

ODA Today

A publication of the Ohio Dental Association focusing on dentistry in Ohio

QuickBites

Don't miss out on ODA Annual Session - there's still time to register!

Register now for ODA Annual Session at www.oda.org.

Registration is also available on-site at Annual Session, but prices increase so it is recommended that you register online by Oct. 2. Classes can continue to be added online and on-site at their normal price.

The 2019 ODA Annual Session will be Oct. 3-6 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and features more than 70 CE courses, 200+ vendors and thousands of dental professionals.

Don't forget to download the ODA Annual Session app before the event to access your schedule, course handouts and much more. Search for "OhioDental" on your favorite app store.

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Experience, test, compare products in the Exhibit Hall at ODA Annual Session

By Jackie Best Crowe
ODA Managing Editor

The Exhibit Hall at the 2019 ODA Annual Session will feature more than 200 vendors, where dentists and their teams can explore new products, learn from knowledgeable sales reps and comparison shop.

"I can't think of another place where you have reps from all these companies with the newest, latest, greatest technology that you can touch, feel and use. You can compare and contrast various things at the same time," said Dr. Kyle Bogan, a general dentist and member of the 2019 ODA Annual Session Committee.

By visiting the Exhibit Hall, attendees have the opportunity to try out various products all in one location instead of shopping online or in catalogs.

"You can see it, you can touch it, you can feel it. It's very difficult to appreciate the size of an instrument by looking at a picture," said Dr. Betsy Mueller, a pediatric dentist and 2019 ODA Annual Session Senior Exhibits chair. "Especially in pediatrics, you like it small and tiny. You can't tell how big it is or how it's going to feel in your hand by looking at a



ODA Staff

The Exhibit Hall at ODA Annual Session provides a hands-on experience for dentists and their teams to test out new products. ODA Annual Session is Oct. 3-6 in Columbus. Register now at www.oda.org.

picture. In our Exhibit Hall, its hands-on – you can really play around with something before you buy it."

Bogan agreed that a hands-on shopping experience is important for dentists.

"Because we use our hands a lot, being able to actually experience the products is the biggest benefit," he said. "For example

with composite, you can compare differences in textures and delivery methods. The hands-on aspect is important."

The Exhibit Hall can also be a way for dentists and their team to find solutions to various problems they're having in the office. For

See EXHIBIT, page 6

Closing arguments held in the FTC's antitrust action against major dental suppliers

By ODA Staff

In June 2019, closing arguments were heard in the Federal Trade Commission's case against the nation's three largest dental supply companies.

The action began with the filing of a complaint by the FTC on Feb. 12, 2018, against Benco, Schein and Patterson. According to the FTC's complaint, the market for dental products in the United States is approximately \$10 billion annually, and Benco Dental, Henry Schein and Patterson Dental collectively control about 85% of the sales of all dental products and services made through distributors in the U.S. and approximately 61% of the sales of dental products and services through all sales channels.

The FTC's complaint alleges that the country's only national full-service distributors of dental products, "Benco, Schein, and Patterson, conspired to refuse to offer discounted prices or otherwise negotiate with buying groups seeking to obtain supply agreements on behalf of groups of solo practitioners or small group dental practices ('independent dentists')."

For further analysis of these issues, see the "From the Corner Office" column on page 2.

The FTC's complaint contends that Benco and Schein entered into an agreement to refuse to provide discounts to or compete for buying groups of independent dentists no later than July 2012 and Patterson joined the agreement no later than February 2013.

The FTC's complaint includes what purports to be a series of inter-company communications between the dental supply companies and some internal communications within the organizations seemingly suggesting an agreement to refuse to deal with buying groups of independent dentists. These communications seem to indicate that the dental supply companies regularly deal with and give discounts to large corporate dental practices and DSO-affiliated dental practices but apparently jointly agreed not to do business or give discounts to buying groups of independent dentists.

According to the FTC's complaint, Benco historically had a policy of refusing to sell or provide discounts to buying groups but Schein did not necessarily have the same policy and worked with some buying groups. Schein allegedly changed its policy following communications between Benco's managing director and Schein's president in 2012. As a result, according to the FTC, top Schein executives began instructing Schein's sales force to avoid selling to new buying groups.

Similarly, according to the FTC's complaint, Patterson did not have a policy against doing business with buying groups until communications with Benco. The FTC contends that in February of 2013 Benco's managing director sent an email to Patterson's president about a specific buying group, stating that "our policy at Benco is that we do not recognize, work with, or offer discounts to buying groups and our team understands that policy."

In a related internal exchange, the FTC alleges that Benco's Managing Director wrote to Benco's Regional Sales Manager on Feb-

See FTC, page 11



Ohio Dental Association
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OCTOBER 3 - 6



The
Director's
Chair

David J. Owsiany, JD
ODA Executive Director

Dental supplies and oligopolies

In reviewing the briefs filed by the parties in the FTC's antitrust action against three dental supply companies (see "Closing arguments held in the FTC's antitrust action against major dental suppliers" on page 1), both the FTC and at least one of the dental supply companies use the term "oligopoly." As you may recall from your college economics class, an oligopoly exists when a small number of sellers controls most of the sales in a relevant market.

That is a fair description of the dental supply marketplace. According to the FTC, three dental supply companies – Schein, Benco, and Patterson – control more than 85% of all distributor sales of dental products and services nationwide, a total market estimated at approximately \$10 billion. This type of oligopoly has caused concerns for commentators, economists and legal scholars for decades.

Robert Bork wrote in his 1978 book "The Antitrust Paradox" that "sellers in oligopolist markets are often found in price conspiracies." This is most likely so because there are so few sellers in the marketplace, the price fixing conspiracy is easy to set up and monitor. As described in the front page story referenced above, the FTC has alleged that Schein, Benco and Patterson engaged in a price-fixing conspiracy in the dental supply market.

Oligopolies, however, also present other challenges even absent an explicit price-fixing agreement. F.M. Scherer from the Kennedy School at Harvard University has written "one of the most important but equally difficult problems faced by antitrust agencies is posed by oligopolistic firms sufficiently few in number that they refrain from active price competition even without entering into explicit price-fixing agreements."

Thomas J. Piraino, Jr., writing in the "Minnesota Law Review" explains the problem this way:

The structure of oligopoly markets facilitates anticompetitive conduct, diverting wealth from consumers to producers. With so few sellers, oligopolists find it easier to coordinate their behavior to maintain prices above the normal competitive level. Such coordination often occurs tacitly, without any express agreement among the firms in the relevant market. Oligopolists can anticipate with greater certainty how their rivals are likely to react to a price increase. Simply by observing the other firms' conduct, oligopolists can maintain prices at high levels just as effectively as a monopolist



OhioDDS

Discount Dental Supplies

AN ODA MEMBER BENEFIT

✔ Discounts ✔ Savings ✔ Service

Group Purchasing Organization coming soon to help save ODA members money

The Ohio Dental Association Services Corp. (ODASC) is in the process of launching an exciting new membership benefit - a Group Purchasing Organization called Ohio Discount Dental Supplies (OhioDDS).

OhioDDS will allow ODA members to join together to purchase discounted supplies, equipment and services. It will be a FREE program that allows ODA members exclusive access to discounted pricing on supplies, equipment and services.

OhioDDS will launch in October. For more details, visit ODASC staff in the ODA Membership Booth at the ODA Annual Session and watch the October issue of "ODA Today."

or a group of firms engaging in an express price-fixing conspiracy.

