organized dentistry,” she said.

The Exhibit Hall is rated by ODA Annual Session attendees as one of the top reasons they attend the meeting each year. This year’s Exhibit Hall featured 152 vendors, where at-

tendees could comparison shop with the help of knowledgeable company representatives.

“It was enjoyable to look through the exhibits and see what the latest tech was like,” said Dr. Veeshesh Patel, an Ohio State University Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery resident. “Being a recent graduate, dental technology has changed significantly in just the last five years.”

This year’s Exhibit Hall featured several new events, including Cuisine + Colleagues From Around The World hosted by the ODA Subcouncil on Diversity and Inclusion, Hops & Shops and Dark Roast & Donuts. The Exhibit Hall also featured ODATalks, free one-hour interactive presentations. The Exhibit Hall also featured daily prize drawings.

“There are many aspects I enjoy about the Annual Session every year, but this year I’d have to say my favorite thing was getting lucky and winning the ODA’s dentist Exhibit Hall prize – a Microsoft Surface Pro!” Martin Miller said.

Many attendees said that the ODA Annual Session is a benefit of their membership.

“It is a benefit because it allows a special and unique time in the year where you can meet with old friends, learn about the latest tech, network, share and attain knowledge, and enjoy yourself” Patel said.

Sommers said it’s a benefit because “it’s in state, we’re able to get some CE and it’s a chance for our staff to travel and spend time together.”

Durkin said ODA Annual Session is definitely a benefit of her membership.

“We had access to amazing CE courses, and I got to meet a lot of employees from the ODA that have helped me during the start of my career” she said.

## CALLAHAN CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE

In conjunction with the ODA Annual Session, the Callahan Celebration of Excellence took place on Sept. 16. The celebration recognized the 2022 Awards of Excellence winners.

The 2022 Awards of Excellence winners include:

- 2022 Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award - Dr. Thomas Matanzo.
- 2022 Achievement Award - Dr.

- Ken Brandt and Ms. Marla Morse.
- 2022 Marvin Fisk Humanitarian Award - Dr. Jennifer Kale.
- 2022 N. Wayne Hiatt Rising Star Award - Dr. Natasha Sheridan.
- 2022 Callahan Memorial Award - Dr. Domenick Zero.

For more information about the award winners, visit [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org).

ODA Leadership pins were awarded to Dr. John Kramer and Dr. Denise Hering.

Kramer has a long history of service to the ODA and is known as a dentist who will treat all people regardless of their background, race, disability or ability to pay. He has served on numerous ODA committees and task forces including chair of the ODA Services Corp, chair of the ODA Council on Dental Education and Licensure and chair of the Finance Committee. Kramer received the ODA Humanitarian Award twice, once in 2000 and then again in 2006 as one of the Hurricane Katrina Mobile Dental Unit Volunteers. He has also testified on behalf of the ODA in support of Medicaid reforms at the Ohio Statehouse.

Hering has served as chair of the Dental Education and Licensure Committee and has also served on numerous other ODA committees. She was vice speaker of the ODA House of Delegates from 2013 until 2017 and then served as the first female speaker of the House from 2017 through 2022, all while acting as parliamentarian to the ODA Executive Committee during her speakership time. She has been a role model for others and has worked to encourage younger dentists and people of more diverse backgrounds to become active in the ODA House of Delegates leading by example in a welcoming demeanor.

The ODA Leadership Pin recognizes members who demonstrate leadership in service to the ODA and their peers, a high level of volunteerism within the profession, and a commitment to organized dentistry. The ODA Executive Committee selects a recipient who is a positive influence in growth and development of the ODA – and who is a true role model for future leaders in organized dentistry.

## TABLE CLINICS

On Sept. 16, ODA Annual Session attendees had the opportunity to earn up to two hours of free CE by attend-

ing Table Clinics. The presentations covered a wide variety of topics, and a panel of judges rated each of them.

This year’s winners are:

- Best of Show – Drs. Travis Pero, Veeshesh Patel and Aktham Adams.
- Auxiliary 1st place (tie) – Sydney Novy and Camryn Werner.
- Auxiliary 1st place (tie) – Natalie Wing, Brooke Shank and Rylie Sines.
- First Place Dental Resident – Dr. Jennifer Lee.
- Second Place Dental Resident – Dr. Mohammed Dameri.

“The Annual Session caused me to have even more enthusiasm for research as my co-residents and I ended up winning the Grand Prize at the Table Clinic, which showed that our research had a beneficial impact on the judges and other attendees,” Patel said. “I enjoyed seeing the latest technologies being offered in the dental space and hearing/sharing everyone’s research projects in the Table Clinics.”

