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MDA NEWS

MAINE DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Winter 2021 | Volume 7 | Number 2

Inside This Issue



MAINE DENTAL ASSOCIATION CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Appleby Scholarship Recipients - p. 9

From The Executive Director's Desk	2
From The President's Corner	3
First District Trustee's Corner	4
Update On HR Law	6
MDA CE Series Continues	11
Allied Dental Team Info	14
News and Notes	14
Preferred Business Partners	16-17
Classifieds	18

2021 MDA Convention Will Be A Virtual Event

The Maine Dental Association's Annual Convention will be a virtual event this year.

Dr. Uche Odiatu and Dr. John Svirsky will both be presenting at the event.

Dr. Odiatu will speak on the topics "Five Patient Lifestyle Habits That Influence Healing" and "Do Your Patients Have The Guts To Enjoy Oral Health?"

Dr. Odiatu is the author of "The Miracle of Health," a professional member of the American College of Sports Medicine and a practicing dentist in Toronto. He is a National Strength and Conditioning Association certified personal trainer, and has given over 400 lectures in England, Canada, the United States, the Bahamas, Denmark,

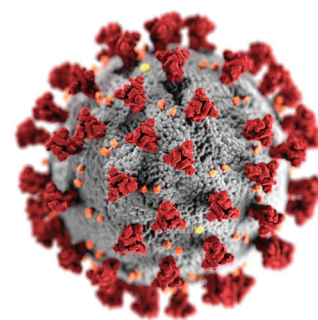
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MDA Aids In Vaccine Effort

The Maine Dental Association is taking an active role as vaccine distribution rolls out to dental professionals throughout the state.

Maine is working to vaccinate all eligible residents as soon as possible. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services refined Phase 1a, the first wave of vaccine recipients, by identifying several subgroups, including Group 1 and Group 2 (which includes dental professionals). Group 2 includes paid and unpaid personnel, including both clinicians and support staff, who physically work in health care settings on a regular basis and have direct contact with patients, or have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or



infectious materials.

A range of professional associations, including the Maine Dental Association, stepped forward to help coordinate vaccinations for patient-facing health

(continued on page 7)

MDA MISSION STATEMENT:

To support members in achieving excellence in dentistry

MDA VISION STATEMENT:

To be leaders in oral health in Maine



From The Executive Director's Desk: Membership Survey Provides Input, Feedback as Association Moves Forward

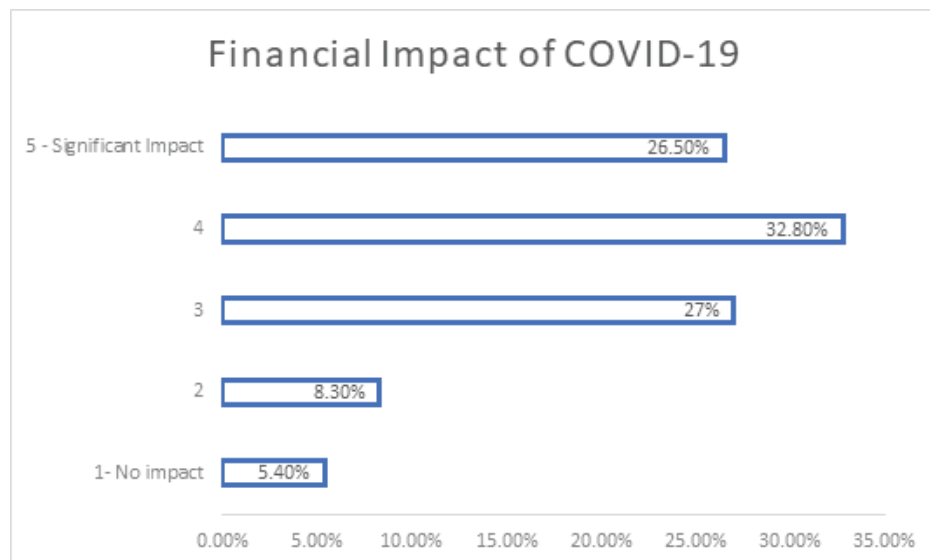
By Angela Cole Westhoff, MDA Executive Director



I think we can all agree we are glad to have 2020 in the rearview mirror. This pandemic continues to impact dental practices across the country in ways we might not have ever imagined. The Maine Dental Association has worked hard over the last year to advocate to reopen dental practices, to provide PPE kits to members, to develop reopening guidelines, and to continue to support practices in their questions about how to navigate these uncharted waters. In addition, the MDA has played a key role in connecting dental offices with vaccination sites to help vaccinate dental professionals in all corners of this state. While the vaccine rollout has been slow and bumpy, it does feel like we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel.

The MDA relies heavily on members' input and feedback to shape the future trajectory of the association. To that end, we conducted a membership survey in the fall of 2020. We were incredibly pleased to have 231 respondents, which represents 30% of the membership. The data was collected through paper and electronic survey methods. An incentive of a \$100 LL Bean gift card was used to help increase response rate. Data is shown in aggregate format and no individual names are included. In this article, I will share some highlights from the survey results.