Arguably, this describes the situation in the dental supply marketplace. In this case, the sellers are the dental suppliers where the big three dental supply companies – Benco, Schein and Patterson – control a significant portion of the marketplace and the consumers in the case are the dentists who are forced to pay artificially high prices.

In this situation, the dental supply companies may be acting entirely rationally by maximizing profits. That has positive benefits for their employees and investors and allows a concentration of wealth that can lead to positives in the community through their philanthropy.

The problem, however, is for the dentists who may be paying higher prices than they would in an otherwise more competitive marketplace. For example, in the class action lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, which was recently settled with the big three dental supply companies paying \$80 million but denying any wrongdoing, the plaintiffs alleged that the dental supply companies beginning in 2005, agreed to charge margins on dental supplies and equipment between 26-28% and have raised that in recent years to margins of 35% or higher.

There are other anecdotal examples suggesting artificially high prices for dental supplies as well. For example, I have heard stories where some dentists in Ohio are paying significantly higher prices than others for the same products and when the dentist who is being charged higher prices confronts the dental supplier, the prices are then brought down. And, in other states where the state dental association has formed buying groups or endorsed a smaller or non-traditional

dental supplier, dentists report that the big three dental suppliers have responded by lowering prices. All of this is consistent with the economic theory related to oligopolies.

As described in the front page article, the FTC, the attorneys general in Texas and Arizona, and groups of dentists participating in class action lawsuits have alleged that the big three dental suppliers have engaged in collusive anticompetitive behavior in order to fix prices. They point to communications between the dental suppliers' executives and various internal communications that seem to suggest collusion. Whether this evidence is enough to prove a conspiracy to fix prices or not will be determined in the courts. However, the discussions between dental supplier "competitors" regarding who each will do business with are troubling if they took place as described by the FTC. It is important to note that Benco, Schein and Patterson have denied engaging in a conspiracy to fix prices.

But the problem remains that even if they didn't engage in a formal conspiracy to fix prices, the oligopolistic marketplace that currently exists in the dental supply industry may still be leading to artificially high prices for dentists since the large dental suppliers are not competing on price.

That oligopoly may be on borrowed time if more dental suppliers enter the space and compete on price. The ODA Services Corporation has an exciting new program – called the Ohio Discount Dental Supplies (OhioDDS) – that seeks to add some competition in this space in order to ensure that dentists in Ohio can access high quality products and services for a competitive price. Please see box above on this page to learn more about this exclusive ODA member benefit.

ODA Today

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2020 ODA Leadership Institute set for March 27, 28

The 2020 ODA Leadership Institute will be held March 27 and 28, 2020 at the Hilton Columbus Polaris Hotel.

Leadership Institute is the ODA's award-winning program developed to help all ODA members become more successful and effective leaders. Attendees consistently rank the event as one of the top leadership development workshops. This event is FREE for ODA members, dental students and dental residents.

Save the date, and watch future issues of the "ODA Today" for more details on the 2020 Leadership Institute.

Have a question? Contact the Ohio Dental Association!

dentist@oda.org | (800) 282-1526 | (614) 486-2700



President's Message

Michael Halasz, DDS
ODA President

What's the ODA doing for you?

As my year as president of the Ohio Dental Association winds down, allow me to update you on the agenda that I set forth and the resolutions that came out of my president-elect's message at the House of Delegates meeting last September.

Resolution 07-18 directed the Ohio Dental Political Action Committee (ODPAC) to assign a dentist to each of our state legislators, similar to what is being done at the ADA. Along with a huge percentage of our membership, I feel that state advocacy is one of the most important things the ODA does and mak-

ing sure that we can deliver our message effectively and consistently is the key. The best measuring stick we have is our stats from Day at the Statehouse, where we met with 103 out of 132 state legislators this year. That means we met with 78% of the lawmakers. That number is up and continues to improve. Plus the fact that so many new dentists are getting involved is a bonus. But term limits and turnover can make it difficult to get to 100% coverage. As long as we continue to be successful in our lobbying efforts, that is a win as far as I'm concerned.

Resolution 08-18 asked the Council on Access to Care and Public Service to study ways that dentists can assist hospital emergency departments deal with dental emergencies. As most of you know, a trip to the hospital with a toothache usually ends with prescriptions for antibiotics and pain medication and no definitive treatment. Additionally, it costs significantly more than a trip to the dentist. Plus, from an access to care point of view, these patients need a dentist, not a physician in the emergency room. So the Council, along with Dr. David Kimberly, is working with the Akron Dental Society to set up a pilot program with hospital emergency departments in the Akron area. The idea

is to create a call list of general dentists and oral surgeons that the EDs can use as a referral base for their patients. As you can imagine, it is a slow process with all the hospital red-tape. But we are making progress and have had at least one hospital sign on.

Resolution 09-18 directed our Speaker Dr. Denise Hering to have all advance meeting materials for the House of Delegates, councils, subcouncils and committees available in electronic format. Thus, making the House and all other groups paperless. We have accomplished this task. Hundreds of trees and postage stamps thank you.

Resolution 10-18 asked the Annual Session Committee to explore the idea of consolidating our House of Delegates to a one-day meeting. This is a very difficult task that has many layers including House logistics, hotel commitments, meeting space, contracts that have already been signed and income to the ODA. The committee did a great job in researching many avenues and ideas and the details can be found in their annual report. Based on the information I have seen, we could go one of two ways. We can keep the current structure and make the House more valuable to the delegates. For example,

we can have topical key-note speakers or mega-topic discussions. Or perhaps we could give the delegates and alternates a voucher for a free CE class. The other option is to commit to a one day House. We have the information, now we need to make some decisions.

Resolution 11-18 asked the Council on Membership Services to monitor and gather information from the local component societies on their recruitment efforts. As you may or may not know, our strategic plan calls for our membership numbers to be at 70% of the total dentists in the state. We currently fall just short of that. The council surveyed the 25 components and the results show that most of the components have membership councils or committees, but many are not well organized and only meet yearly. Most of the components want support and/or resources from the ODA. Well the ODA has a tool-kit that components can use to help with recruiting efforts. My understanding is that the Council on Membership will be updating the tool-kit and making it more user-friendly. The council has a "road-show" and is willing to come to your components and work with you. So the resources are there, they just need to be utilized. This is important. We must maintain strong membership numbers if we want to remain relevant.

Resolution 12-18 recommended that the ODA president reappoint the DSO Task Force. Well, I did and the DSO Task Force and ODASC have been busy. They have recently approved signing an agreement with DentalHQ, a company that sets up and runs in-office membership discount plans for your patients. These discount plans are an alternative to traditional dental insurance. As an ODA member, you will receive a discount on their services of around 18%. The Task Force and ODASC also voted to set up a Group Purchasing Organization in conjunction with Midway Dental Supply. Our member dentists can sign up for the GPO, free of charge, and save anywhere from 5% to 30% on dental supplies. The Task Force is also working on an online Regulatory Compliance Manual. This will be a huge benefit as all compliance materials and information will be in one convenient organized place on the ODA website. Since I mentioned the website, the ODA staff is working on a CE presence. Initially, it will include the mandatory opioid awareness CE requirement. This will be a free offering for ODA members. The Task Force did a fantastic job. I'm sure you will agree that taking advantage of the new services and products makes your ODA membership a fantastic value.