## EARN ONLINE CE

Registration for the ODA Annual Session includes access to 18 free hours of virtual CE, available until Dec. 31, 2022.

Didn’t register for the in-person event? No problem, you can still register to access the online CE.

Register and access CE at <https://www.prereg.net/2022/oda/>.

## DOWNLOAD CE SLIPS AND COURSE HANDOUTS

Obtain CE credit verification and download handouts for courses attended at the 2022 ODA Annual Session by visiting <https://www.prereg.net/2022/oda/>.

To access CE certificates, click the “proceed to CE dashboard” button shown at the top of the screen.

To access course handouts, links are posted on the account summary page, which is the first page shown after you log in.

## SAVE THE DATE

The 2023 ODA Annual Session will be Sept. 21-23, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Watch the ODA Today, [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org) and News-Bites for more details.

HEALTH, from page 1

With the ODA Services Corp., you can direct your questions to the customer support team, and they will get you the answers needed in a timely manner.

Our goal as the Board of Trustees for the ODA Wellness Trust is to continue to grow and provide a valuable member benefit to the ODA membership. For those not currently enrolled in the plan, I urge you to contact the ODA Services Corp. staff and get a quote for the 2023 plan year. For those currently enrolled, I’m pleased you have taken advantage of this excellent member benefit and hope you share your experience with other member dentists. The feedback and support has been amazing and we look forward to this being a long-term health benefit solution for ODA members.

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## DENTAL INSURANCE CORNER

### VIRTUAL CREDIT AND DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS

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

Based on dentists' reports to the Ohio Dental Association, a small number of insurance companies and third-party administrators (TPAs) began issuing reimbursement to dentists via virtual stored value credit or debit cards instead of paper checks over a decade ago. While the number of third-party payers that use this payment methodology still appears to be small, it can be helpful for dentists to understand their options in dealing with them should they receive payment through some type of stored value card.

Virtual stored value cards work similar to other forms of payment, like paper checks or electronic funds transfer (EFT), in that the third-party sends them to the dentist as the means of reimbursing the dentist for services provided to one of the payer's subscribers or beneficiaries.

However, these cards are very different from paper checks or EFT in that they carry a merchant service or transaction fee that must be paid by the dentist when the card is utilized as the means of payment. This fee is even typically higher than the fee the dentist pays when a patient uses a credit card to pay for services. While the payer may derive some benefit from using these cards, the dentist typically only sees increased operating costs, which reportedly can range from 2 to 5%, in order to process a payment that otherwise would not be present had a paper check or EFT been used.

Dentists who have interacted with these types of cards have reported to the ODA that they 1) never previously requested to be paid with a virtual credit or debit card and 2) were not in any sort of contractual relationship with the insurance company or TPA that mandated their use.

While TPAs seem to be more likely to utilize virtual stored value cards than traditional insurance companies, the ODA has received reports that large insurers are using them on a somewhat infrequent basis.

"It is important for dentists to know that unless they are in an insurance company contract that mandates acceptance of virtual credit or debit cards, they do not have to accept the card as payment if they do not want to," said Dr. Manny Chopra, chairman of Ohio Dental Association Council on Dental Care Programs and Dental Practice. "Dentists can and should request the insurance company or TPA to issue them a paper check or utilize EFT if a stored value card is an unacceptable means of payment in their practice. If the payer's customer service representative does not agree to the dentist's request, then the doctor should persist and request a supervisor or person

with the authority to grant the request."

It is worth noting that some third-party payers will grant the dentist's request to receive payment via paper check or EFT on an across the board basis while others will require that a request be made for each employer for which they administer.

Dentists should also be aware that some third-party payers have maintained Ohio law requires dentists to accept virtual stored value cards. They cite a 2010 law (Ohio Revised Code 3901.381(F)) requiring third-party payers that receive electronic claims from contracted providers, including dentists, to electronically pay those providers for those claims. The law also prohibits providers from refusing to accept these payments because the payment was transmitted electronically.

They don't typically reference, however, regulatory guidance to the insurance industry that was issued by the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) which states insurers are required to make a good faith effort to obtain a provider's account information in order to make electronic payments. However, if an insurer is unable to obtain that information either because the provider refuses to provide it or for any other reason, the insurer must continue to make timely payments to the provider in the same manner it had prior to adoption of the law.

A number of insurers responded by giving dentists the option of opting out of being paid electronically.

The third-party payers have also not provided affected dentists with any evidence that virtual stored value cards meet the legislature's intended electronic claim payment criteria.