In terms of the demographics of respondents, we asked members to share how long they have been in practice in Maine with responses ranging from recent grad to over 30 years. The number of years as a MDA member ranged from less than a year to 54 years. The average number of years was 19 years. General dentists represented 80% of the respondents and the other 20% were specialists. In addition, we asked questions about members' timeline for retirement, with 24% of respondents indicating they plan to retire in the next 3-5 years; 19% in the next 6-10 years; 12% in the next 11-15



years; and 45% in 16 years or more.

We also asked respondents to provide some feedback about what is most important with their MDA membership. Overall, supporting the profession, advocacy, and professional credibility were among the most important reasons. Of lesser importance to members were responses like discounts on products/services, publications, and practice resources.

We also asked members to give us some insight on their perceptions about the MDA, including membership benefits, services, and resources. We provided respondents with 6 options and asked them to provide the level to which they agreed. The statements ranked highest in terms of members indicating they strongly agree or agree: The MDA: 1.) keeps me up to date on legislative/regulatory issues; 2.) is a leading advocate for oral health in Maine; and 3.) provides me with relevant scientific and clinical information. The lowest ranking statement in terms of those who strongly agreed or disagreed, but had the highest neutral percentage, was the MDA helps me to address practice management challenges.

I also want to highlight members'

We also asked respondents to provide some feedback about what is most important with their MDA membership. Overall, supporting the profession, advocacy, and professional credibility were among the most important reasons.

perception of the MDA's response to the pandemic. We asked respondents to say to what extent they agreed or disagreed with several statements about the MDA's response in terms of providing timely, relevant information, advocating for the safe reopening of dental practices, providing guidelines that were easy to understand and follow, and lastly providing COVID-19 webinars that were useful. Overall, the feedback was very positive. Despite a limited staff, the MDA did hold numerous webinars and

(continued on page 8)

News from the President's Corner

David Kerr, DDS



Sailing For The Headlands: Maine's Vaccination Rollout

As I think about the vaccination rollout in Maine, I am struck by the similarities of how I would approach planning for a sailing trip on the clear waters of Casco Bay. What I wouldn't give to be out there on the sparkling water with a steady breeze and warm sunshine!

When one plans for an extended sailing trip, the first thing you do is to study the route and estimate how long it will take to get there under ideal conditions. Secondly, one would review the weather forecast and figure out how the weather will impact your plans. Finally, you would take all this information, assess the tides and currents, and formulate an initial plan. This initial plan would outline your goals and strategies to reach your destination.

Sometimes when I go sailing, my goal to get to my destination at a certain time doesn't work out. The currents were stronger than expected, the winds came in at a different direction, or the winds might not have been as strong as predicted.

This is like what Maine is experiencing with its vaccination rollout plan.

The MDA has been in communication with DHHS/Maine CDC about its plan to vaccinate health care providers, including dentists and dental team members. Just last week, we were provided information about vaccination sites across Maine and were able to start matching up

As on my sailing trips, I keep tacking and adjusting as plans change and new ones are made. And I guess that is the nature of a pandemic the likes of which we have not seen in the United States since 1918.

dental offices with vaccination locations.

As we have covered in previous communications, there have been a few hiccups in the plan. Some non-essential workers have been vaccinated; some dentists have been vaccinated, some have not; some dentists have been called by a hospital, and others not. This is incredibly frustrating, and I absolutely get that. I am as frustrated as you are. But know that the MDA leadership continues to advocate for the swift and efficient vaccination of all dental team members.

Unlike my sailing trips, we are sailing in uncharted waters. The winds keep changing. The currents are more tortuous. But as on my sailing trips, I keep tacking and adjusting as plans change and new ones are made. And I guess that is the nature of a pandemic the likes of which we have not seen in the United States since 1918.

We need to keep our eyes on the horizon looking for the headlands that are coming. We will all get vaccinated, perhaps not as planned or as fast as we might like, but we will. And we can all look forward to a sunny day and a warm breeze having arrived at our destination.

As you know, I have always strived to keep members up to date with information as soon as we have it. I want to thank the staff at the MDA for their efforts in helping to match dental offices with vaccination sites as information changes and vaccine supplies ebbs and flows. This has not been an easy journey, but the destination will be worth it!

Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act Becomes Law

The Competitive Health Insurance Reform Act, legislation that repeals the McCarran-Ferguson antitrust exemption for health insurance companies, became law on Jan. 13.

The law is the "culmination of a multi-year effort by several organizations, including the American Dental Association,

to persuade Congress that health care insurance, including dental plans, should no longer be protected from some of the federal antitrust laws," according to an ADA news release. The new law is aimed at improving transparency and competition in the health, dental and vision insurance marketplaces.

News from the First District Trustee's Corner

Rich Rosato, DMD



Three Periods

The joyous holiday season has recently passed. For many of us, the holidays bring great joy, the spirit of giving and good will toward others. Of course, the specter that still looms over us is the COVID-19 pandemic. It impacts everything we do, both in the dental practice and in our community.

