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new dentists feel at home

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Representation of
diverse groups increases
across all levels of the
ADA leadership

Fluoride advocates

DENTISTS, DENTAL STUDENTS PLAY ROLE IN SUPPORTING COMMUNITY WATER FLUORIDATION

BY MARY BETH VERSACI

It's never too early to get involved in fluoridation advocacy.

Chloe Zana, a first-year student at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, has used her position as advocacy chair and legislative liaison with the Harvard chapter of the American Student Dental Association to advocate for change and help empower other students to do the same.

“At the beginning of the year, my classmates and I realized that while we, as dental students, are taught that fluoridation is a scientifically proven, safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, there are still many misconceptions about it,” she

said. “Unfortunately, many areas do not have appropriately fluoridated water systems.”

The Harvard ASDA Advocacy Committee, whose role is to involve the student body in advocacy events and initiatives and connect with other students and dentists, organized a webinar on community water fluoridation in November 2020. The virtual event was attended not only by dental students at Harvard and other New England schools, but also by more than 100 pre-dental, medical and public health students, as well as government workers. Participants came from four countries.

Continued on Page 4.

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SOUTH FLORIDA DISTRICT DENTAL ASSOCIATION

makes new dentists feel at home

BY JENNIFER GARVIN

There's no magic formula for attracting new dentists to organized dentistry, but if there were, you might say the South Florida District Dental Association has a blueprint for success.

Veteran dentists may cherish the benefits of organized dentistry, but for many new dentists, there may be questions about cost or time commitment. The South Florida District Dental Association knows this and prioritizes making a welcoming atmosphere for all. It's working. To date, six new dentists, including president and president-elect, sit on the association's executive board.

Some examples of how they do it:

Need continuing education hours? Before the pandemic, the Coral Gables, Florida-based association held multiple continuing education dinners each month where they invited dental residents, dental students and new graduates. Whenever they could, they made the events free to newcomers. Veteran members often sponsored the events themselves.

"These dinner meetings are where young dentists start to engage and become interested in more than just being members," said Yolanda Marrero, executive director of the dental association.

Have questions about organized dentistry?

The association urges newcomers to engage.

"Our veteran leadership encourages our young dentists to take a seat at the table and voice their opinions and give input," Ms. Marrero said. "They tell them, this is no longer my ADA; it's yours."

Mariana Velasquez, D.D.S., South Florida District Dental Association president, agreed.

"When I went to my first affiliate society CE meeting, I was instantly welcomed and encouraged by other young dentists to become a leader," she said. "I started as treasurer of that affiliate society and have since worked my way up the ladder. Now I am proudly serving as the president, and I really enjoy the camaraderie and collaboration between veteran and young dentists as well as the drive we all share to better our profession."



Just looking for fun? SFDDA prides itself on producing fun social activities, like fun trust exercises and game nights.

"These events and moments have given rise to great camaraderie and trust and it's never a dull moment around here," Ms. Marrero said. ■

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Fluoride advocates

(continued from cover)



Chloe Zana,
first-year student at
the Harvard School
of Dental Medicine.



Nathan Suter, D.D.S.,
owner of Green Leaf
Dental Care in House
Springs, Missouri.

“The talk was a success and prompted me to get more people involved in spreading the message about one of the greatest public health achievements of the century,” Ms. Zana said. “Through social media, I can reach thousands of students and professionals daily. I firmly believe that one doesn’t need to be elected to Congress to influence public policies and that starting conversations with pre-dental and dental students can go a long way.”

Since the inception of water fluoridation, the American Dental Association has monitored scientific research regarding its safety and efficacy. Seventy-five years of research have consistently shown an optimal level of fluoride in community water is safe and effective, and it prevents tooth decay by at least 25% in both children and adults.

The ADA has continually reaffirmed water fluoridation as the most effective public health measure for the prevention of dental caries and strongly urges that its benefits be extended to those served by communal water systems. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also included community water fluoridation in its list of 10 great public health achievements during the 20th century, and former chief dental officers of the U.S. Public Health Service released a statement in July 2020 in support of community water fluoridation to commemorate its 75th anniversary.