"We saw a handful of TPAs cite the 2010 Ohio law as justification for their efforts to get dentists to accept their reimbursement of dentists via virtual stored value cards. We believe their arguments were a misapplication of Ohio law," Chopra said. "The ODA has previously expressed our strong concerns to TPAs that have utilized these payment methods without the dentist's consent. We believed in 2010

and still believe today that this practice unnecessarily increases the dentist's cost to provide care without adding anything to the quality of the care. Dentists who do not want to be paid in this manner should be free to opt out of it and be reimbursed via other acceptable means."

Many dentists reported when they informed the TPA of their desire to opt out of the virtual stored value card payment method that the TPA agreed to pay them via check. Some of the TPAs indicated that payment would be delayed for four to six weeks so that they could recover the funds that had been allocated to the credit card. In the years since and up through today, dentists have reported similar experiences when they informed a TPA of their desire to be paid by a method (either paper check or EFT) other than a virtual credit or debit card.

It is unknown what the TPAs would send to patients of dentists who do not accept assignment of benefits. It is also unknown how a credit card issuer would respond to a complaint that a dentist refused to accept a credit card payment made by a business such as a TPA as opposed to an actual patient.

#### AT A GLANCE

-  The law does not mandate that dentists accept virtual stored value cards.
-  Dentists who do not want to be paid via virtual stored value cards should request third-party payers utilize an alternative form of payment.

"The ODA Dental Insurance Working Group continues to monitor and respond to this situation as warranted," Chopra said.

In fact, the 2018 ODA House of Delegates addressed this issue through the unanimous adoption of Resolution O2-18. This resolution formally establishes the ODA's position urging third-party payers to support a dentist's right to receive a traditional paper check in lieu of alternative payment methods as payment for services rendered to a beneficiary of a dental benefits program while also opposing third-party

See VIRTUAL, page 13

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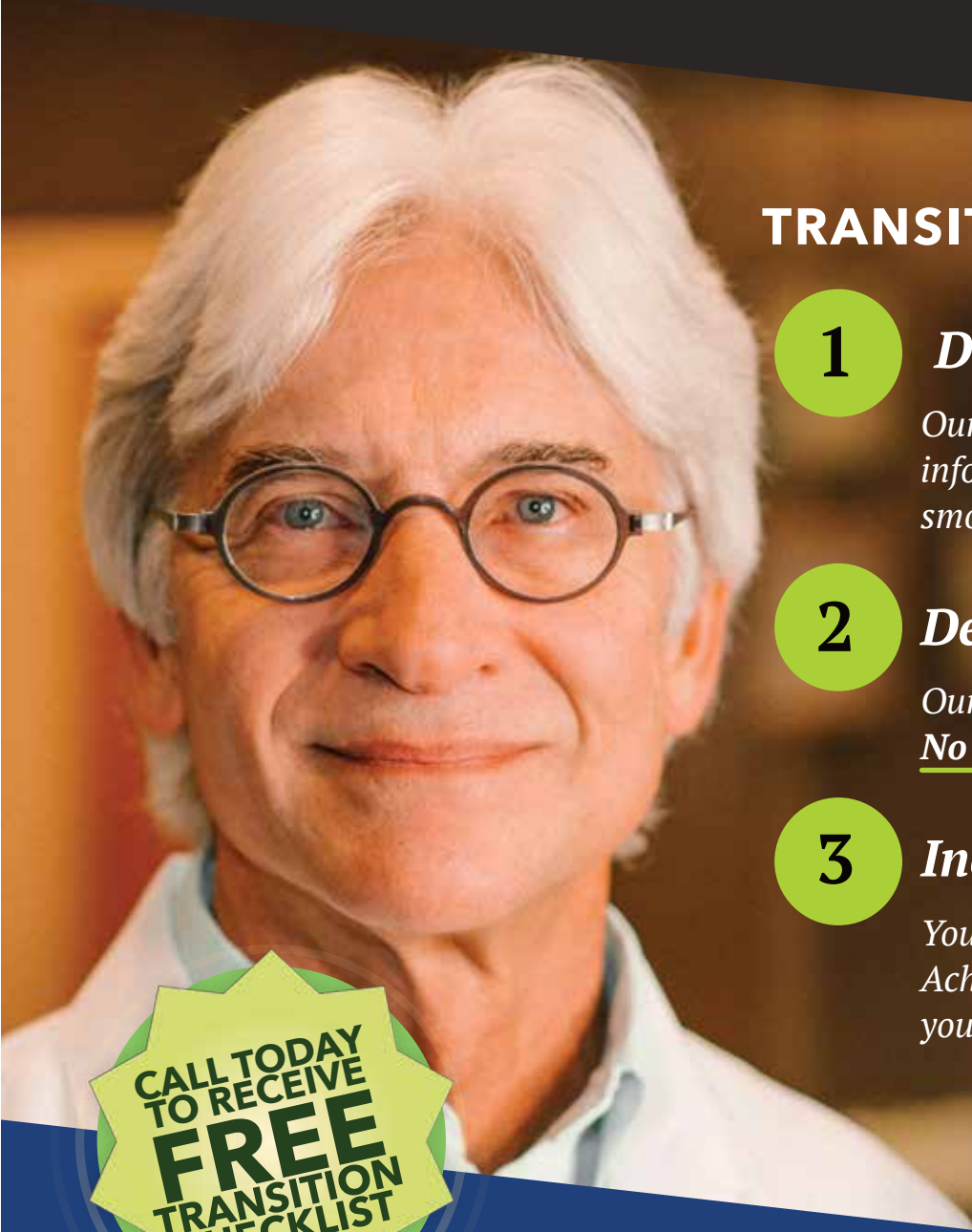
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ODA members who would like to submit a dental insurance related question, problem or concern may do so by sending the appropriate information to the ODA Dental Insurance Working Group online at [www.oda.org](http://www.oda.org), by mail to 1370 Dublin Road, Columbus, OH 43215, by fax to 614-486-0381 or by email to [dentist@oda.org](mailto:dentist@oda.org). To see past issues of the Dental Insurance Corner, visit [oda.org/member-center/resources/dental-insurance-assistance/](http://oda.org/member-center/resources/dental-insurance-assistance/).