The things I mentioned above do not even include the "normal, everyday" actions the councils, subcouncils, committees and ODA staff do daily to keep the ODA running and focused on our strategic plan. Things like getting the teledentistry bill passed, organizing Give Kids A Smile Day, running a highly successful Leadership Institute and Day at the Statehouse, and scouting other state meetings to bring you quality CE opportunities at our own Annual Session, are just a few examples of what the ODA does for you.

I have served on the Executive Committee for nearly 10 years as speaker, and as a line-officer. I am always amazed at how hard you, the volunteer dentists, work along with the entire ODA staff to make this the best state dental association in the country. The ODA constantly and consistently serves as a role model for others. We would not be in this position without our Executive Director David Owsiany and the top-notch staff he has assembled. Thank you for making my job easy and keeping me in line!!

It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as your president and I thank you for allowing me this privilege.

Congratulations!



Neeru Sharma, D.D.S. has acquired the practice of Helen Ashford, D.D.S. in Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Practices Opportunities

SE of Toledo: Grossing \$700,000+. Free standing building, high visibility. Over 3100 active patients; 50 new patients monthly. 3200 square feet, 5 ops. Building also for sale.

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

Cincinnati: Over \$430K in revenue. 2500 active patients; 40 new patients a month. 5 nicely equipped ops with room to expand. Mix of FFS, PPO, Managed Care and Medicaid. Building also for sale.

Stark County: Grossing over \$600K on 3.5 days a week. Mix of FFS and PPO. Digital with 7 operatories and room to expand. 1400 active patients. Located on a busy road.

Medina County: Grossing \$150K+ a on 2 days per week. 100% FFS patient base. No lease – great merger opportunity. Seller wishes to retire.

Cleveland Suburb Orthodontic Practice: Satellite practice collecting \$380k on 2 days a week. Mix of FFS and PPO patients. 5 chairs with plenty of room to expand. Paperless and digital.

Northeast Cleveland Suburb: Grossing \$400K. 4 ops. Mix of FFS, PPO and Medicaid. Over 2500 active patients with an average of 40 new patients monthly. Doctor referring most specialty work out.

Clermont County: Grossing \$525k. 3 ops with plenty of room for expansion. Paperless with digital x-ray and digital PAN. Mix of FFS, PPO and Medicaid patients.

NW Dayton: \$330K in revenue. Over 1300 active patients with an average of 35 new patients monthly. 3 ops with room to expand. Open only 2 days a week. Mix of FFS, PPO and Medicaid.

Columbus Suburb: Grossing \$450K. 7 ops. Beautiful facility. Paperless and digital. Located in a free-standing building. Over 1000 active patients. Mix of PPO & FFS. Seller relocating.

We also have Associate Positions available throughout Ohio, all in private practices. Call us today to hear more about associate placement.



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Legal Briefs

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

Over the past year I have been asked numerous questions about in-office dental plans. My answer has always been that in-office dental plans are not illegal or improper, but dentists must be careful to not call the plan insurance. Identifying an in-office membership plan as “insurance” carries with it a very large penalty, which many dentists have considered to outweigh the positives that a membership plan could provide. On the other hand some dentists have thought the reward outweighs the risk, and by some estimates nearly 20% of ODA members use some form of in-office plans. The good news is that because of a new law passed this year, in-office membership plans are now plainly defined. With these new definitions, dentists can be confident in how to set up their plans, avoid liability with the Department of Insurance, and potentially reach more patients through an in-office dental plan.

In the budget bill that was passed in July, the Ohio General Assembly outlined what it takes to be involved in a “direct primary care agreement.” The new law, R.C. 3901.95, states that so long as the direct primary care agreement meets all of the requirements in this section it shall not be considered insurance. Those requirements are as follows:

- The agreement is in writing.
- Is between a patient (or the patient’s legal representative) and a health care provider and is related to services to be provided in exchange for the payment of a fee to be paid on a periodic basis.
- It allows for either party to terminate the agreement as specified in the agreement.
- It requires termination to be accomplished through written notification.
- It permits termination to take effect immediately upon the other party’s receipt of the notification or not more than 60 days after the other party’s receipt of the notification.
- It does not impose a termination penalty or require payment of a termination fee.
- It describes the health care services to be provided under the agreement and the basis on which a periodic fee is to be paid in exchange for those services.
- It specifies the periodic fee required and any additional fees that may be charged.
- It authorizes the periodic fee and any additional fees to be paid by a third party.
- It prohibits the health services pro-

New law provides framework for in-office dental plans

vider from charging or receiving any fee other than the fees prescribed in the agreement for those services prescribed in the agreement.

- It conspicuously and prominently states that the agreement is not health insurance, is not subject to the insurance laws of this state, and does not meet any individual health insurance mandate that may be required under federal law.

This new law gives the framework for what these agreements must include. This also limits the risk of any interference with the Department of Insurance if offices follow the statute. This is great news for offices that want to introduce in-office dental plans. Now there is a concrete way to ensure that the plan does what you would like while quelling the risks of lurking insurance fines.

This is an exciting development and gives dental offices another way to reach people that do not carry dental insurance. These membership type plans have been successful for dentists across the country and now without the risk of

ODASC-endorsed in-office membership plan coming soon

Later this Fall, the Ohio Dental Association Services Corp. (ODASC) will be announcing the endorsement of a platform to help dentists create, customize and automate in-office dental plans.

An in-office dental plan allows dentists to offer their uninsured patients the ability to join the plan and pay a monthly or yearly fee directly to the dental practice in exchange for services and discounts created by the dentist.

Watch future issues of the “ODA Today” to learn more.



running against the department of insurance, dentists can explore these new plans. Many of the plans will offer a type of discount for services that are offered outside of the services enumerated in the membership plan. As long as these discounts are applied uniformly across all patients in a group, it will work just like any other discount given in the office.

In the coming months please look for more information about in-office dental

plans from the ODA, as the Ohio Dental Association Services Corp. (ODASC) will be announcing an endorsement for a company that can help you run an in-office plan later this fall.

It is important to seek counsel from an attorney to implement a new membership plan into the office. Also, feel free to contact the legal department at the ODA at (800) 282-1526 with questions regarding direct primary care agreements.

What is the goal for your practice?

- Practice sales and acquisitions
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Access articles from current and past issues of “ODA Today” by visiting www.oda.org.



Purchase ODA Foundation raffle tickets to help fund access to care grants, scholarships

The annual ODA Foundation raffle is one of the primary sources of funding for oral health-related grants and scholarships. Raffle tickets are \$100 each, two for \$175 or six for \$500, and only 700 will be sold.

This year's raffle prizes are:

- Winner's choice of a lease on a 2019 Mercedes GLC300 SUV or \$20,000 cash (lease terms established by Crown Mercedes)
- Tripartite membership dues or \$1,500 cash
- Piece of fine jewelry valued at \$1,000 from Laudick's

The drawing will be held Oct. 5 in the ODA Annual Session Exhibit Hall.

For more information about the raffle and how to purchase tickets, visit oda.org/community-involvement/oda-foundation/odaf-raffle/.

Looking for a job or to buy a practice? Looking to hire an associate or sell your practice? MATCH @ ODA Annual Session is for you

This year's ODA Annual Session will feature an event to help dentists, dental residents and dental students who are looking for a job match up with dentists who are preparing for a practice transition or looking to expand their practice.

MATCH @ ODA Annual Session is a free event hosted by the ODA Subcouncil on New Dentists and will take place from 1-2 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 4.