The ADA works closely with state and local dental societies to promote the fluoridation of

municipal water supplies at recommended levels and supports capacity-building grants to help communities establish, upgrade and maintain an effective public water fluoridation infrastructure. It also encourages individual dentists to get involved in fluoridation efforts.

At a local level, Nathan Suter, D.D.S., owner of Green Leaf Dental Care in House Springs, Missouri, was part of a 2019–20 effort with other fluoridation advocates to stop an area water authority from discontinuing community water fluoridation.

“We made quite the in-roads with the local authorities, had tours of the facility and helped them delay their decision until funding could be found to help offset the costs of a new system,” said Dr. Suter, a past ADA 10 Under 10 Award winner who graduated from the University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Dentistry in 2013.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as patients perhaps delayed their dental appointments, community water fluoridation may have played an important role in guarding their oral health.

“Fluoridation is a passive, time-proven preventive measure that can benefit an entire community,” he said. “People have been stuck at home, and without dental visits, patients’ personal hygiene, diet and community water fluoridation are the only ways many have maintained their oral health.”

Dr. Suter said dentists should consider being part of fluoridation efforts in their communities to help ensure the most knowledgeable voices are heard.

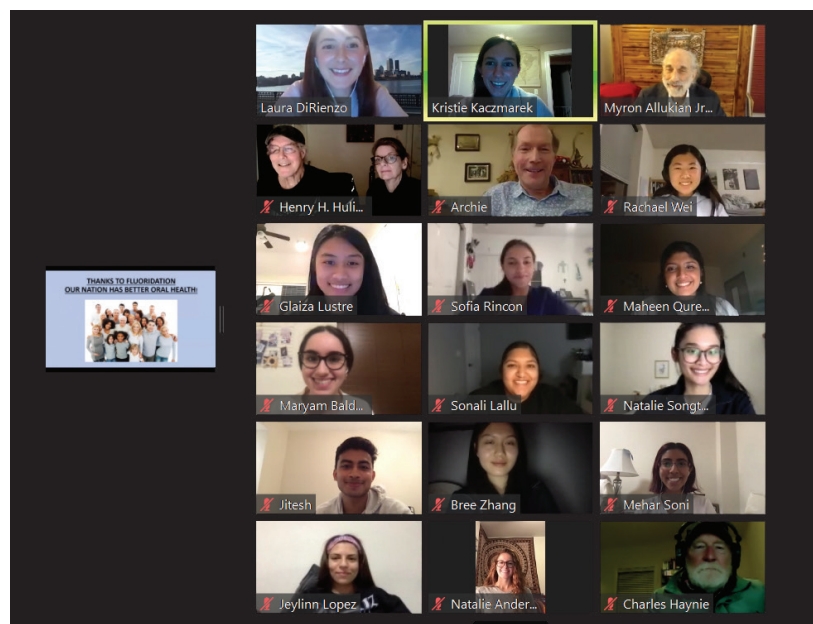
“It is important to get involved as a member of the community and an expert who sees the consequences of dental decay,” he said. “If you don’t show up to the table, it is easier for the loudest people who do show up to win out.”

There is a place for dental students at that table as well, Ms. Zana said.

“Fluoride builds up tooth structure and is a safe, effective way to prevent dental decay, but fluoridated water only reaches two-thirds of the U.S. population,” she said. “Education and community involvement are key. The science around fluoridation already exists, but education is lacking. Therefore, our impact will depend on how many communities we can reach and educate, in order to promote local implementation of fluoridated water systems for all Americans.”

For more information on community water fluoridation and ADA advocacy, visit

[ADA.org/fluoride](https://ada.org/fluoride). ■



Fluoridation education: Myron Allukian Jr., D.D.S. (top, right), a faculty member in the Harvard School of Dental Medicine’s department of oral health policy and epidemiology, leads a November 2020 webinar on community water fluoridation. It was organized by the Advocacy Committee of the Harvard chapter of the American Student Dental Association and facilitated by students Laura DiRienzo (top, left) and Kristie Kaczmarek (top, center).

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Ask the Expert:

HOW DO I CAPITALIZE ON MY BANKING RELATIONSHIP?

BY CHRISTINE OLMSTEAD LOPEZ, CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE FINANCIAL PROFESSIONAL,
BMO HARRIS BANK

Dear Christine: *As a new practice owner, I am reviewing vendors at my practice and making sure the practice is getting value from each relationship. Ideally, I want to work with suppliers who are both dependable and who advocate for my practice. I have never really considered what my current bank brings to the table. How do I evaluate my banker?*

— Seeking Vendors with Benefits

Dear Seeking: Practice success can certainly be dependent upon establishing a network of trusted suppliers.

It makes good business sense to regularly re-evaluate vendor relationships, including advisory relationships like your banker.

To aid in your decision, I suggest interviewing multiple bankers and asking these three questions:

1. What type of lending do you specialize in?

Some banks, like BMO Harris, have a focus on the dental industry, which means they know the ins and outs of practice management and know that dentists will generally meet the bank's loan eligibility requirements.

2. How have you helped practices like mine?

Good bankers are advocates for their clients and should be able to provide examples of such. They can proactively help solve challenges and even prevent future problems by providing advice based on what they've seen with other clients.

3. Do you offer any business counseling?

This question gets to the heart of the added value that a good banker can provide. Some bankers can provide technical assistance in preparing applications, as well as offer educational assistance on financial management, practice management, business plans, marketing and more. Most importantly, they can leverage their own network to generate referrals.

A good banker will always be willing to answer the above questions — and frankly, will be impressed that you asked. I would add that it's good to start asking these questions even before you own a practice, so you're well positioned for your next career move.

There are many types of supplier relationships, but none as important, or as potentially business-altering, as practice owners' relationship with their bank. Doing your due diligence here will be well worth it. ■

A good banker will always be willing to answer these questions — and frankly, will be impressed that you asked.

A commercial banker since 2006, Ms. Olmstead Lopez advises mid- to large-size practices, leveraging her background in commercial credit underwriting and structuring, and providing industry-specific expertise and local market insight.

Editor's note: This article is provided by BMO Harris Bank, the ADA Member Advantage-endorsed provider for practice financing. Call 1-833-276-6017 or visit bmoharris.com/dentists for more information.

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Becoming MORE INVOLVED

Are you looking to play a role in organized dentistry? Do you have ideas or concerns that leaders in the profession should know about? Do you have stories and experiences to share that can potentially help other new dentists? Your voice is important.

New dentists talk about WHAT THEY MOST LOOK FORWARD TO POST-PANDEMIC

New Dentist News asked dentists from around the country about what they hope the summer and beyond will bring them as vaccination efforts continue to ramp up and restrictions begin to lift. Here are a few of their responses:

1 Contact your ADA New Dentist Committee representative.

Look for your 2020-21 representative on Page 3.

2 Reach out to your state or local new dentist committee.

Most state dental societies have a new dentist committee that provides resources, continuing education tracks and social networking events.

Share your experiences and learned lessons at the New Dentist Now blog, newdentistnow.ada.org.
Email: newdentist@ada.org

3 4 Ask about micro-volunteering opportunities at your state or local dental society.

Getting involved doesn't always mean a big commitment.

5 Volunteer for charitable dentistry events.

Help bridge the access to care gap through programs such as Mission of Mercy and Give Kids A Smile.

6 Take a stand in Washington, D.C.

Help the ADA advocate for things that matter to dentists and the patients they serve at ADA.org/advocacy.

Fill out the newly launched ADA Volunteer Interest form at ADA.org/getinvolved.

Need more information on how and where to start?

Contact Tera Lavick, ADA New Dentist Committee director, at 1-800-621-8099, ext. 2386, or newdentist@ada.org. ■



I am most looking forward to spending time outdoors at the lake with my family, the hot summer sun and not having COVID-19 be the talking point of interactions with patients.

— BRITTON M. MARSH, D.D.S., WYOMING



My team and I look forward to taking our portable clinic back into long-term care facilities for in-person care. While guided oral hygiene-utilizing teledentistry and remote-monitored silver diamine fluoride application have been great tools during the pandemic, we miss our patients.