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# CALLAHAN MEMORIAL AWARD: DR. DOMENICK ZERO

## Awards of Excellence

By Jackie Best Crowe  
ODA Managing Editor

Dr. Domenick Zero has lectured and done clinical research on almost every aspect of cariology. In recognition of his efforts, he received the 2022 Ohio Dental Association Callahan Memorial Award on Friday, Sept. 16 at the Callahan Celebration of Excellence, held in conjunction with the 156th ODA Annual Session.

"Dr. Zero's caries research spans all aspects, from prevention to diagnosis to early intervention and everything in between," said Dr. Joseph Mellion, chair of the Callahan Commission. "His research has been instrumental in helping dentists treat and prevent oral disease in their patients."

Zero said he is honored to receive the award.

"This is just a wonderful thing to me. To get recognized in this way is a tremendous honor. I looked at the history of the award, the prior recipients, and boy am I in some good company."

Zero graduated at the top of his class from Georgetown University School of Dentistry in 1975. He then completed a general dentistry residency and a three-year research fellowship at the Eastman Dental Center at the University of Rochester, where he earned a master's degree in 1979.

During that time, Zero decided he wanted to become a "triple threat" practicing dentistry, doing research and teaching.

He then went on to teach and do research at the Eastman Dental Center, where he served in many roles including as associate director for research and program director of oral sciences.

Zero is currently a professor in the Department of Cariology, Operative Dentistry and Dental Public Health at the Indiana University School of Dentistry. He also served as Director of the Oral Health Research Institute at Indiana University for 22 years and recently stepped down from the position. He has chaired the Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry and served as the associate dean for research at the Indiana University School of Dentistry.

Zero said his favorite part about being a dentist is the broad opportunities it's given him.

"In addition to seeing patients, which I've always enjoyed, I've always enjoyed helping people, and I get tremendous satisfaction when someone sees their oral health and function improve," Zero said. "But the ability to educate young minds is a tremendous privilege, to have that access to students, and then also working with young faculty and helping them develop their careers. And then the ability to do oral health research and have the opportunity to work with the NIH and many big companies involved with oral health prevention."

Zero's research has been extensive in the area of cariology.

"I always really put the patient first," he said. "I wanted to do research relevant to improving oral health. That really became the focus of my career."

His research areas have included how caries develop, caries diagnosis, prevention and early intervention, early diagnosis and caries diagnostic tools, caries risk assessment, fluoride, non-fluoride remineralizing agents, dental erosion and salivary diagnostics. More recently, he has also been doing research on a cure for Sjögren's

Syndrome and studies on how to help people with TMD.

"I've always tried to do my best, to contribute and meet my personal goals," he said. "I've been on a mission to improve health; it's something I feel very strongly about. I have a strong sense of public health and public good. And to help organizations that serve the profession and serve the public; I'm very honored that people have trusted me to contribute."

Zero has lectured extensively throughout the U.S. and internationally, has published more than 160 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals and book chapters and over 220 abstracts.

