

Dentists As Vaccinators— A Necessary Scope of Practice Expansion

By Rosie Wagner, DDS

Dr. Wagner is a general dentist with a practice in Somerville focusing on patients with dental anxiety. She serves on the MDS Foundation Board of Directors and the Middlesex District Dental Society Executive Committee.

On March 11, 2021, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services authorized dentists and dental students to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. This led to a whole new concept: dentists as vaccinators. The idea makes sense for several reasons: We see our patients more often, with two well visits in addition to any procedural visits every year. We have longstanding relationships with our patients, often spanning several generations, and many dentists treat people of all ages and backgrounds. We are providers at the community level, and this leads to a greater level of patient trust and comfort.

Dentists also have a responsibility to be one branch of a patient's comprehensive medical home. We are responsible for knowing the details of someone's medical history and being aware of the connection between oral and systemic disease. We focus significantly on prevention, and preventing disease through vaccination is an important part of treating any patient. Reducing the severity and transmission of COVID-19 and the flu is certainly crucial, as well as preventing oropharyngeal cancers with HPV vaccination. We can make a big difference.

The infrastructure around administering a vaccine is already present in our offices: Infection control, aseptic injection technique, recordkeeping, and handling materials according to manufacturer recommendations. These are tasks we do all day with the rest of our inventory and processes. Administering an intramuscular injection is far simpler than ensuring an accurate IA block, and vaccine records simply go into a patient's dental chart (along with reporting to the Massachusetts Immunization Information System [MIIS], the state's immunization database). The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is offering online immunization training that is free and straightforward (see article on page 9 or visit <https://macovidvax.populationhealthexchange.org/>), and the state provides all COVID-19 vaccines (as well as flu for pediatric patients) at no charge.

So, it makes sense and is a provider's responsibility to include immunizations in practicing preventive health care. But how does a dentist get started? There are four things a Massachusetts dentist will need to get established as an immunizer:

- Onboarding with the MIIS, which is the website that you will use to enter each vaccine you administer. This is a five-minute sign-up process, followed by a brief onboarding. Once established with the MIIS, dentists will also need to sign up for the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP), another short registration. The MIIS has created easy-follow guides on [onboarding](#) and [site registration](#).
- Purchase a vaccine refrigerator and thermometer. The refrigerator is small (like one you might find in a dorm room) and can be stored in your sterilization area, lab, or anywhere that is convenient. The thermometers—also called data loggers—use Wi-Fi to send a monthly report of the refrigerator's temperature to make sure that all vaccines remain safe. The MIIS requests a monthly upload of this temperature log. You can purchase the refrigerator

and thermometer from lab equipment websites or many online retailers such as Amazon (search for "vaccine fridge" and "data logger") and they can be ordered together.

- Use the MIIS system to order vaccines. The state pays for all COVID-19 and pediatric flu vaccines. Your office can then send a medical claim for vaccine administration. (If you purchased the vaccine yourself, as in the case of adult flu or HPV, you can also send a claim for the vaccine itself.)
- Take the free online training for administering the COVID-19 vaccine in Massachusetts. This provides 3.5 hours of continuing education credits and explains everything that's needed for onboarding, administering, and documenting immunizations.

I found the process straightforward, and once I began administering immunizations, I received a very positive response from both my patients and community. When I offer a COVID-19 booster during a patient's routine recall visit, it is simply another quick step in the appointment, and I often administer it while they're still leaning back for their exam. I host regular clinics for both COVID-19 and pediatric flu, and patients always comment on how much quieter, smoother, and faster it is than trying to navigate a busy retail pharmacy or sit in a doctor's office full of patients. Several people have said that they wouldn't have gotten immunized if it wasn't offered at my office (or otherwise wasn't as convenient).

Although I'm an individual immunizer with limitations on the number of people I can treat (note: there are no restrictions on the number of people a dentist can immunize), I feel that I'm helping to improve community vaccination rates and to lower disease transmission. It is an amazing feeling to know that I'm practicing preventive medicine and keeping both my patients and other community members healthy. Dentists have a responsibility to protect our patients as much as possible, and including immunizations in your practice is an easy, inexpensive, and effective way to broaden your scope of practice at a time when it's truly needed.



Dr. Rosie Wagner of the Middlesex District and Dr. Len Radin of the Berkshire District team up to prepare for a COVID-19 booster clinic in late October.



The MDS Values Your Membership

As we near the end of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your membership. The Tripartite of organized dentistry—the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS), along with the American Dental Association (ADA) and your local District Dental Society—are here to support you throughout your career. The MDS strives to serve as the ultimate resource for our members, and that means something different to each individual member.

The MDS represents more than 5,000 dentists and encompasses varying demographics of age, practice, and locations across the Commonwealth. This special network of dental professionals works together to improve our profession and provide the best care possible to our patients. Engaging with fellow members of organized dentistry provides an invaluable support system and an indispensable personal connection with like-minded colleagues. I have witnessed two dentists who worked in the same building meet each other for the first time at a Boston District Dental Society social event. In another District, an MDS member developed a serious health issue and fellow members generously volunteered to see this dentist's patients and keep their office open while they were recovering. New graduates enjoy the opportunity to connect with mentors to learn the intricacies of practice in their local area. The MDS is continuously evaluating ways to provide member value, and we need your feedback. Additionally, we are sending out a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey in early December, so please keep an eye on your inbox and take the survey. You can also stop by the Membership Booth at Yankee Dental Congress 2022 to take the survey.