— BROOKE FUKUOKA, D.M.D., IDAHO



I am looking forward to a very productive and enjoyable 2021. I will be excited to visit family and friends again. With the easing of restrictions, I hope to get the chance to show my wife my hometown of Oakville, Ontario, Canada.

— AMIR KAZIM, D.D.S., CALIFORNIA



As the summer months approach, I'm hoping to return to "normal" carne asada season with my friends and family. It's a huge part of my Mexican heritage to get together over a nice piece of meat, with homemade guacamole and salsa.

— EDDIE RAMIREZ, D.M.D., OREGON



I am most excited to attend national and local events, both dental-related and not. Hopefully, the vaccine will be ubiquitous come summer, and everyone will be able to resume a normal social life. I hope to see colleagues, both familiar and not, at SmileCon.

— KEVIN KAI, D.D.S., CALIFORNIA

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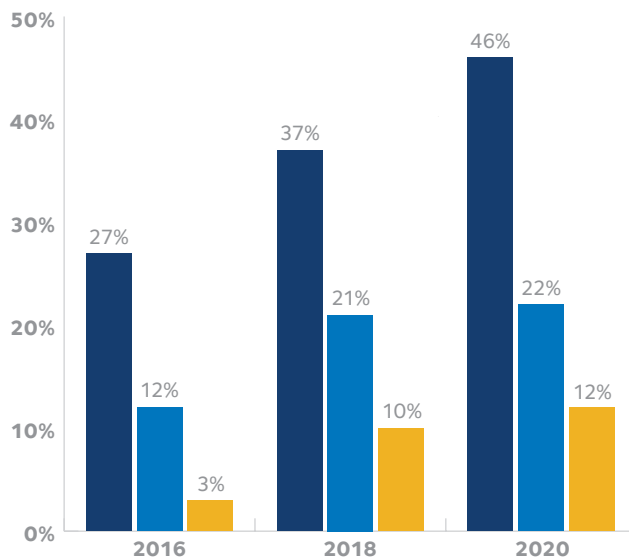


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Representation of diverse groups INCREASES ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE ADA LEADERSHIP

Given the changing demographics of the profession and the ADA's commitment to diversity and inclusion, it's more critical than ever that the ADA evolve on its diversity and inclusion journey. To make progress, the ADA must embrace strategies to advance inclusion, while growing membership diversity, including diversifying representation in leadership. New dentists make up 29% of ADA membership, and while diversity is improving, new dentist representation in ADA councils and committees continues to lag behind. Fostering the leadership pipeline will grow the ADA as well as impact the profession and the patients we serve. For more information, visit [ADA.org/diversityandinclusion](https://ada.org/diversityandinclusion). ■



Source: ADA Councils and Committees' Demographic Report EOY 2020.

WOMEN
19%

ETHNIC AND RACIAL
10%

NEW DENTIST
9%

In case you missed it



Women dentists can do everything

In celebrating Women's History Month in March, three new dentists shared which women in their lives have inspired them and what advice they would give other women in the profession. Visit [ADA.org/WHM](https://ada.org/WHM) to read the article.



ADA Success provides eye-opening view of life after dental school

From finding a job to managing debt, life after dental school can be full of uncertainties. Enter the ADA success program, which provides guidance and support for dental students on various topics relevant to them while in school and after graduation. By turning to a virtual format since the pandemic, it has only expanded its reach. Visit [ADA.org/afterdentialschool](https://ada.org/afterdentialschool) to read the article.



10 Under 10 Awards: Recognize the future of the dental profession

The ADA announced the recipients of its annual 10 Under 10 Awards, which recognize 10 new dentists who demonstrate excellence early in their careers. The winners were chosen for making a difference in science, research and education; practice excellence; philanthropy; leadership; and advocacy. Visit [ADA.org/2021awards](https://ada.org/2021awards) to read the article.

NEW DENTIST EMERGING INTO PRIVATE PRACTICE?

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- The 5 Most Important Things You Need to Know About DSOs
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