He has served as president of the Cariology Research Group of the International Association for Dental Research and was an elected member of the European Organization for Caries Research (ORCA) Advisory Board. He has also served as chair and vice-chair of the American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs, as a member of the Dental Products Panel of the Food and Drug Administration's



Dr. Domenick Zero is the 2022 recipient of the Ohio Dental Association Callahan Memorial Award

Medical Devices Advisory Committee, and as a member of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Expert Panel on School-based Dental Sealant Programs. He currently serves as chair of Clinical Practice Guidelines Oral Working Group, Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation, and a member of

the ADA Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry's Expert Panel for the ADA Clinical Practice Guideline on Caries Management. He is a founding board member of the International Caries Detection and Assessment System (ICDAS) Foundation and the American Academy of Cariology, and member of Enamel Tooth Wear Foundation Scientific Advisory Team.

Zero is a member of the International Association for Dental Research, the American Academy of Cariology, the American Association for Dental Research, the European Organization for Caries Research, the American Dental Association, the American Dental Education Association and the Society for Clinical and Translational Science.

Zero said organized dentistry is important for two reasons. "The first reason is we need to support the profession so that dentists can keep doing what they're doing in helping to improve the health of patients," he said. "But also the ADA and most profes-

See ZERO, page 13

## We are pleased to announce



Dr. Savana Driller  
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Dr. Marc Gayed  
has acquired the practice of  
Dr. Vince Fiorita  
Wooster, Ohio  
(Pictured left.)

Dr. Casey Chanatry  
has joined the practice of  
Dr. Nate Fennell  
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Wayne Co: Grossing \$750K/year. Mostly FFS. 4 ops with 5th plumbed. Real estate available. Highly profitable. Seller retiring.

NW OH Endo: Grossing \$1.6M/year. Thriving practice. Associates in place. Very profitable. RE available. CBCT, PBS endo.

Butler Co: 5 nicely equipped ops. All digital. Collecting \$1M/year. Mostly Medicaid. Very profitable.

Hamilton Co: Grossing \$650K/year. 4 ops. 3,000 sq/ft. Digital PAN, digital x-ray, Cerec. RE available. Great visibility.

Toledo: Consistently collects \$800K/year. 25 new pts per month. 4 ops with room to expand. Seller will stay for transition.

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

Greater Cincinnati Pedo: Revenue over \$300K/year. High cashflow. No Medicaid. Real estate available. Fully digital.

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

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

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.

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.

Greater Cleveland: Collecting \$900K/year. 8 ops. Paperless, digital x-ray, digital PAN. FFS/PPO. Lots of space. Busy street.

Lake County: Grossing \$400K on only 18 clinical hours a week. 3 ops with one more plumbed. FFS/PPO. Merger opportunity.

East Akron Suburb: 3 ops, room to expand. Grossing \$250K per year. PPO/FFS. Real estate available.

Dayton: Grossing \$500K on 3 days/week. Mix of FFS & PPO. 1700 active patients. Digital x-ray, digital PAN, and Cerec.

Cuyahoga Co: Grossing \$300K. FFS/PPO. 3 ops. Great merger opportunity. Seller owns real estate, would stay for transition.

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**Matthew J. Messina, DDS**  
Executive Editor

THE EXPLORER

## HEARTBREAK AND TRIUMPH

Opinion & Editorial

My time treating dental oncology patients has been among the most rewarding experiences of my career. It has required the highest level of clinical skill and forced me to think outside of routine dentistry to craft inventive solutions for patients. Every day, there is another case that touches my heart. But some leave an impression that will last for a lifetime. This is another one

of those stories.

For the sake of patient confidentiality, I have changed the patient's name and blurred his personal information. For the purposes of this tale, let's call him Shawn. He is 51 years old. Ten years ago, he was diagnosed with squamous carcinoma of the base of the left side of his tongue. At that time, his 3rd molars were extracted prior to his cancer treatment. He underwent a partial glossectomy and radical neck dissection on the left side. This was followed with high-dose radiation treatment. His cancer treatment was a complete success, and he remains in remission of the SCC of his tongue.

Two years ago, when I first met Shawn, he had radiation caries that had destroyed his remaining teeth. Due to the high risk of osteoradionecrosis (ORN) with extractions, we carefully considered options that would allow the retention of as many teeth as possible. Treatment planning for oncology patients is always a balancing act and requires clear and direct consultation with the patient. In this case, we had to weigh the risk of the potential for

My time treating dental oncology patients has been among the most rewarding experiences of my career. It has required the highest level of clinical skill and forced me to think outside of routine dentistry to craft inventive solutions for patients.

ORN lesions against the likelihood of osteomyelitis or a life-threatening submandibular space infection if we retained the severely decayed and fractured teeth. As many of his teeth already had apical pathology and the endodontist was unsure about the long-term success of endodontic therapy on the teeth, the decision was

made in consultation with Shawn to extract his remaining 22 teeth.