For the first time in more than half a year, however, there is light at the end of the tunnel. We can start looking forward to life after the pandemic, even if we do not know exactly what that life will resemble. As first district trustee, I am working with the ADA and dental leaders throughout the country to explore this very topic and assess how it will impact the dental community.

FIRST PERIOD: The number-one question on the minds of the dentists with whom I speak is “when will dental professionals be administered the vaccine?” As one might expect, the answer is a bit complicated. For weeks and even months (even before we knew what the vaccine would be), every state had been finalizing its own plan for distribution of the vaccine. This state-by-state approach is necessary – each state is unique in terms of its population, workforce, demographics and economy. Of course, the standard federal overview of how the vaccine should be administered is uniform: employees of long-term health care facilities are the hardest-hit among health care workers. Once this group is covered, health care workers and first responders are first in line.

However, health care is a tremendous industry, comprised not only of medical doctors and nurses, but hospital workers, mental health care providers and, of course, dentists and dental professionals. Supplies are limited, at least for now. While dentists and dental professionals are definitely higher on the list than other workforces, we must be patient and respectful of the process. We all have been eagerly anticipating this day since March – I encourage everyone to remain patient as this process continues.

SECOND PERIOD: One of the key innovations health care has embraced during the pandemic is telehealth. While patients were sequestered in their homes as early as March, some still needed to consult with their respective health care providers through live video chats and photographic/video consultations. Dentistry is not exempt from this trend, as we have found ourselves

part of this innovative approach to care. Certainly, a video consultation is not the same as a face-to-face patient encounter – whether remote or in-person, the care we provide cannot fall short of the ethical standards to which we are committed.

Additionally, a lack of that face-to-face ability during an ongoing COVID-19 surge has fostered the opportunism of so-called “do-it-yourself dentistry” organizations; we must protect our patients from the dangers these businesses often pose. Furthermore, we must work with third-party payers to ensure that reimbursement for teledentistry works to the benefit of the dental office and patients alike.

It is for these reasons that ADA has been actively moving toward helping dentists utilize teledentistry in such a way that it does not compromise care. The ADA Board, working with our team of experts as well as third-party payers and federal and state governments, is actively exploring the best ways to add teledentistry to mainstream dental care’s cache. The process for this endeavor may take a few months, but it is our hope that teledentistry will only enhance dentistry long after the pandemic subsides.

THIRD PERIOD: Over the last several months, we have all been through a long battle – one that threatened our health as well the health of our businesses. While the pandemic is far from over, we can take stock in many great blessings that shone despite the shadow of COVID-19.

Every state in New England can take great solace in the fact that we were able to reopen so quickly. Our timing was not forced nor was it based on a desire to just “get back to work.” It was based on science. In fact, whereas many state governments struggled to put together guidelines for businesses to reopen safely, dentistry was a comparatively easy one to reopen – the tripartite network helped each state understand that dental offices could reopen safely and in such a way that patients were extremely safe.

Now, we can look ahead a few months with optimism, even when the present warrants caution. The road to recovery will not be easy, but as a collective – indeed, as a dental family – we can plot a course to calmer and more prosperous waters.

As always, it is a great honor to serve as your trustee.

Financial Trends That Could Affect the Dental Industry in 2021

BY DAN CROFT

TD Bank Healthcare Practice Solutions

Disclaimer: This article was provided by TD Bank.

The majority of dental practices have successfully rebounded in the face of COVID-19-related challenges as patients gain a deeper understanding of the important role dental health plays in overall health and have returned in great numbers to their local dental office. Dental practices were also able to implement enhanced safety protocols quickly and efficiently and provide clear and consistent communication to ensure patients felt safe returning to the practice. They also implemented teledentistry, online and mobile payment options, and remote check-in processes to enhance efficiency and convenience and limit face-to-face interaction.

Now, with 2021 upon us, the American Dental Association is monitoring the sustainability of the industry's recovery as practices extend appointment times to allow for proper sanitization and see fewer patients per day. Although practices are changing their schedules and prioritizing specific dental procedures, with personal protective equipment (PPE) expenses slightly up and production down, dental practices will need to focus on enhancing revenue and reducing overhead expenses to secure long-term financial stability. To bolster their finances and prepare for an uncertain future, dental practice owners should consider capitalizing on some of the following industry trends:

Rise of alternative financing options

COVID-19 has negatively financially impacted many patients who may need dental care but are concerned about their ability to pay. To help maintain long-term financial sustainability, practices should consider offering memberships, discounts, and third-party financing plans to make care more affordable and accessible. While many practices may have previously had these offerings, dentists should now expand their alternative financing options, use them more frequently, and actively publicize them. Alternative financing options, such

as dental memberships, provide practice owners with a regular stream of income and are affordable for the patient.

