

It has been an interesting summer at the American Dental Association. As all of you are aware, in May the California Dental Association's Board of Directors revealed a proposal to allow optional membership to the ADA for their constituent/component members, beginning in January of 2025. The ADA determined this would conflict with their bylaws if it was passed by the California House of Delegates this November, and directly affect the tripartite. There has been an intense and educational debate around the country since that time with many interesting opinions. As of the time of this writing, the CDA Board of Directors is recalibrating the proposal and not bringing it forward to their House of Delegates as a resolution in November.

I believe it is critical the American Dental Association look at this as an opportunity to improve the strength of the tripartite and communicate the Power of Three. It has been mentioned many times throughout the debate how we are stronger together in so many aspects of the profession. Whether it is advocacy, science, standing up to dental insurance companies or help with individual career pathways, it needs to be communicated to all our members we thrive with the ADA, our constituents and our components as one.

The ADA Task Force on Sugar, Nutrition and Diet has had a very productive year since ADA president George Shepley initiated it after our annual meeting last year in Houston. They have met virtually several times this year reviewing existing ADA policy as well as previous task forces that have worked on these subjects. Revisions of current policies were approved at the August ADA Board of Trustees meeting emphasizing healthy foods, avoiding ultra-processed foods and promoting access to potable water. Future strategies include educating dental students, prevention and patient education, more interprofessional education and an increase in dental research. There was also discussion about tax policy, agricultural policy and food labeling. The task force was approved for another year to have the Council on Scientific Affairs explore the feasibility of developing science-based guidelines to document the impact of added sugar consumption on oral health outcomes and to develop an action plan to educate the public on foods with added sugar consumption as it relates to oral and systemic health.

As we know, one of the main objectives of the ADA Strategic Plan is to maintain membership at 94%. An ADA survey to the ADA Advisory Circle, a group of 1800 members who have agreed to respond to ADA surveys, reported back emphasizing the importance of supporting the value and values of members. Many members expressed a strong interest in volunteering and giving back to their community, preferably their local community. They also felt the ADA should facilitate these opportunities. The Council on Membership felt the idea of an interactive volunteer platform and a volunteer recognition program would be supportive of members value and values. The ADA Board approved the appropriate agencies investigate recognizing dentists who have contributed significant philanthropic efforts through a member loyalty program and create a dynamic database allowing members to post and/or search for volunteer opportunities locally, statewide, nationally, and globally.

The ADA Faculty Ambassador Program I have initiated with ADA Board approval and the assistance of ADA staff is coming along well. Right now, it is being piloted in our district with the five undergraduate dental school programs. Much information has been

shared on successful events, lectures and programs offered in each of the schools. I am in the process of bringing districts 1, 3 and 13 on board, hopefully by the end of the meeting in Orlando. By springtime of next year, the goal is to have a faculty ambassador from every dental school in the country on the platform contributing ideas and sharing information to use with all their dental students. I am convinced the more dental students become exposed to the value of organized dentistry at this early stage in their careers, the easier it will be to have them as lifelong members.

I am sorry I will not be with you in Albany for our September meeting. I will be in Sydney, Australia from September 17<sup>th</sup> through September 27<sup>th</sup> as a member of the ADA/FDI delegation. I look forward to seeing everyone in Orlando in October. As always, you can contact me at any time to discuss the important issues of the day or to just catch up on the latest ongoings.

Respectfully submitted,  
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ADA Second District Trustee