His dental treatment included a two-week course of antibiotics, pentoxifylline, vitamin E, and chlorhexidine rinse prior to the extractions. His post-surgical recovery was very slow but eventually successful. He finally returned to me for the fabrication of his dentures and we started the final phase of his dental journey.

Crafting maxillary and mandibular complete dentures in a patient with irregular bony architecture and severe xerostomia is certainly a challenge. Add to that the fact that his surgical neck dissection had created significant facial asymmetry and his partial glossectomy leaves him with functional issues with his tongue. In time, Shawn may be a candidate for implant-supported dentures, but those are not part of his options at this time. We must play the hand that was dealt!

Shawn's denture appointments proceeded exactly as you remember, but I had to spend several visits in wax,

See TRIUMPH, page 13



**Paul S. Casamassimo, DDS, MS, FAAPD, FRCSEd**  
Guest Columnist

JUST THINK ABOUT IT

## WHO WE ARE

Opinion & Editorial

In the autumn of 1974, sitting in a class given by an Appalachian-born pediatrician at the University of Iowa, I learned that some children were born with "ambiguous genitalia." Having been raised in a 1950s traditional Catholic household, that concept had never occurred to me. From the silence of our small seminar group, emerged, "What do you do about that?" The pediatrician's response was likely born of his former life in back-country practice and he simply said, "Well, it's always easier to make a girl than a boy..." and left it at that.

Like many my age, sexuality was always a simple dichotomy (although I didn't learn that second word until much later in my education) and genetics was always Mendelian, except when there was a convenient X-chromosome linkage so guilt could be laid on mom's shoulders (it often still is, sadly). The concept of non-binary sexuality was a half-century in the future, as was gender dysphoria, transsexuality, bisexuality, and a host of other concepts. Then, as now, life was easier for the binary majority, but an untold painful struggle for those caught in the chromosomal continuum.

Society is only now emerging from darkness in recognizing that many biologic phenomena are continuums rather than dichotomies. Back in the 1960s, the Scandinavians led the way in recognition of disability as simply a dif-

ferent pattern of cans and can'ts. Who would call Senator Tammy Duckworth or the late scientist Stephen Hawking "handicapped" today?

In the case of sexuality, we see the stresses and sparks of this agonizing scientific reckoning in banned books, protests, pride celebrations, reactive legislation, violence against others, and a host of other societal signs of the difficulty of change. Our dental offices are not immune from this and other often uneasy, often life-altering, and occasionally life-saving changes.

In another column, a while back, on another difficult topic, I wrote that when I chose dentistry, I "didn't sign up for that" but eventually recognized that as dentists, like physicians, attorneys, teachers, clergy and other educated people in society, eyes turn to us for guidance and the expectation of wisdom often exceeds what we have to offer on new and difficult topics. We're caught off guard and flat-footed, not knowing how to act or even whether to act.

That has changed.

When it changed is hard to say. Our colleague and past-president of ODA, Dr. Sharon Parsons shared her personal and professional challenge dealing with substance abuse in her family, and her words rang true with me, as with many others, about the need to be aware and act when challenged with the potential for danger and harm. The difficult decision to acknowledge an uncomfortable situation, act or not, or to confront a concern that may be life altering and outside our dental universe, she profoundly summarized as "Lose a patient or lose a patient."

Gender issues are difficult for many, for many reasons. The overturning of Roe v. Wade, the transitions of celebrities, and the very public "uncloseting" of others have brought these issues to the fore. As a pediatric dentist, I've seen the struggles of teens with their sexuality of any type, all too often, and when Johnny wants to be called Jenny, or becomes Jenny, we're faced with personal challenges that, well, we didn't sign up for.

Of more significance is the turmoil and all-too-frequent deadly consequences of gender confusion left for some people to deal with alone or worse, in an unaccepting and antagonistic environment. And that is the purpose of this column - to create awareness of still another struggle our patients and their families may have to deal with and how we as health professionals should respond. Suicide is a not uncommon or unthinkable outcome of gender confusion and growing.

We all have to make personal and professional choices about many things, often on a daily basis. Today, those challenges have grown.\* They will not likely diminish and how we adapt ourselves to helping our patients with issues like substance abuse, gender issues, depression, dementia, loss of a family member, and other challenges - with recognition, acknowledgement and possibly life-saving referral - is a test of who we are as health professionals. I've included some resources below that may be a starting point for our patients - and us - dealing with sexuality issues.

I know that we all, when confronted with the unknown and unfamiliar, choose to advance Sharon's words with a welcoming environment and welcomed response: "Save a patient and save a patient." That's who we are.

\*Some areas that have been identified as crossing professional discipline responsibility that may cross our

doctor-patient relationship in dentistry: obesity and high BMI, substance use, child abuse and partner abuse, smoking and tobacco, hypertension, immunizations, developmental delays, gender issues, depression, suicidal ideation, and dementia.

### RESOURCES

Morgan LE, Meininger ET, Donahue KL. A pediatrician's guide to supporting the family of a gender-expansive child or adolescent. *Clinical Pediatrics* 2022; 61(10):674-78. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00099228221101723>

Murtha J. Caring for trans youth in a contentious political climate. *MD Linx*, August 25, 2022. <https://www.mdlinx.com/article/caring-for-trans-youth-in-a-contentious-political-climate/6fWtDWxxXcPrORnc6bA832>

Gardiner A. Do you have a transgender friendly practice? *MD-Linx*, September 15, 2021.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=Do+you+have+a+transgender-friendly+practice%3F+By+Alistair+Gardiner+%7C+Published+September+15%2C+2021&rlz=1C1GCEV\\_en&oq=Do+you+have+a+transgender-friendly+practice%3F+By+Alistair+Gardiner+%7C+Published+September+15%2C+2021&aqs=chrome..69l57.721j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=Do+you+have+a+transgender-friendly+practice%3F+By+Alistair+Gardiner+%7C+Published+September+15%2C+2021&rlz=1C1GCEV_en&oq=Do+you+have+a+transgender-friendly+practice%3F+By+Alistair+Gardiner+%7C+Published+September+15%2C+2021&aqs=chrome..69l57.721j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

Dr. Casamassimo may be reached at [casamassimo.1@osu.edu](mailto:casamassimo.1@osu.edu).

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Our dental practice, the Dental Loft, in Beavercreek, Ohio is expanding and offering an exciting employment opportunity! We're seeking an Associate Endodontist to support our mission to provide excellent dental care to the community. The Dental Loft is a thriving private practice with a team of longtime associates and staff working closely together supporting each other. Our continuously growing patient base, thanks to amazing feedback from our patients (over 300 Five Star reviews) and generous referring offices, supports the need for an Endodontist to join our team at the Dental Loft! This position offers: highly competent, motivated and well-trained staff; brand new and state of the art microscopes and equipment; modern and spacious dental office; schedule flexibility part time or full time; supportive marketing team; great earning potential based on growing referral base; caring, upbeat environment and team. If you have any interest in this amazing career opportunity at all, please check us out! Read our reviews and visit our website. We'd love to chat with you and tell you more about our practice and this amazing opportunity! Call Shari at (937) 572-1566 for more details. Send resume to [shari@daytoncomp.org](mailto:shari@daytoncomp.org).

Our general dental practice, located southwest of Akron, Ohio, is seeking a motivated full-time associate who is ready to learn new skills, expand your capabilities and explore new ways of thinking about your profession and your future. Develop within the practice, be mentored and grown as a leader from the moment you are hired and experience what being encouraged and cheered on by your teammates feels like. We are dedicated to providing a practice where employees feel a sense of belonging and are valued for their contributions. We create value for our patients by nurturing relationships with them and helping them heal and grow. You will be busy from the beginning and have a chance to make a significant impact on the health of the community. You will have current technology (Primescan, iTero, CBCT) available to you, but your most important learning opportunity will be in human connection. Compensation will be based on a percentage of collections. We are FFS only. 401K and malpractice coverage available. No weekends. Visit our website

at [raymondndentalgroup.com](http://raymondndentalgroup.com). Please send a resume and cover letter to Dr. Kate Raymond via [kirbydds@aol.com](mailto:kirbydds@aol.com).

Our North Central Ohio pediatric dental practice is seeking a part-time/full-time pediatric dentist to join our busy, but caring team. We pride ourselves in providing state-of-the-art dental care for the pediatric population of 5 counties. Our most recent associate of 12 years retired to care for her young family due to COVID-related childcare issues. Compensation package includes a daily rate with production-based bonus. Please contact our office manager via email at [Traci@pedotoothdr.com](mailto:Traci@pedotoothdr.com) or call Traci at (419) 522-5437.

Our practice in Cleveland, OH is seeking an Associate Dentist to join our team. This established practice is fully staffed with a steady flow of new and existing patients. We will provide you complete clinical autonomy and can offer paid malpractice, medical benefits, 401k plan and annual CE reimbursement. If you are seeking a practice where you can grow your skills and provide exceptional dental care, apply today! Contact Kelsey Wiginton at (949) 525-6478 or [kelsey.wiginton@smilebrands.com](mailto:kelsey.wiginton@smilebrands.com).

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**TRIUMPH, from page 11**

evaluating the esthetics to allow for his facial asymmetry. It was one of these wax try-in appointments that brought about an epiphany.

Shawn always has a positive attitude, and we joke and laugh at every appointment. On this day, Shawn was irritated and frustrated, asking how much longer this was going to take. I laid out the remaining timeline and we completed the appointment, with his final wax try-in scheduled for the following week. I called Shawn the next day to see how he was doing but had to leave a voice mail. He did not call me back but came in the next week as scheduled.

Shawn looked sad and apologized, saying he was sorry for "being such an a##-hole." I told him there was no reason to be sorry, as I always want him to be honest with what he's feeling. We talked about his journey through the cancer treatment, and he told me this story:

The day before his last visit, Shawn had been driving in town and another driver cut him off. The road-raged driver rolled down his window and shouted at Shawn "Get off the road you f\*#king toothless hillbilly!" That vile epithet had cut Shawn to the core.

After thanking Shawn for sharing that with me, I reminded him that his

tooth loss was due to the cancer and its treatment. When someone has cancer in a leg and the treatment is amputation, we create a prosthetic limb for the patient. In the same way, we make dentures as replacement body parts to make the patient whole. Shawn broke down and we shed a tear together. He had never looked at his tooth loss and dentures that way, but that analogy helped him put it in better perspective. It gave him comfort and helped him regain his hope for a better future.

I promised Shawn that we would turn that vile comment into the driving force behind the triumph of giving him his smile back. My stated mission for our team in dental oncology is always to give patients back comfort and function, as well as their dignity and humanity.

The work we all do every day in dentistry is part of giving patients back their health and self-confidence. Most of the time, we don't see it this dramatically, so we miss the significance of our care. But it's no less important. Good oral health and the benefit that a great smile has on someone's self-confidence has value beyond measure! Shawn helped to remind me of that fact. His smile is the testament to the value of what we do.

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

**ZERO, from page 10**

sional organizations do a lot of things that help educate the public, to help empower the public to improve their health. Second, guidelines development is incredibly important. Staying on top of science and developing new information is as important as supporting the profession as a profession. We need organizations that have the resources and can bring the experts, the people with information together so those positions can be taken on behalf of the profession and public good."

Zero has achieved life membership in the Omicron Kappa Upsilon Dental Fraternity and the American College of Dentists and is a member of the Pierre Fauchard Academy.

This year, Zero has received four prestigious awards: the ADA Norton M. Ross Award for Excellence in Clinical Research, Indiana University School of Dentistry Distinguished Faculty Award


for Research, and The Yngve Ericsson Prize for outstanding contributions to prevention of oral diseases.

Outside of dentistry, Zero enjoys the outdoors and physical fitness. He enjoys hiking, golfing and tennis, and he also enjoys reading, especially about philosophy and human nature.


Zero said his family is a big source of motivation and inspiration. He has two daughters, one who recently graduated from medical school and another who is in dental school. His wife, Mariana Levi, is an orthodontist who practices in Argentina and Ohio, and his mother is also active in his personal and professional life.

The Callahan Memorial Award Commission was established in 1920 by the ODA to honor the work of John Ross Callahan, one of Ohio's noted dental researchers and a leader in organized dentistry. Since its establishment, the award has continued to grow in prominence in the dental profession. Past Callahan Memorial Awardees include such luminaries as George Paffenbarger, Wendell Postle, Lindsey Pankey, P.I. Branemark, Arthur Dugoni, Gordon Christensen, and Linda Niessen.

The Callahan Memorial Award recipient receives a \$5,000 gift via the ODA Foundation to be donated to a charity of their choice. Zero has decided to designate the gift to the Indiana University School of Dentistry.



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**VIRTUAL, from page 8**

payer payment methodologies that require a dentist to accept virtual credit card payments, EFT payments or any other payment options as the only payment option without an opportunity to choose a paper check.

"We do not currently hear many complaints from dentists regarding this payment issue," Chopra said. "However, I encourage ODA members who encounter these types of objectionable reimbursement schemes to: 1) speak up about them to the third-party payer and 2) inform the ODA's Dental Insurance Working Group about their situation so the ODA will be in a position to also respond to it as needed."

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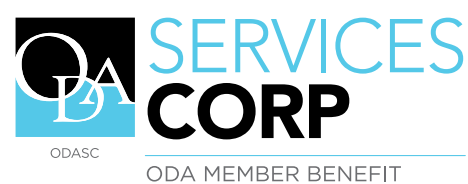
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