Esthetics, stress-related conditions up

As patients stare at themselves more than ever on video conferencing services, there has been an increased interest in cosmetic dental services to appear more attractive on screen. The "Zoom effect" has led to a rise in noninvasive esthetic treatments such as teeth whitening, porcelain veneers, dermal fillers, and dental implants.

Additionally, the stress related to COVID-19 has led to more cracked and chipped teeth as well as dry mouth. Dentists are also seeing an increase in dental-related emergencies from patients who delayed seeing the dentist and allowed a minor issue to turn into a more expensive procedure. Dentists should be prepared to cater to these urgent dental concerns and larger procedures to support their current patients and help grow their existing patient base.

Focus on teledentistry

The pandemic has sparked positive innovations in the dental industry, and teledentistry will continue to be a key focus for the industry in 2021 and beyond due to its ability to allow dentists to prescreen patients and prioritize patient appointments. Overall, teledentistry is a win-win because it allows practices to operate more efficiently and provides a quick, safe experience for the patient.

While these trends will remain top of mind in 2021, the future is bright for dentists due to aging populations, industry innovations, rising levels of dental insurance, and improved dental access for low-income individuals. Overall, the pandemic should have a low to moderate effect on the dental industry long-term as people now truly appreciate and understand the vital role that dental health plays in their overall health.

Dan Croft has been the head of TD Bank's Healthcare Practice Solutions Group since 2014.



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Human Resources Law Update - Early 2021

BY MICHAEL S. MALLOY
The Malloy Firm

In last Fall's newsletter, I posed a few hypotheticals to help you sort through employee requests for paid leave. Since that time, a few changes have come for Maine employers.

First, as of the date of this writing, Congress has not extended the paid leave requirements under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. That could still change once all new lawmakers have been sworn in in D.C., so before you make decisions on covered workers, be sure to check in.

Second, the Maine Earned Paid Leave law, which covers all employers with 10 or more employees, went into effect on January 1, 2021. If you have that many employees and you haven't spoken to your attorney about what policy changes are in order, it's time to get on the stick. Savvy employers may be able to take advantage of the new Maine statute by

We are seeing more federal movement in favor of mandatory vaccination policies, especially for health care workers.

reclassifying leave they already offer as paid leave under the statute, and use the opportunity to clean up cumbersome vacation/sick accrual policies.

Finally, on the vaccination front, we are seeing more federal movement in favor of mandatory vaccination policies, especially for health care workers. It has been my advice that most Maine dental offices can make vaccinations a mandatory job requirement, so long as they engage in a meaningful interactive dialogue for qualifying individuals with disabilities or religious objections. Those are highly fact-specific determinations, so be sure to check with your counsel or call me at (207) 333-6700.

Use Promo Code When Registering For 2021 Yankee

Yankee Dental Virtual 2021 registration is open. MDA members and their staff are being invited to take advantage of the opportunities Yankee Virtual has to offer.

Be sure to use the MDA's promo code when you register for Yankee: YDC21ME.

You can register for the all-inclusive Power Pass at a cost of \$79. If four people from the same office register for the Power Pass, the registration for the fifth person is complimentary.

Yankee Dental Virtual will offer both live programs at designated times January 28-30, as well as pre-recorded sessions that can be viewed at your convenience.

For more information, or to register, go to www.yankeedental.com.



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Vaccine

(From page 1)

care personnel and staff within Phase 1a.

“The MDA successfully advocated to advance the vaccination timeline for when phase 1a, group 2 health care professionals, including dentists and dental team members, could get access to the vaccine site information,” said MDA Executive Director Angela Westhoff. “Luckily, we were prepared with data from the Board of Dental Practice and were ready to act immediately. It’s been frustrating, but we’re finally seeing some light at the end of the tunnel.”

The MDA partnered with Maine DHHS to identify available vaccination sites and provide information to licensed Maine dental professionals about sites. This process has provided access to COVID-19 vaccines for dental personnel during the past few weeks, recognizing that the rollout depends on the supply of vaccine Maine receives from the federal government as well as capacity at vaccination sites.

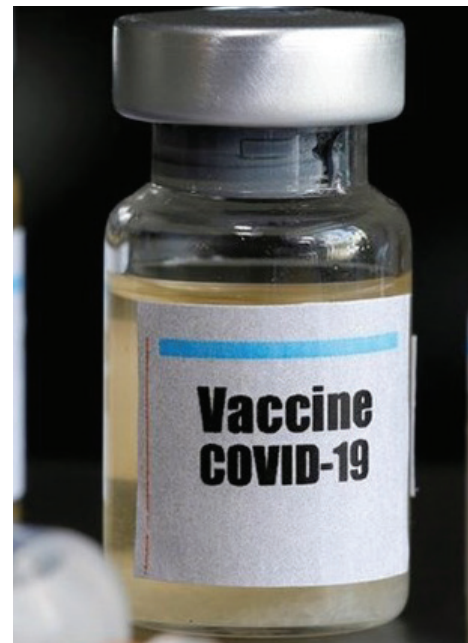
The MDA contacted dental professionals during the past few weeks with information on hospital systems, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and other health centers in their area that may be able to provide vaccinations.