Those looking to sell a practice, buy a practice, hire an associate or become an associate are all invited to attend this unique event.

After registering, attendees will be contacted by the ODA to gather more information to enhance and personalize the process.

No outside companies or vendors will be included in this program, and attendees are not required or guaranteed to make a "match" at the event. Register for this event using code E95. Refreshments and appetizers will be served.

To register for the MATCH event and the ODA Annual Session, visit www.oda.org/events.

Download and print employment posters online

ODA members can download and print employment posters from the ODA's website for free. All employers are required to post numerous employment posters in their offices. To download the posters, visit oda.org/member-resources/employment-posters/. These posters are only available to ODA members.



Like the ODA Facebook page!
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ODA Meeting & Event Calendar

Sep.

- 2 ODA office closed for holiday
- 8 Executive Committee (call)
- 17 Annual Session Committee (call)

Oct.

- 3-6 ODA Annual Session
- 3-4 ODA House of Delegates
- 15 OSU Street of Dreams
- 23 CWRU Street of Dreams
- 29-30 Council on Dental Care Programs and Dental Practice

Are you receiving all of our updates from the ODA Facebook page?

The Ohio Dental Association Facebook page provides the most up-to-date information about advocacy, regulatory compliance issues, membership benefits, ODA events, deadline reminders and more.

Once you've liked the ODA Facebook page, you can take a few extra steps to make sure you're receiving ALL of our updates, which we post several times each week.

On the Facebook app on your phone or tablet:

- Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ohiodentalassoc
- Like our page if you haven't already done so
- Tap the three dots next to the "Message" button just below our name
- Tap "Following"
- Choose the option that says "See First" so new ODA updates will be at the top of your newsfeed
- If you would like to get notifications when we post, tap the button next to "Get Notifications"

On a browser on your computer:

- Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ohiodentalassoc
- Like our page if you haven't already done so
- Click on the "Following" button just beneath our header photo
- Under "In Your Newsfeed" click "See First" so new ODA updates will be at the top of your newsfeed
- If you would like to get notifications when we post, under "Notifications" click "On (Highlight Posts)"

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BROOK MULLINS, JD



SUSAN CRONAN, PARALEGAL

CAIT SCHAUER, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

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.

Dr. Thomas J. Perrino has been a practicing dentist for over 30 years and was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 2014. Actively involved in organized dentistry, Dr. Perrino assists in the representation and defense of dentists in all practice related matters.

Areas of practice include:

- Administrative Law before State Dental Boards
- Dental Malpractice Defense
- Practice-related Business Transactions

Individual dentists and dental organizations are also represented in various matters including First Amendment litigation (i.e. advertising), judicial appeals of state board proceedings, civil rights actions against state agencies, and disputes with PPOs and DSOs.

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EXHIBIT, from page 1

example, if a certain material isn't working as well as it used to or if some instruments just aren't getting the job done any more, knowledgeable sales reps are available to help offices trouble shoot and find a better solution.

"The biggest way I have prepared to shop the Exhibit Hall in the past is thinking about problems or issues that I'm having in the office ahead of time, and looking at the mobile app or the Annual Session program and seeing what companies will be there that have varying products that would solve my problem. It's nice because I can talk to them in one place at one time to solve whatever problem I'm looking at solving," Bogan said.

Mueller also recommended that dentists look over their list of vendors and talk to their staff to find out what needs they have. She said dentists should have a good idea of what they're currently spending on products so they know if they're getting a good deal in the Exhibit Hall.

She added that she thinks it's important to include staff in shopping the Exhibit Hall. She and her team typically divide up into small groups to explore and then meet up at a certain time to review what everyone saw.

"Letting your staff shop in the Exhibit Hall and bring ideas back to you really empowers your team," Mueller said. "You're letting them bring to you the ideas that have to do with their field. It's much better than everything coming from you, and it's more collaborative so team members feel like they're more responsible for their area."

This also allows each member of the team to look at items that interest them the most.

Plan your trip to the Exhibit Hall

The ODA has several avenues for dentists and their teams to plan their trip to

the Exhibit Hall in advance.

Visit www.oda.org and find the Exhibit Hall page for a map and directory of all vendors. Search by company or category to find vendors. A list of show specials is also available.

Attendees can also access this information at their fingertips by downloading the ODA Annual Session app. To download the app, search for "OhioDental" on your favorite app store.

Attend FREE special events in the Exhibit Hall

Marketplace Mixer with the Madow Brothers - Be entertained by the Madow Brothers, enjoy free appetizers and visit the more than 200 companies exhibiting this year. 4:30-6 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 3 in the Exhibit Hall.

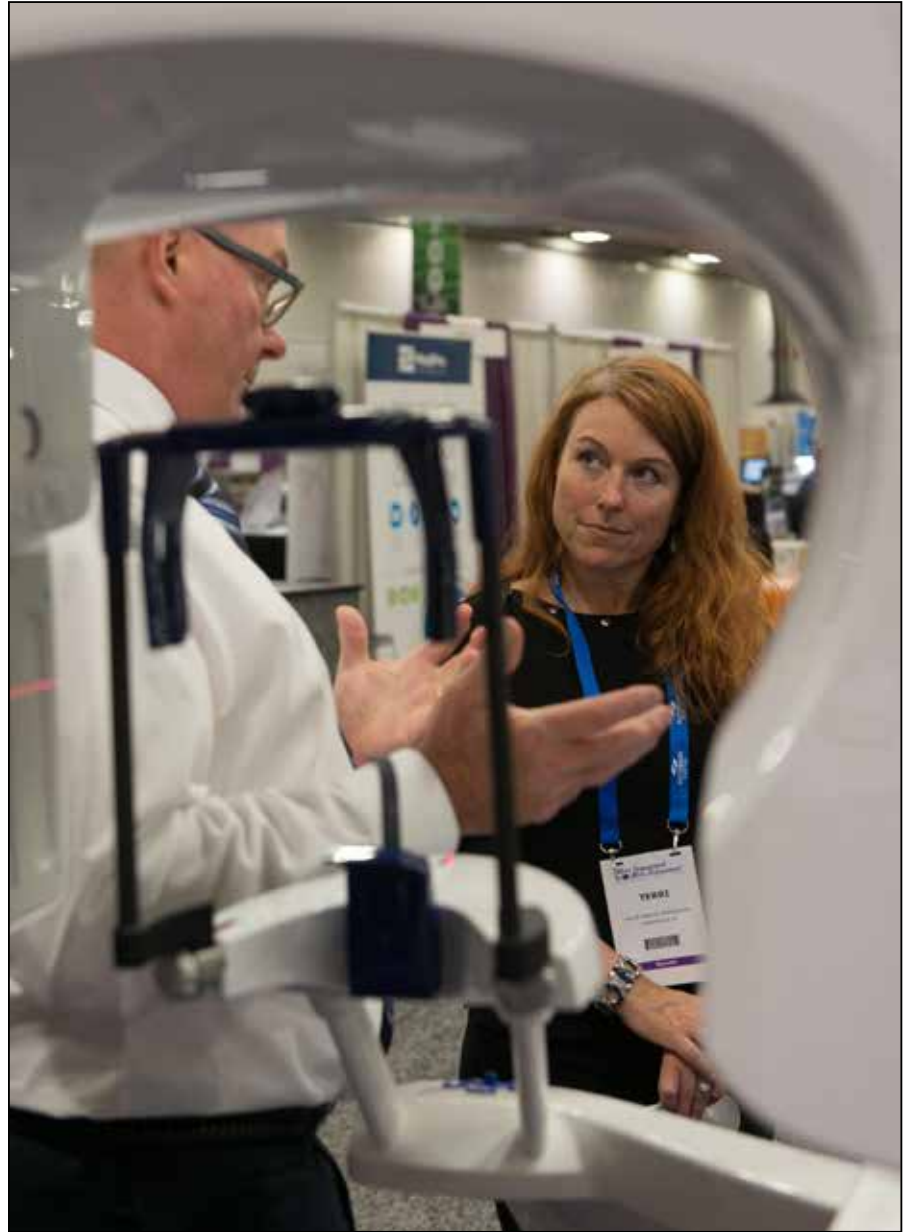
Sip & Shop - Pick up a free glass of wine, beer or soft drink and stroll the aisles to be entered in the Exhibit Hall door prize: one attendee will win a \$2,000 Visa Gift Card, and two runners-up will win \$500 Visa Gift Cards! 4-6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4 in the Exhibit Hall.