The Board of Trustees has created a new platform to improve communication this year. Every month, MDS members will receive via email the brand-new Regional Trustee Newsletter. This newsletter will have a personalized message from your Regional Trustee and customized information for your local District. As an MDS member, you have access to protected information on the website that includes Dental Practice Insights tips to help you navigate the business side of dentistry and critical information about changes to the practice landscape that impact you, your staff, and your patients. This year,

the Dental Practice and Benefits Committee formed a Subcommittee dedicated to evaluating the current workforce shortage severely impacting dental offices across the state.

For more than 47 years, the Yankee Dental Congress has been an annual tradition, and we are excited to welcome you to back to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) for Yankee 2022 as we “Explore, Educate, and Engage” together from January 27-29, 2022. Highlights for Yankee 2022 include lectures with trending topics that are changing the dental landscape, such as artificial intelligence, dental robotics, and medical-dental connections. We are also offering new continuing education courses, exceptional hands-on opportunities, corporate forums, office communication information, power marketing, and special programs designed for your entire team. Registration is now open, and MDS members receive special registration discounts. Visit yankeedental.com to learn more. We look forward to seeing you in a few months!

One of the most important functions of organized dentistry is to serve as the unified voice of the dental profession. The MDS Government Affairs Committee has been holding monthly webinars to educate and engage members at the grassroots level by explaining pending legislation at the state and national levels and sharing advocacy opportunities. Health care is local, and we need every dentist to speak to their local representatives with a unified message. Please visit massdental.org/advocacy-events to view previously taped webinars and mark your calendars for future meeting dates.

As Chair of the ADA Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs this year, I must also emphasize the importance of belonging to an organization whose members abide by the ADA *Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct*.

The MDS recognizes this is a challenging time. Please know that the Tripartite of organized dentistry is working hard to ensure you receive the resources you need to be successful and is here to support you throughout your career.

Dr. Meredith A. Bailey
MDS President 2021-2023

Officer Candidates for 2022-2024 Term

Two MDS members, Dr. Jennifer Korzeb and Dr. Kristine Grazioso, are running for the position of MDS Treasurer for the 2022-2024 term. Dr. Korzeb, a general dentist in Haverhill, began serving as MDS Treasurer on July 1 to complete the term vacated by Dr. Philip Howells. She also served as the first At-Large Trustee on the Board. Dr. Grazioso is a pediatric dentist in Cohasset and former Chair of the MDS Government Affairs Committee. Per the MDS *Constitution & Bylaws*, the Trustee Selection and Nominations Committee was scheduled to meet this fall to interview both candidates and make a recommendation to the House of Delegates, which will be held on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at the Seaport Hotel in Boston.

Additionally, current MDS Speaker of the House Dr. Raymond K. Martin, an MDS Past President, is running uncontested for Speaker for the 2022-2024 term. He's held this role since 2018. Learn more about the MDS governance structure at massdental.org/leadership-and-governance.



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of the Massachusetts Dental Society

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Join MDS member dentists as they address a wide variety of topics, including implants, pediatrics, the future of dentistry, and more

NO CHARGE for ADA Members • Registration Required • 1 CE Hour per Course

Thursday, January 27, 2022



Parsia Koleini, DMD

**Implant Surgery
for the General Dentist**
8:30 - 9:30 am



Lisa Simon, DMD

**Is Oral Health Integration
the Future of Dentistry?**
10:00 - 11:00 am



Martin Kaplan, DMD

**Pediatric Tongue and Lip
Ties and Laser Frenectomies**
11:30 am - 12:30 pm



Keri Discepolo, DDS

**The Dentist's Role
in Recognizing Sleep-
Disordered Breathing
in Children**
1:30 - 2:30 pm



Todd Rowe, DMD

**When the Plastic Doesn't
Do What the Software
Says It Will!**
3:00 - 4:00 pm

yankeedental.com/member-spotlight

YANKEE REBATE PROGRAM

*Attend Yankee 2023
for FREE*

ADA members and staff: Purchase \$2,500 of goods or services from Yankee Dental Congress 2022 exhibitors, and receive FREE registration to Yankee 2023!

**Submit your rebate onsite
or at yankeedental.com**

HEALTHY YOU HEALTHY PRACTICE

NEW!

The courses in our “Healthy You, Healthy Practice” track will help you carve a path to thrive in our current environment. Caring for yourself is more important than ever so that you can continue to care for others in your practice.

Thursday, January 27



David Galler, DMD

Dental Burnout: Understanding & Dealing with Dental Office Stress

1:00 - 4:00 pm



Bethany Valachi, DPT

Neck, Back, and Beyond: Preventing Pain with Evidence-Based Ergonomics

2:00 - 5:00 pm

Friday, January 28



Sarah Benton, LMHC

Pandemic Aftershocks: Managing the Personal and Professional Impacts

8:00 - 10:00 am



Lisa Mallonee, RDH

Bugs, Drugs, and Food Fads: Considerations for the Dental Professional

9:00 am - 12:00 pm



Christina DiBona Pastan, DMD

The Chair Yoga Experience: How Yoga Benefits Dental Professionals

2:00 - 4:00 pm



Tom Youngholm

Transforming COVID Challenges into Learning Opportunities

8:00 - 11:00 am



Christina DiBona Pastan, DMD

Mind-Body Professionalism

10:00 am - 12:00 pm



Tom Youngholm

De-Stressing the Dental Profession: Happiness at Work and Home

1:00 - 4:00 pm

yankeedental.com/healthy-you

RECENT GRADUATES

This track of programs has been specifically designed for those who have graduated within the past three years. