

Annual Report to the House of Delegates, January 25, 2023, from the

## Executive Director

As Executive Director, I herewith submit the following report:

### Governance

With the start of the 2021-2022 governance year, the MDS Board of Trustees fully realized its shift to a smaller, more nimble Board. This continues with the 2022-2023 Board, with five Officers, six Regional Trustees, and one At-Large Trustee.

Governance should be studied regularly to see where shifts and improvements can be made. The Governance Task Force continued to meet over the past year and presented recommendations to the Board of Trustees, which the Board approved, to modify the roles and responsibilities of the Regional and At-Large Trustees. The Board also approved the Task Force's recommendation to formalize position descriptions for the MDS Officers, which incorporate the duties for each that are listed in the MDS *Constitution and Bylaws*. The Task Force also reviewed the Yankee Dental Congress, its structure, and the connection between the MDS Board and Yankee. The Board will consider the Task Force's recommendations regarding Yankee at a future meeting.

In addition to continuing to study the overall governance of the Society, the Board formed a Board Manual Review Task Force which reviewed the Board of Trustees Organizational and Operating Manual. The Task Force presented recommendations to improve the consistency and clarity of the manual that the Board approved. The manual was revised in May 2022.

### Government Affairs

For years, the MDS Government Affairs Committee has worked to implement Medical Loss Ratio (MLR) legislatively by finding common ground with lawmakers and dental insurance providers. In 2021, a small group of dentists and patients came together as the Committee on Dental Insurance Quality and put the MLR patient-centered referendum (Question 2) on the ballot.

Under the leadership of MDS President Dr. Meredith Bailey, the MDS Board of Trustees endorsed the ballot question. The MDS and ADA joined forces to form the Massachusetts Dental Care Providers for Better Dental Benefits ballot campaign committee. Through this collaborative effort, the MDS and ADA developed and executed a campaign strategy to educate voters on the importance of voting Yes on 2. For decades, the lack of adequate consumer protections for dental patients allowed dental insurers to put their own profits and operations ahead of serving consumers and supporting the oral health of patients. The Yes on 2 campaign worked tirelessly to secure support from dental teams and oral health care providers across the country, as well as from Massachusetts dental providers, consumer advocates, and elected leaders here in the Commonwealth.

In November, the Medical Loss Ratio ballot initiative passed by a landslide victory in Massachusetts. Commonwealth voters overwhelmingly approved Question 2, delivering first-in-the-nation dental insurance reform that will assure patient dollars are spent on patient care, protect consumers from large increases in dental insurance premiums, and provide increased transparency of and accountability for dental insurer spending. The better dental benefits and consumer protections afforded by Question 2 are poised to be replicated in states across the country.

Starting on January 1, 2024, dental insurance providers in the Commonwealth will be required to:

- Set the MLR for dental plans at 83%, requiring insurers to refund any excess premium to customers
- Require dental benefit providers to disclose projected medical loss ratio for plans, file the following year's group product base rates by July, and release other specified financial information
- Authorize the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Division of Insurance to approve or disapprove of any increases above the CPI.

This important reform increases accountability and transparency for dental insurers and puts patients first.

## **Communications**

The MDS communications remained committed to going above and beyond this year to support the needs of MDS members and to provide helpful guidance to members. The MDS provided members with timely updates on critical issues they needed to know to support the needs of their dental practices. The MDS stays abreast of what is going on in the Commonwealth and communicates information on any regulations or policies that have an impact on the dental community

Communication channels that are exclusive to MDS members include the weekly eNews, District emails, *Dental Practice Insights*, the *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society*, web content, Regional Trustee Newsletters, Presidential messages, and the District Outreach Communicator emails by the At-Large Trustee. The MDS also communicates via social media platforms. Be sure to follow and engage with the MDS on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

## **Dental Practice Support**

Throughout the year, the MDS has played a vital role in educating members on issues that impact dental practice and the changing landscape of dentistry. One of the key challenges this year is the dental assistant shortage that is affecting dental practices throughout Massachusetts. As a result of this growing workforce shortage concern, the Massachusetts Dental Society's Dental Practice and Benefits Committee is leading a multifaceted campaign to spread awareness and engage key audiences to attract new talent to the dental assisting field. The program is designed to educate people on the dental assisting field and the many benefits of joining a dental team. Components of the program include a dedicated campaign website, direct outreach to high school guidance counselors, paid social media advertising, social media influencer engagement, and state analysis.

### ***Dental Practice Insights***

The *Dental Practice Insights*, which is overseen by the Dental Practice and Benefits Committee, continues to be a well-received member benefit. This tool provides our members with tips they can immediately incorporate into their practices. Tips over the past year have included information on the Board of Registration in Dentistry (BORID), health and wellness, state regulations, staff management, patient communication, and practice management. The email open rate for this feature continues to climb and ranges from 28–60%, depending on the topic.

## **Webinars**

The MDS offered a series of free webinars via Zoom to support the needs of members. Webinars are designed to be viewed from the convenience of a member's office or home. Some webinars offered continuing education credit, while others provided personal and professional enrichment content. When appropriate, the MDS partners with a leading expert to help present the topic. Whenever possible, the webinars are recorded and posted on the MDS website. Members can view past webinars in the online learning section of our website at <https://www.massdental.org/webinars/#personal-and-professional-enrichment-webinars>.

## **Member Assistance Center**

The MDS Member Assistance Center (MAC), which was launched seven years ago, is a member-exclusive service designed to help MDS members get the most out of their membership by providing dedicated staff to answer member questions. Members no longer need to determine the right staff person to call for a specific question; they can simply call 800.342.8747 and get connected to a MAC representative. MAC representatives are knowledgeable on a broad range of subjects, and in most cases, have been able to respond directly to member inquiries. When the answer is unknown, representatives will do their best to track down the answer and find a resolution. The MAC averages 200-300 calls per month. Most of the calls this year were on practice management issues, COVID-19 concerns, regulatory matters, dental benefits issues, and membership.

## **Peer Review**

The MDS Peer Review Program is an important member benefit that helps resolve complaints submitted against members by their patients without the need to go through BORID. Over the past year, the MDS has trained District Peer Review Committee members on the guidelines and processes to follow to ensure compliance with the program.

## **Health and Wellness**

The health and wellness of our members is very important to maintaining a thriving Society. The MDS Dentist Health and Wellness Committee (DHWC) has the important role of educating our members on health and wellness topics.

With a growing concern for the health and wellness of our members in 2020, at the height of pandemic, the Committee launched a Facebook group dedicated to promoting health and wellness guidance to members. Over the past two years, this Facebook community has continued to grow and increase engagement. Approximately 566 members now participate in this private, active community.

The DHWC offered a Health and Wellness corner of the MDS Membership Booth at Yankee Dental Congress 2022. This was an entertaining and educational area that highlighted the DHWC and valuable wellness resources. The committee also hosted a hike through the Blue Hills that members enjoyed on October 23, 2022.

## **Dental Student Support**

The MDS works closely with the three Boston dental schools and hosted several programs for students throughout the year. The showcase event was the student debate that included teams from Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (TUSDM), Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine (BUGSDM), Harvard School of Dental Medicine and a guest team of young dentists. The event was initially scheduled to take place at Yankee, but due to the snowstorm was postponed until March 2022.

The MDS conducted live Signing Day programs at the three Boston dental schools to encourage graduating students to transfer their membership from the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) to the MDS. The MDS also welcomed new students at the three Boston dental schools during their orientations. Either President Dr. Meredith Bailey or Vice President Dr. Abe Abdulwaheed spoke on behalf of the MDS at these luncheon programs encouraging students to get involved in organized dentistry and the MDS.

The MDS hosted an Advocacy Question 2 lunch and learn program in October for students at Tufts and BUGSDM to help students learn more about Question 2 and how they could get involved in supporting the campaign.

The MDS held a student day on April 3, 2022, in Lenox, MA. The visit aimed to introduce third and fourth-year dental students to the idea of practicing in the Berkshires, an area that often experiences a need for dentists. The successful trip gave dental students the opportunity to visit the area and consider the Berkshires as a possible career location following graduation.

## **Membership**

The MDS continues to be one of the strongest Dental Societies in the country, with nearly 74% of dentists in the state participating in the Society. This is a major accomplishment. The profession is also faced with increased regulations, pressure from dental plans and insurance companies on reducing fee schedules, and increased overhead. To stay this strong as a Society is a testament to our members. Ninety-four percent of our members renewed their memberships in 2022. Their ongoing commitment to membership is vital to the continued success of organized dentistry and, ultimately, the profession. The MDS is comprised of a diverse group of members with a shared passion for excellence.

The MDS's efforts were rewarded by winning three awards at the ADA Membership reception last summer. The MDS won the following awards:

- Converted the highest percentage of nonmembers to membership
- Greatest percentage of reduced dues payers to full dues
- Most improved active member retention rate

## **Publications**

The *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society*, the Society's flagship publication, continued setting an example of editorial excellence this past year. The *Journal* is known for providing content highlighting a wide range of clinical and practice management subjects to benefit readers. Articles featured this year included, dental services for children in fluoridated vs. non-fluoridated cities, the perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the oral health of head

and neck radiation patients, building a culturally competent practice, and the use of teledentistry for pediatric dental screenings.

The *Journal* also continued highlighting members with features on 2022 William McKenna Volunteer Hero Dr. Mina Paul and the annual 10 Under Ten recognition program through the Membership Committee.

### **MDS Member Savings Program**

The Business Development Committee met several times this past year to review the existing Savings Program partners. The Committee chose to eliminate partnerships that were not performing well for members and added two new programs. The first program is an expansion of options with Pure Life Dental. New features include:

- MDS Group Pricing with up to 40% off all dental supplies + free shipping;
- AutoShip - a Schedule & Save tool that guarantees you the best pricing on your essentials with zero contracts;
- PureRewards - the most convenient and most rewarding loyalty program in dentistry (free \$10 gift card when you sign up)

Volvo is the second new program offering MDS members \$1,000 (restrictions apply) off the purchase or lease of any vehicle, including the new XC40. Committed to becoming a fully electric car company by 2030, Volvo is one of the world's premier automotive brands and a leader in safety and sustainability.

### **Yankee Dental Congress 2023**

Yankee Dental Congress allows the attendees to *Imagine the Possibilities* as we continue to build back this exceptional meeting for the dental professionals who visit the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) every January. Yankee 2023 continues to deliver innovative learning in an interactive and vibrant environment. Yankee continuing education courses provide attendees with some of the best opportunities to learn and network in the country. We have many highlighted offerings for 2023 including: Yankee Study Club, Forsyth, Recent Graduate Day, and a Business Track, to name a few.

For the very first time Yankee is offering a two-day Multi-Site Summit. A first of its kind, the Summit is a collaboration between multi-site owners and dental professionals that come together as top experts to discuss the evolving dental industry. Designed for business owners who have more than one practice, the summit will include topics on important issues such as scaling, HR, insurance, and other key issues.

The Yankee Dental Congress Awards Ceremony is coming back on a new night, Thursday 5:30-6:30 pm in the Westin Boston Seaport. Join your colleagues in celebrating these dental professionals who have volunteered for Yankee and organized dentistry.

Dentchella is Yankee's exciting new evening event on Thursday starting at 8:00 pm in the Westin Boston Seaport. Join us as Yankee Dental meets Coachella with live bands, entertainment, photos, food, and much more!

MDS members must continue to play a vital part in keeping Yankee strong. Please be sure to shop on the Exhibit Hall floor and take advantage of some of our great programs.

### **MDS Learning**

The Dental Education Committee was tasked with surveying members and their staff regarding continuing education needs and wants. A survey was sent out in late August, and again in September. There were 375 responses, allowing the committee feedback on attendee preference of types of courses, day, timing, and much more. This information will be used moving forward as future programming is planned.

To help keep members aware of any changes and updates, we offered two key educational programs hosted by the Board of Registration in Dentistry:

- BORID Update 2022
- BORID's Licensure Requirements for dental Assistants

**Yankee Study Club**

The Yankee Study Club Continues to gain momentum with over 400 registrants this year. Along with the help of the Founding Members, we hope to expand the program significantly in 2023. The Spring Session will begin March 1, 2023, with the following topics:

- Esthetic Dentistry
- The Effectiveness of SDF Treatment on Caries Lesions
- Posterior Composites
- Single Unit Implant Therapy
- Ectopic Canines

The sessions will be held virtually on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30 pm. Attendees can register for the entire package at a discount, or individual sessions. Once registered, they also have the ability to watch the recorded session.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin C. Monteiro, CAE