Grab a Bite, Grab a Deal! - Enjoy great deals and great food as you finish up your shopping in the Exhibit Hall. To make the day even better, we will provide a \$10 food voucher (good for concessions inside the hall) to the first 250 registrants who stop by the registration desk. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5 in the Exhibit Hall.

Register now for ODA Annual Session

ODA Annual Session is Oct. 3-6 in Columbus. Find full details and register at www.oda.org.

For attendees who are interested in only shopping the Exhibit Hall, the ODA is offering a free Exhibits Only pass on Saturday, Oct. 5. Any dentist or dental team member can register for the pass, which is only available on Saturday, and allows entrance into the Exhibit Hall, only.



Ellen Dallager

ODA Annual Session will feature an Exhibit Hall with more than 200 vendors - the largest in the area. ODA Annual Session is Oct. 3-6 in Columbus. Register now at www.oda.org.

Exhibit Hall Hours

- Thursday, October 3 - 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 4 - 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 5 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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member benefits
BUZZ

Health benefit plan open enrollment starts in October

By ODA Staff

Open enrollment for the Ohio Dental Association Services Corporation (ODASC)'s health benefits plan, the ODA Wellness trust, starts in October.

The ODA Wellness Trust is available exclusively to ODA members, their families and their staffs, and most participants are able to save money on health benefit costs by joining the plan.

For the upcoming 2020 plan year, the ODA Wellness Trust Board of Trustees has made several changes to help participants save money:

- One of the lowest rate increases currently filed with the Ohio Department of Insurance.
- The addition of an Employee + Child rate – a savings for those currently enrolled, and a more competitive rate for those interested in joining the ODAWT.
- Two customized plan designs not offered by any other Ohio self-insured benefit plan!

The ODA Wellness Trust has partnered with Medical Mutual of Ohio to access its broad health care provider network. Medical Mutual's SuperMed PPO Network is a statewide network that includes nearly every health care provider in Ohio and 99 percent of the hospitals.

Dentists are able to offer their staff access to the ODA Wellness Trust without making any employer contribution to the employees' costs. Employer dentists may offer access to this plan without having to pay a penny.

ODASC staff works to make health benefits easier for ODA members, their families and their staff. The ODASC team provides attentive, responsive customer service and can guide offices through every step of the enrollment process and help relieve the administrative burden dental offices might encounter with other health plans. ODASC staff will also complete all compliance filings on behalf of the dentist employer.

The ODA Wellness Trust is a not-for-profit health benefit plan created by ODA members for ODA members. By joining together with ODA members throughout Ohio, the ODA Wellness Trust can gain collective buying power that allows dentists and employees access to similar pricing and coverage large employers receive.

Open enrollment for the ODA Wellness Trust is from Oct. 15 to Nov. 15, with an effective date of Jan. 1, 2020. Request a quote by contacting the ODASC team at (614) 486-2700 or insurance@oda.org. Learn more about the ODA Wellness Trust at www.odawt.org.

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Dental Insurance Corner

Avoiding denials, disallows and not billable to the patient

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

To have a dental claim denied that the dentist believes is appropriate and necessary treatment is bad. To have a claim in the same situation disallowed or deemed not billable to the patient is horrible.

Claim denials typically result from limitations or exclusions contained in the patient's dental benefits plan, e.g., the patient has exceeded their maximum benefit, the service is not a covered benefit, frequency limitations come into play or the treatment is determined to be investigational therapy. With a denied claim, a contracting dentist may charge the affected patient for the treatment, up to the agreed upon fee in their participating provider agreement.

When a claim is disallowed or not billable to the patient, however, it is both denied and a network dentist is contractually prohibited from billing the patient for the services. With disallowed or not billable claims the contracting dentist is essentially barred from receiving any reimbursement from anyone for the services that are disallowed or not billable.

The terms "disallow" and "not billable to the patient" can be utilized by any insurance company or third-party payer.

Earlier this year, representatives of the American Dental Association and

the Delta Dental Plans Association met to discuss Delta Dental's disallow policies. As a result of the meeting, Delta Dental has decided to move from using the term "disallow" to "not billable to the patient" on all of its documents. This change will not change any Delta Dental policies. It is believed, however, the new terminology will provide more clarity to patients and dentists.

Claims that are disallowed or deemed not billable to the patient typically occur because the insurance company determines the contracting dentist failed to provide the required documentation it needs to pay the claim, the submitted documentation does not support the need for treatment, treatment benefits are included in another benefit (i.e., the carrier contends the dentist is unbundling or breaking down a more inclusive procedure into its parts as determined by the CDT) and/or the insurance company determines the treatment does not meet generally accepted dental therapeutics.

Insurance companies justify their actions by pointing to their responsibility to properly administer the terms of their subscribers' dental benefit plans, including protecting them from improper charges, and their need to justify to plan sponsors the insurer's payment actions. They also note that making decisions as to whether the services provided meet generally accepted standards of care are common in the dental and medical insurance industry and necessity determinations

are required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and many, if not most, of their contracts with plan purchasers. Participating provider agreements also require contracting dentists to abide by standards of care as determined by their state board of dentistry and the insurance company's evidence based processing policies.

While still very small in number, the Ohio Dental Association does seem to be receiving more calls from member dentists regarding disallowed/not billable to the patient claims. The limited number of calls involved newly submitted claims as well as claims that had been previously paid.

For over the past year the ODA and Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana have been working together to address these and other issues of mutual concern. The interchange between the two organizations has been positive, professional and productive.

It has resulted in the ODA gaining a better understanding of the processing policies, scientific evidence, Delta Dental Plans Association policies, American Dental Association policies, and specialty

academy policies and record keeping/record submission requirements for remuneration that Delta Dental uses to process and adjudicate claims.

It also resulted in an agreement on a protocol that ODA member dentists can follow to address disputes they have with Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana on cases involving medical necessity and quality of care issues.

Specifically, ODA member dentists who find one of their claims deemed by Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana to be not billable to the patient should first read their EOB and make sure the requested documentation was submitted, then utilize all of Delta Dental's internal appeals process. If the dentist is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeals, he/she should then submit the claim to the ODA's Dental Insurance Working Group for the DIWG to determine if Delta Dental properly followed its own process. The member dentist should submit to the DIWG all of the information he/

See AVOIDING, page 12

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. To see past issues of the Dental Insurance Corner, visit www.oda.org/news and choose the category "ODA Today" and subcategory "Dental Insurance Corner."



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Register your 2020 Give Kids A Smile events in October

By ODA Staff

Dentists, their staff members and others planning to hold Give Kids A Smile events any time in 2020 should plan to register those activities during October 2019. Events registered between Oct. 1 and Nov. 13, 2019 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 dental office to a large-scale event at a dental school. In 2019, more than 2,400 dentists, dental team members, students and other volunteers are expected to provide dental care and/or education to over 39,000 children by the end of the year.

"We in organized dentistry have a unique opportunity to not only help children in need and provide access to care, but to also demonstrate to our respective communities our commitment to the oral health of that community," said Dr. Sharon Parsons, ODA president-elect. "This is a perfect time to show the media and the public what we stand for."

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 will open in October and dentists or their staff who are interested in GKAS can contact Carley Circosta, ODA manager of public service, at carley@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.

ODA You can Give Kids A Smile!



ADA Foundation

Give Kids A Smile is one of the ODA's biggest access to care and oral health education efforts in Ohio, but not every event is a large-scale effort! Whether you're helping five kids receive free dental care or educating 500 kids about oral health, no event is too small and everyone's efforts combined make a big impact on Ohio!

You choose...



The scope of the event and how many kids you want to see for:

- Education only
- Dental screenings
- Preventive care
- Restorative care
- Donated follow-up care



Your venue and partners:

- Open your office up to the public for a GKAS day
- Partner with a local school, Head Start or social service agency such as a Boys and Girls Club
- Work with a local dental assisting or hygiene school with multiple dentists



The date that works for you:

- The national kickoff is always the first Friday in February, but you can hold a GKAS event any day you want!

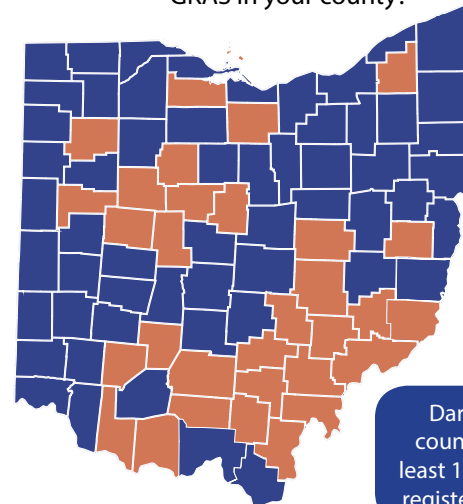
Whatever you choose to do, make the choice to Give Kids A Smile!

Benefits of registering your GKAS activities:

- ODA staff support to help you plan and promote your event
- Free products from the ADA – like dental supplies for cleanings, fluoride and sealants and toothbrushes and toothpaste to give away at your event
- 1 CE credit for every 1 hour of volunteer care provided by dentists and hygienists, up to 1/3 of the total hours required per biennium
- Your activities will be counted in state totals used in ODA advocacy efforts

Are you or your staff already providing oral health education or free care to children? Register these activities in October as Give Kids A Smile events to receive the benefits listed above.

We're on a mission to have an event held in every county of Ohio! Will you be the one that helps children through GKAS in your county?



Dark shaded counties had at least 1 GKAS event registered in 2019

GKAS registration is open every October for the following year. Visit www.oda.org for details, or contact Carley Circosta, ODA public service manager, at carley@oda.org or 614-486-2700 for help.

"I thank PMA for its relentless efforts and help in organizing and guiding us through the sale of our dental practice. Their knowledge of the intricacies and vital aspects of the sale were so important. I strongly urge those looking to sell their practice to seek PMA's help." — Dr. Merle Frankel

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Contact the Ohio Dental Association Membership Department if you are planning to move your home or practice or if you have changed your phone number, changed your name or changed your email address.

Via email: membership@oda.org

By phone: (800) 282-1526



FTC, from page 1

bruary 26, 2013 that he had already sent the president of Patterson a note about the buying group issue but didn't want to call him "because it might be construed as price fixing."

The FTC's complaint alleges that after receiving the Benco note, a Patterson senior executive instructed his sales team to reject a proposed buying group, stating "confidential and not for discussion...our 2 largest competitors stay out of these as well. If you hear differently and have specific proof please send that to me."

The FTC also contends that executives at Benco had multiple discussions with Schein and Patterson on whether to bid on business from certain large group dental practices and group buyers.

In August of 2013, a Patterson executive said in an internal communication that "we don't need GPOs in the dental business," and "Schein, Benco and Patterson have always said no." The Patterson executive concluded "I believe it is our duty to uphold this and protect this great industry."

The FTC's complaint also alleges that a Benco representative had multiple conversations with a large regional dental supply company in 2013 urging them not to sell to buying groups. According to the FTC, the regional dental supply company did not join the agreement not to sell to buying groups.

In October 2013, the Texas Dental Association launched its own buying group, seeking to allow independent dentists from solo and small group practices to band together to secure pricing for supplies that is closer to the discounts large group and DSO-affiliated dental practices get. According to the FTC's complaint, shortly after TDA announced its buying group, "employees at Benco, Schein, and

Patterson engaged in repeated inter-firm communications to apprise each other of their intended response" including "collectively withdrawing from the TDA's 2014 annual trade show." According to the FTC's complaint, a Benco executive said in regards to the TDA buying group that "I have been talking to the directors of Schein and Patterson. We are going to be taking a stand together against them [TDA]." Benco, Schein and Patterson did not participate in the 2014 TDA Trade Show.

Similarly, when the Arizona Dental Association announced the creation of a buying group in July of 2014, a Benco executive emailed a Patterson executive stating: "I know that Patterson, Schein and Benco boycotted the Texas Dental Association meeting this year after TDA did the same thing and wanted to see if we could create the same message here in Arizona."

According to the FTC complaint, "following inter-firm communications in the summer of 2014, all three distributors withdrew from the AZDA Western Regional Conference."

In connection with the alleged Texas boycott, the Texas Attorney General commenced an investigation of Benco, Schein and Patterson alleging that they participated in a group boycott to suppress competition. Benco and Schein settled the Texas case, agreeing to pay the state of Texas \$300,000 each. Patterson settled for \$200,000. The dental supply companies denied any wrongdoing in reaching the settlements.

In October of 2018, the Attorney General of Arizona filed an antitrust complaint against Benco alleging anticompetitive activities related to the Arizona Dental Association's endorsement agreement (buying group) with another dental supplier.

In response to the FTC complaint, the

dental supply companies have denied any wrongdoing or collusive activity, arguing that they each reach their decisions whether to do business with buying groups independently.

Benco argued that to the extent there were communications between Benco and other dental supply companies evidencing a conspiracy not to deal with buying groups, the FTC "greatly exaggerates the number of such communications and attaches far-fetched inferences to scant communications concerning buying groups."

Separately from the FTC action and the Texas and Arizona cases, Benco, Schein and Patterson agreed to pay a total of \$80 million to settle a class action lawsuit filed in federal court in New York in which the suppliers were accused of violating antitrust law by fixing prices on dental equipment and supplies.

The FTC action is nearing completion. A trial was held before an administrative law judge with evidence being presented by both sides in late 2018 and early 2019. Following a series of briefs from both the FTC and the dental supply companies, the parties presented final arguments in June 2019. The FTC's staff concluded its case by arguing that the evidence shows that the dental supply companies colluded to not give discounts to buying groups of independent dentists. The dental supply companies argued that the FTC could not demonstrate the existence of an agreement and that each company reached its own decision regarding with whom each one will do business.