“While the vaccine roll out has been less than smooth, the MDA was pleased to partner with Maine DHHS/ CDC to match up dental providers with vaccination sites. We contacted over 4,000 licensed dental professionals in half a day to provide site contact information,” Westhoff said.

It is important to note:

- Health Insurance must be billed for the vaccine administration if insurance is available
- There is no mandate to receive the vaccine
- You must consult with your business attorney as to whether you can/should require vaccination of your employees

The MDA and ADA will continue to monitor developments related to COVID-19 vaccine approvals and



administration on behalf of the profession and public. Visit www.medental.org/covid or ADA.org/virus, which now includes two new FAQs the American Dental Association has developed that provide answers to commonly asked questions from practice owners and employee dentists about COVID-19 vaccines.

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Convention

(From page 1)

Bermuda, and Norway.

Dr. Svirsky will present “25 Shades of Grey and a Whole Lot Less Risqué” and “Great Cases with New Faces.”

Dr. Svirsky is a board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologist at Virginia Commonwealth University, and has developed a broad background in research, published numerous articles in dental literature, and earned a master's degree in adult education. He is a sought-after speaker, with an international reputation as an informative and entertaining lecturer. He has received a presidential citation from the American Dental Association for significant contributions to the health of the public and the

profession of dentistry.

Dr. Odiatu's presentation will be offered on Friday, May 21, and is part of the 2020-2021 Dentist Package Plan and the 2020-2021 Hygienist/Assistant/Staff Member Package Plan. Dr. Svirsky's presentation will be offered on Saturday, May 22, and is part of the Dentist Package Plan.

The annual Risk Management Seminar will also be offered. The Risk Management Seminar is not part of any Package Plan.

Attendees will also have a chance to interact with exhibitors. A dental student reception and student lunch and learn is also planned.

Watch for convention and Risk Management Seminar registration, as well as more information, coming soon.

Executive Director

(From page 2)

coordinated six statewide PPE distribution events.

We also asked respondents about the extent to which the increased cost of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) impacted their practice's bottom line. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being no impact and 5 being significant impact, 86.5% of respondents answered 3 or higher. The weighted average of answers was 3.67.

Finally, I want to highlight members' utilization of member benefits over the last 12 months. The most popular benefit, by a wide margin, was the MDA's continuing education programs, which 77% of respondents checked off. The next most popular was professional liability insurance, at 38%.

In conclusion, these are a few highlights a few of the key findings from the membership survey. The MDA Board of Directors reviewed this information at its recent meeting and will continue to refer to the results in long-term planning for the association. We appreciate everyone taking the time to complete the survey and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



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MDA Charitable Foundation Awards Appleby Scholarship to 21 Students

The Maine Dental Association Charitable Foundation has awarded \$2,500 each to 21 students who were selected to receive the 2020 Alva S. Appleby Scholarship.

Recipients of the 2020 Appleby Scholarship include 15 students at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine, three students at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, two students at Dalhousie University, and one student at New York University.

To be considered for the annual scholarship, a student must be a resident of the state of Maine (lived in Maine for purposes other than attending dental school), have completed their first year of dental school, and be currently enrolled in a dental school accredited by the American Dental Association.

The MDA Charitable Foundation awarded these scholarships in addition to making a \$50,000 donation to the MDA to purchase personal protective equipment earlier in 2020.

The following students are the recipients of the 2020 Appleby Scholarship:

Shyanne Barnes is a member of the class of 2022 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. She graduated from Caribou High School and received her bachelor's degree from the University of Maine.

Ryan Creighton is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Nokomis Regional High School and received his bachelor's degree from Husson University.

Alec Daigle is a member of the class of 2023 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Maranacook Community High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

James D'Amico is a member of the class of 2022 at Dalhousie University. He graduated from Brewer High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maine.

Olivia Drew is a member of the class of 2022 at the New York University College of Dentistry. She graduated from York High School and received her bachelor's degree from Manhattanville College.

Chloe Eisenhaur is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. She graduated from Thornton Academy and received her bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Garrett Fillebrown is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School and received his bachelor's degree from Saint Joseph's College of Maine.

Jenna Fongemie is a member of the class of 2022 at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. She graduated from St. Dominic Academy and received her bachelor's degree from Stonehill College.

Christopher Goding is a member of the class of 2023 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Greely High School and received his bachelor's degree from Providence College.

Benjamin Harwood is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Kents Hill School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Christian Labonte is a member of the class of 2021 at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Lewiston High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maine.

Emily Leach is a member of the class of 2022 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. She graduated from Medomak Valley High School and received her bachelor's degree from Colby College.

Jonathan Lee is a member of the class of 2022 at the University of New

England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Madawaska High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maine.

Elijah Leverett is a member of the class of 2022 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Greely High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Benjamin Martin is a member of the class of 2023 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Sanford High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Patrick Randall is a member of the class of 2022 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Thornton Academy and received his bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Corey Riemersma is a member of the class of 2022 at Dalhousie University. He graduated from Orono High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maine.