The "ODA Today" will report when a decision is issued in the case and on any appeals that are filed in light of that decision.

For further analysis of these issues, see the "From the Corner Office" column on page 2.

Numbers to know

American Dental Association
(800) 621-8099 or (312) 440-2500

Dental OPTIONS
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Ohio Department of Health
(614) 466-3543

Ohio Dental Association
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Ohio Dental Association Services Corp. Inc. (ODASC)
(800) 282-1526 or (614) 486-2700

Ohio State Dental Board
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Staffed Dental Societies:
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Cincinnati Dental Society
(513) 984-3443

Cleveland Dental Society
(440) 717-1891


Columbus Dental Society
(614) 895-2371

Corydon Palmer Dental Society
(330) 719-1297

Dayton Dental Society
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ADA members can download the eBook for free at
www.ADA.org/prescottebook

Resolutions to be considered by the 2019 ODA House of Delegates

By ODA Staff

The ODA's House of Delegates, which is the supreme authoritative body of the association, will be meeting on Oct. 3 and 4 at the Hilton Columbus Downtown Hotel in Columbus in conjunction with the 2019 ODA Annual Session. Nearly 150 delegates from across the state representing all 25 component dental societies, including two student delegates representing the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine and The Ohio State University College of Dentistry, will gather at the 2019 House of Delegates meeting to deliberate resolutions proposing policies and/or operations of the association. The 2019 House of Delegates will consider the following resolutions at its meeting in October:

- Resolution 01-19 urges Ohio's 25 component dental societies to have a local membership committee or membership outreach team dedicated to grassroots outreach to help improve membership retention and recruitment efforts throughout the state.
- Resolution 02-19 proposes that the Ohio Dental Association oppose dental assistants being permitted to administer nitrous oxide on their own but supports dental assistants being permitted to titrate nitrous oxide under the personal supervision and direction of a dentist providing the dental assistant meets the Ohio State Dental Board's requirements to monitor nitrous oxide.
- Resolution 03-19 proposes an Ohio Dental Association Statement on Preventive Coverage in Dental Plans.
- Resolution 04-19 proposes that the Ohio Dental Association strongly discourage the practice of direct to the consumer dental laboratory services because of the potential for irreversible harm to patients.
- Resolution 05-19 proposes that the Ohio Dental Association adopt a Statement on Prosthetic Care and Appliance and Dental Laboratories.

AVOIDING, from page 8

she already submitted to Delta Dental except all patient identifiers need to be redacted from the information submitted to the ODA.

"We are very excited about this opportunity to work with Delta Dental on behalf of ODA members who encounter quality of care and/or necessity claim problems with the insurer," said Dr. Manny Chopra, chairman of Ohio Dental Association Council on Dental Care Programs and Dental Practice. "Not only does the ODA-Delta Dental relationship provide an avenue for member dentists to address problems, it also gives us an excellent insight into the inner workings of Delta Dental. Over the coming months we shall share the information we've learned from Delta Dental with the ODA's membership to assist them in understanding ways to prevent many dental insurance related problems from becoming problems to start with."



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Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award: Dr. Walter Buchsieb

By Jackie Best Crowe
ODA Managing Editor

Dr. Walter Buchsieb has had a long career dedicated to organized dentistry, serving his patients, the community and the profession of dentistry. In recognition of his efforts, he will receive the Ohio Dental Association Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award on Friday, Oct. 4 at the Callahan Celebration of Excellence, held in conjunction with the 153rd ODA Annual Session.

"Dr. Buchsieb is a past president of both the ODA and the Dayton Dental Society. Besides being president of these organizations, he has also been heavily involved in committee work and task force work for both," wrote Dr. Mark Wenzel, president-elect of the Dayton Dental Society, in his nomination letter. "... There are many more factoids I could include about Dr. Buchsieb, but suffice it to say that we at the Dayton Dental Society think he is well deserving of this award."

Buchsieb said "I was surprised and pleased. I am honored to be the first recipient of the Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award. The ODA has always been my primary organization. The support of dentistry – that's what I'm about. I'm a cheerleader for orthodontics."

Buchsieb received his DDS from The Ohio State University in 1955. He then went on to an internship at the Letterman Army Hospital in San Francisco, California. In 1956, Buchsieb ran the 539th Dental Dispensary during the Cold War in Zweibrücken, Germany. He later discovered that his grandmother emigrated from this town when she was 10 years old.

It was during this time that Buchsieb decided to specialize in orthodontics. At the

clinic, he saw many dependent children of military families. Children who needed orthodontic care would have to wait to receive care until they returned to the United States because there was often a three year waiting list for orthodontics.

After seeing this need, he decided he wanted to study orthodontics and was accepted into the program at The Ohio State University. He received a Certificate and Master of Science in orthodontics in 1960 and board certification in 1970.

He opened a private orthodontics practice in Kettering, where he practiced for 33 years. He then accepted a position as orthodontic clinic director at The Ohio State University, which he held until 2004.

Throughout his career, Buchsieb presented or assisted with more than 75 continuing education courses and had numerous hospital appointments and affiliations. He has also lectured internationally, including at the Children Dental Congress in Sienna, Italy in 1968 and in five cities in China, and has been published in a number of journals.

Buchsieb said his favorite part about being an orthodontist is "watching young people grow and mature and building relationships with families."

Throughout his career, Buchsieb has been very involved in organized dentistry.

"The ODA is such an important makeup of the various state dental organizations," he said. "We have many outstanding dental societies within the ODA that make the ODA the outstanding dental society that it is. I've been personally very proud of the ODA, especially since we recently elected an ADA president from Ohio."

He also said he feels it's important to support the Ohio Dental Political Action Committee and American Dental Political Action Committee to make sure dentists



Dr. Walter Buchsieb is the 2019 recipient of the Ohio Dental Association Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award.

have a voice in the political arena to protect their patients and their practices.

Buchsieb has served as president of the Dayton Dental Society, The Great Lakes Association of Orthodontists, the Ohio Dental Association and College of Diplomates of the American Board of Orthodontics. He has served on many councils, committees and task forces with organized dentistry, including on the ADA Council on International Relations (Annual Session). He has also served as a delegate to the ODA and the ADA.

Buchsieb is a fellow of the International College of Dentists, the American College of Dentists and the Pierre Fauchard Academy. He has received the Distinguished Service Award from the Ohio State Orthodontic Alumni Foundation, the Ohio Senate Service Award, the ODA

Achievement Award, the James E. Brophy Distinguished Service Award from the American Association of Orthodontists, among other recognitions.

Buchsieb has also been involved with many community service initiatives, including as president of the Dayton Hearing and Speech Center, Epiphany Lutheran Church and Centerville Rotary Club.

Buchsieb and his wife, Betty, have two children, W. Charles Buchsieb II, who is an orthodontist in Gahanna, and Christine Bardon. They have six grandchildren and one great grandson. Betty served as president of the Alliance to the ODA during Buchsieb's presidential year.

"Betty and I have been blessed to work with so many fine and dedicated dentists, hygienists, assistants and staff over these many years that have truly made this journey of dental life worthwhile," Buchsieb said. "The association, with its various committees, has worked and continues to work hard for the public good. We all need to continue to support these dedicated professionals to the best of our abilities in whatever role we play. It is a great profession and I am proud to still be a member."

Outside of dentistry, Buchsieb's hobbies include antique cars of the 1930s and genealogy.