Robyn Rousseau is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. She graduated from Noble High School and received her bachelor's degree from Simmons College.

Natasha Seavey is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. She graduated from Rockland District High School and received her bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Brody Valley is a member of the class of 2021 at the University of New England College of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Brewer High School and received his bachelor's degree from the University of New England.

Cody Woods is a member of the class of 2022 at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. He graduated from Houlton High School and received his bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College.

NCDHM Encourages 'Nature's Drink' For Kids

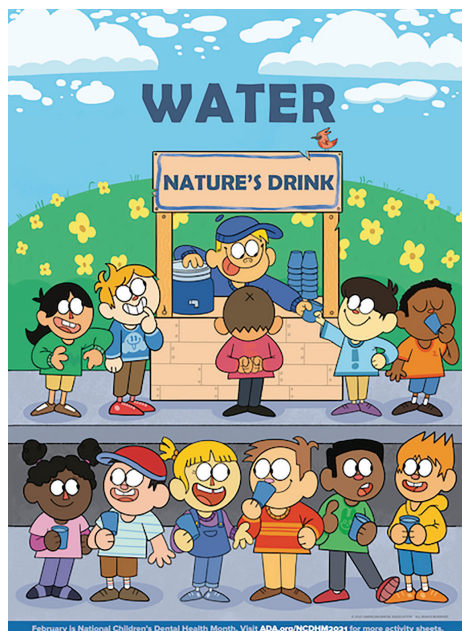
FROM ADA NEWS

National Children's Dental Health Month is approaching, and the ADA is helping dentists celebrate the occasion with posters available to festoon dental offices.

The 2021 slogan for National Children's Dental Health Month, which is celebrated every February, is "Water: Nature's Drink."

Brought to the public by the ADA, the month-long national health observance brings together thousands of dedicated professionals, health care providers and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers and many others.

Free posters about National Children's Dental Health Month are available to order on the National Children's Dental Health Month website, ADA.org/ncdhm. They can also be downloaded and printed in poster and flyer sizes.



Other National Children's Dental Health Month materials on the website include free activity sheets for kids, including crosswords, coloring sheets, calendars and maze sheets.

Paying Your 2021 Membership Dues

Invoices for 2021 tripartite membership dues (ADA, MDA and local component society) have been mailed.

Thank you to those who have paid for 2021.

If you retired in 2020, or retired by January 1, 2021, and have not yet notified the Maine Dental Association, please do so as soon as possible. It is necessary for members to complete a required form to change your dues rate.

You can pay your dues online - just click on the "Pay Dues Now" button on the MDA website (www.medental.org).

The MDA thanks you for your continued support.

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Use, Disinfection, Minimization Of Cross-Contamination of Dental Materials

BY PAUL CASAMASSIMO, DDS, MS
ADA Council on Advocacy for Access
and Prevention

The COVID-19 viral pandemic has brought infection control front and center in dental practice. Most attention has been with viral transmission through contact and aerosol in our dental world; but in the public sector, the longevity of virus contamination on various surfaces has been a concern and hand and surface cleansing have partnered with social distancing in efforts to control spread. In dental practice, surface disinfection is a standard protocol, but an area that has gained less attention has been dental material packaging, distribution, and handling. This brief article talks about how we use, disinfect, and minimize cross-contamination of dental materials.

In dental practice, surface disinfection is a standard protocol, but an area that has gained less attention has been dental material packaging, distribution, and handling.

Some dentists continue to use materials dispensed from bulk stores. The obvious benefit is cost savings. Use of bulk materials is on an as-needed basis at point of use, or in increments prepared ahead of time and packaged by staff for use when needed. Hopefully, the practice of replacing dispensed, but unused, bulk materials is not common, if done at all, due to the risk of wider

contamination. Yet, bulk use can still have contamination risks all along the use chain. The first risk is with the material container itself. We may naively believe that suppliers clean and sterilize containers and packaging, but that is not always true. In a small study I did several years ago, almost half of bulk packaging yielded pathogens. As we have learned with COVID-19, the supply chain offers ample opportunity to add contamination even if supplies leave the manufacturer in a clean state. Dispensing in the office requires strict attention to surfaces, instruments, personnel barriers, sterile receptacles, and storage. Expiration of self-packaged materials, and insurance of packaging barrier effectiveness add to the challenges. Unless a practice can assure all of these, there is the assumption of contamination and

(continued on page 13)

2020-2021 MDA CE Series Continues

The 2020-2021 Continuing Education Series continues in March and April, and at the MDA Annual Convention, with several virtual offerings.

The series features nationally and internationally known speakers.

Here are the remaining courses in the MDA's 2020-2021 Continuing Education Series (Hygienist/Assistant/Staff and Allied Dental Team Member Package Plan Courses are indicated by *; All courses are in the Dentist Package Plan):

- March 26, 2021 - *Technology In Your Dental Practice/ Diagnosis, Planning, and Treatment Using New 3D Technology* - Dr. Paul Feuerstein (This course will be held virtually via Zoom)
- April 16, 2021 - *Anterior All Ceramics: From Case Selection to Cementation* - Dr. John Nosti (This course will be held virtually via Zoom)
- May 21, 2021 - *Five Patient Lifestyle Habits That Influence Healing/Do Your Patients Have The Guts To Enjoy Oral Health?* - Dr. Uche Odiatu (MDA Convention, course will be held virtually)*
- May 22, 2021 - *25 Shades of Grey & A Lot Less Risqué/ Great Cases With New Faces* - Dr. John Svirsky (MDA Convention, Course will be held virtually)

You will be required to register for courses for the MDA Convention separately.

For more information on courses, and to register, go to www.medentalce.org.

Find COVID-19 Information/Guidance
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Materials

(From page 11)

possible transmission of infectious agents.

Unit dosing is growing in acceptance in routine dental care, for obvious reasons of convenience and greater assurance of contamination control. The downsides are cost and waste, and if you are environmentally conscious, addition of still more plastic to our environment. Even unit dosing has its risks if not done properly. Some unit dosing is not really “unitized” and is really just packaging for easy dosing for multiple patients. Some unit dosing still requires decontamination prior to use. Don’t assume that a dispenser in a plastic

container is sterile, unless so stated. Unit dosing often also has expiration dates, which need to be accounted for in storage and utilization. Cleaning and disinfecting can be challenging; by definition, unit dosing means “one-and-done” and most are not meant for reuse. Dentists may want to salvage remaining material and use what’s left for another patient, but in an absolute sense, that isn’t intended. The recent furor over aerosol in the COVID-19 crisis suggests that if material is to be saved for later use, rigorous decontamination and preferably separation from the active treatment area be in place, which may not be possible for all materials. A best practice has to be to ‘choose and use’ only single use, single patient materials. While manufacturers may claim that

post-treatment disinfection is possible, it is technique sensitive and effectiveness can’t be assured.

As a result of the pandemic, we may be required to adhere in the future to a medical-surgical standard for cleanliness that includes mandated one-use products and the era of bulk-dispensing may end. My advice to dentists reading this is to begin a thoughtful process of introducing unit-dose materials into your practice and analyzing what it means from a safety, efficiency, and cost standpoint. The question of tighter control over potential transmission of minor and major infectious diseases inadvertently via vectors known to be controllable, is one of *when not if*, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADA develops Vaccination FAQs for practice owners, employee dentists

ADA NEWS

The ADA has developed two new FAQs that provide answers to questions from practice owners and employee dentists about COVID-19 vaccines.

The FAQ for practice owners addresses such questions as whether dental owners can require their employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19. The FAQ for employee dentists addresses such questions as who pays for the employee’s

vaccination and any related time off.

Both FAQs will be updated regularly as new information becomes available. You can find both the owner and employee FAQs at www.ada.org/virus.

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Allied Dental Team Members - Join For 2021; Courses To Be Announced

The Maine Dental Association has added hygienists, assistants, lab technicians, and dental office staff members as allied dental team members.

The MDA believes that the Association can only become stronger by including all dental professionals.

A Maine Dental Association allied dental team member is defined as "a licensed dental hygienist in good standing in the state of Maine, a dental assistant, a dental laboratory technician, or a dental administrative staff person working or residing in Maine."

Among the benefits of becoming a MDA allied dental member:

- Quarterly lecture series – topics



specific to allied dental team members

- An e-newsletter specifically for allied dental team members
- Printed quarterly newsletter
- Continuing education course discounts
- Access to endorsed services and discounts

The annual fee to be an allied

dental team member is \$50, with a membership cycle from January 1 to December 31.

Be sure to keep an eye out for our Allied Dental Team course schedule for 2021, which will include four offerings and will be announced soon.

If you would like to become a MDA allied dental team member for 2021, or for more information, go to www.medental.org and click on Allied Dental Team Info, or call the MDA Office at (207) 622-7900.

The MDA office will be closed:

- **February 15**
(Presidents' Day)

News and Notes

HELLO

New Members

Dr. Jaclyn Danko
177 Main St
Lewiston, ME 04240
O=207-777-7442

Dr. James Gerweck
110 Broadway
Bucksport, ME 04416
O=207-902-1100

Dr. Michael Gillins
292 South St
Blue Hill, ME 04614
O=207-374-5398

Dr. Kevin Hadar
57 Barra Rd Ste 3
Biddeford, ME 04005
O=207-282-1305

Dr. Luke Libby
440 Narragansett Trl
Buxton, ME 04093
O=207-929-3900

Dr. Kevin Lukis
1355 Congress St Ste B
Portland, ME 04102
O=207-761-6699

Dr. Michele Shems
202 US Route One
Falmouth, ME 04105
O=207-781-5655

MDA CE Courses

March 26, 2021 -
"Technology In Your Dental Practice/3D Technology,"
with Dr. Paul Feuerstein

April 16, 2021 -
"Anterior All Ceramics,"
with Dr. John Nosti

Go to www.medentalce.org
for more information

COVID-19 Info Online
www.medental.org/covid

*The MDA expresses its condolences to the families of Dr. C. Leighton Philbrick Jr.
and Dr. Theron "Ron" Hatch III.*



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While 2020 was filled with new challenges, your local, state and national ADA were there every step of the way. Your membership gave you members-only access to practical tools and guidance you can't find anywhere else, including:



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Step-by-step guide to providing COVID-19 testing for your patients



Ready-to-use patient communication resources

Continue accessing these resources and the new tools and guidance we'll release as science evolves this year.