The Joseph P. Crowley Distinguished Dentist Award is the ODA's most prestigious award. It is given to a leader in the profession committed to the advancement of dentistry who is dedicated and committed to organized dentistry at the local, state and national level. This year, the award was renamed in honor of Dr. Joe Crowley, who recently completed his term as president of the American Dental Association.

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The Explorer

Matthew J. Messina, DDS
Executive Editor

White Coat

I attended my third White Coat Ceremony as a member of the faculty of The Ohio State University College of Dentistry this week. It was a moving experience, as it always is, watching the newest members of our profession begin their careers in dentistry. I'm sure the excitement is the same at every White Coat ceremony throughout the country. The newly minted D1 students feel the sense of pride in accomplishment that comes with the start of the professional education that they have worked years to achieve. Their lives have been aimed at this point and it is important for them to stop and savor the moment. In one split second, they are both at the top of the hill, looking down at a life's goal that has been achieved, and standing in the

valley ready to begin the journey, staring up at the mountain of learning that dental education represents. It is a heady mix of joy and fear! But that's what life is made of.

Aristotle said that "where your talents and the needs of the world cross, there lies your vocation." For the dentists of tomorrow, many feel that they see the needs of the world clearly. They understand their talents, but need to harness them into the profession. To sharpen their skills to meet the needs of others. That is the essence of professional education.

Sadly, this year there will be thousands of students going to college across the country, most of them going hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. They will be surrounded by plush campus libraries, high-speed, wireless internet access on demand everywhere around them, with the ability to consult with highly educated professors and intelligent friends at any time they want. Yet, the dominant dynamic will be "How little can I do to get by?" and the ever popular, "Will this be on the test?"

The challenge for a beginning dental student is to break out of the feeling of success in their admission. Fear and uncertainty at the start of professional education is necessary, and a very valuable motivator. For success leads to a form of complacency. We feel that we

have reached our best in order to achieve this goal. However, it is important to remember that "Better always beats Best!" Because best is static, but better is dynamic. There is motion and motivation to striving for better.

In life, as well as in college, learning should be motivated by curiosity. Can I study because I just want to know? Can we achieve because we want to, rather than because there are assignments, tests and a diploma? Can we see possibility instead of risk in our lives? Can we see generosity instead of scarcity? Can we find a way to make the world a better place?

Motivation is a fork in the road moment. It determines what we do and how we do it. It changes the story we tell ourselves. It gives power and momentum to our dreams. It becomes the measuring stick for our goals. It is an invitation to great-

ness that we extend to ourselves, and no one else needs to know. They can see the results in how we act and what we do.

My advice to the dental students is the same at the beginning of their dental education as it is upon their graduation:

Get up!
Go to work!
Do your best work!
Repeat tomorrow!

That's sound advice for all of us, throughout our careers. I have tried to practice that way for my career. The sign over my desk reminds me, as well as my students, of a simple motto:

"Don't stop until you're proud!" That's what being a professional has always meant to me. Even 36 years later, I remember that each day as I put on my own White Coat.

Dr. Messina may be reached at docmessina87@gmail.com.



The Happy Dentist

Najia Usman, DDS
Guest Columnist

The Retreat

Earlier this month I attended my third and last ODA Executive Committee retreat. As ODA secretary I will be coming off my two year term in September. Three years ago, I was excited to be included in this summer program. The retreat is planned by the president-elect with some type of a theme which reflects their focus in their president's address and their personality. The elements of the weekend are 1) a business meeting 2) a lecture from some type of guest speaker and 3) a team building activity.

The first retreat in July of 2017 was designed by Dr. Steve Moore. The resonating theme was improving success through the understanding of modern economic variables such as marketing and economy of scale. The focus of the lecture was a discussion with the owner/founder from the Mortenson Dental Partner group. It was an interesting look into a large group practice model which is dentist owned and allows opportunity for partnership. I loved learning about an example of how dentists were maintaining autonomy as owners but still benefitting from the economy of scale. This certainly dove-tailed beautifully with the DSO Task Force that Steve Moore was very involved with. Our activity was to work with our very own ADA spokesperson Matt Messina to learn how to deal with media interviews. It certainly was an interesting opportunity to see our own taped interviews when asked some challenging policy questions to see how we all carried ourselves. I realized for the first time that I break eye contact when I don't feel strongly about what I'm saying. I am working on it. That evening we attended a Clippers game where we noshed, laughed and broke character for a bit.

My second retreat in July of 2018 was

designed by Dr. Michael Halasz. The theme here was understanding how we have to be flexible and forward thinking using history as a teacher. Being from Dayton, he wanted us to have a full immersion experience into his home town. We started our business meeting which ended with a food coma at his favorite Italian restaurant Mamma DiSalvo's. The next day we had a scintillating lecture from Dayton's own Peter Luongo who conducted an interactive session with all of us about how to be relevant in an ever changing world. His experience came from his many years at Yellow Pages. Perhaps a highlight for me was the tour of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. Seeing these historical planes and displays really again hit home the concept of innovation and the fact that we really need to pay homage to those before us on whose shoulder's we stand. The day again culminated in an ice cream social at the 145 year old, founded in Cincinnati, Graeter's and a suite for a Dayton Dragon's baseball game.

This last retreat was designed by our incoming president Dr. Sharon Parsons. The theme was "beauty in differences." We were hosted at the beautiful, historical LeVeque Tower where every corner in this art deco masterpiece is a feast for the eyes. The stylish conference rooms and artfully prepared menus were a great backdrop to a wonderfully interactive lecture/workshop in diversity and communication. After an intense introspective session we blew off some steam go-carting and then put on the pressure again in an escape room. FYI go-carting and escape rooms should be the new job interview. (You really get to see who's competitive at all costs and who's

See **RETREAT**, page 17

The views expressed in the monthly columns of the "ODA Today" are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the view of the Ohio Dental Association (ODA). The columns are intended to offer opinions, information and general guidance and should not be construed as legal advice or as an endorsement by the ODA. Dentists should always seek the advice of their own legal counsel regarding specific circumstances.



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collaborative). Finally Sharon honored us by inviting us inside her beautifully renovated home for the most delicious home cooked meal prepared by her talented new dental colleague son Dr. Michael Herman and his husband. The next day we were mesmerized with a three hour walking tour of the Courthouse and LeVeque Tower. We were speechless as we were shown ceiling murals, gold gilded wood and

iron work and elaborate mosaics that told the story of the Northwest territories.

In these special moments, I have learned a little something about my colleagues, myself and about how being a leader is not only about mastering skills and communicating effectively. It is also about being yourself while still being sensitive to others and taking time to enjoy each other's differences. I am so grateful for all of these unique lessons.

Dr. Usman may be reached at usman@zoominternet.net.

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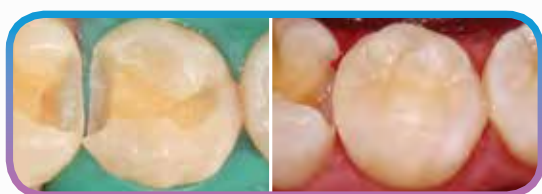
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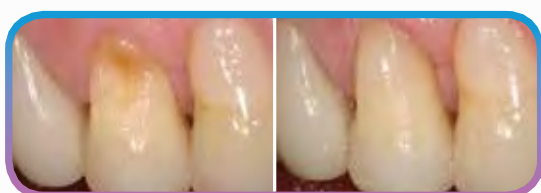
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