"As the science evolves, I know that the ADA will continue to advocate on behalf of our profession, our patients, and the public."

— DR. MIA GEISINGER

"You have clearly demonstrated to me that the ADA is an essential organization. ... orthodontists like me need you, dentists need you and the profession needs you! Thank you for your tireless efforts supporting us during this pandemic."

— DR. DAVID E. HARMON

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(continued on page 13)

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USI Insurance Services is the agent who brings the Professional Protector Plan for Dentists to the MDA, and provides insurance in the form of professional liability (malpractice), general liability, property, employment liability, cyber liability, plus many other coverages. MDA members receive a 5% discount on their professional liability insurance. Dentists purchasing practices for the first time, new graduates, and dentists who work part time receive special discounts.

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You can also find classified ads at www.medental.org

MDA Virtual Business Meeting Attendees OK Bylaws Changes

The MDA held a virtual business meeting on October 26. Those in attendance approved bylaws changes and awards were given out.

Bylaws changes approved were:

- The MDA modifying its bylaws to mirror dues streamlining voted on and approved by the ADA House of Delegates
- A regional model to streamline the MDA Board of Directors component representation by creating three regions based on size and geography. The size of the board will decrease from 21 to 17 members.
- The number of Board voting members needed for a quorum will decrease from 10 to 7

MDA Immediate Past President Dr. Brad Rand recognized the MDA's Re-Opening Task Force with the President's Award. The committee was convened during the COVID-19 pandemic to establish a unified vision and comprehensive guidance for Maine dental offices to safely re-open. The task force has put together "Establishing Safe Dental Care in the Era of COVID-19" for reference and continues to meet to make any modifications to the guidance.

Ann Mitchell of Mitchell Tardy Jackson Government Affairs was recognized with inclusion on the MDA's Honor Wall, which highlights "those who have given extraordinary service to the Maine Dental Association," and is displayed at the MDA Office in Manchester.

Dr. David Kerr, president of the MDA Board of Directors, recognized Dr. Rand and his work as board president during an unprecedented time in dentistry.

U.S. News & World Report: Dentistry Remains One Of Top 10 Jobs in America

BY DAVID BURGER
ADA News

Dentistry remains among the top 10 jobs in America, according to rankings published Jan. 12 by U.S. News & World Report.

Dentists are No. 9 on the list of the publication's 2021 Best Jobs report, with health care jobs dominating the list.

The global pandemic has reinforced the need and value of health care professionals, said Antonio Barbera, consumer advice editor at U.S. News & World Report.

"With health care being more critical than ever, the job outlook for the sector is positive, with 42 of the 100 Best Jobs in health care or health care support roles," Barbera said. "Dentists rank ninth in the 2021 Best Jobs rankings due a high median salary, low unemployment rate and excellent work-life balance."

After ranking No. 3 since 2017, physician assistant captured the No. 1 spot, while software developer landed at No. 2 after topping the list for three consecutive years. Nurse practitioner followed at No. 3, with medical and health services manager debuting in the top 10 at No. 4.

Health care jobs also rank high among the publication's list of Best Paying Jobs. Oral and maxillofacial surgeon is ranked No. 3, with a median salary of \$208,000. Dentist is ranked No. 11, with a median salary of \$155,600.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 2.8% employment growth for dentists between 2019 and 2029. In that period, an estimated 3,700 jobs should

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects 2.8% employment growth for dentists between 2019 and 2029. In that period, an estimated 3,700 jobs should open up.

open up, the publication reported.

To calculate its list of Best Jobs every year, U.S. News & World Report identifies jobs with the greatest hiring demand. Jobs are then scored using seven component measures: 10-year growth volume, 10-year growth percentage, median salary, employment rate, future job prospects, stress level and work-life balance.

The listings largely draw from data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The most recent data available is from 2019, and was released in March 2020, so it pre-dates the coronavirus pandemic.

Has Your Address Or Contact Information Changed?

Be sure to let the MDA Office know your new information! You can contact us by mail at PO Box 215, Manchester, ME, 04351; by phone at (207) 622-7900; by fax at (207) 622-6210; or by email at info@medental.org.

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Phone 207-622-7900 Fax 207-622-6210 E-mail info@medental.org



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is going virtual!**

May 20-22, 2021

Details to come!

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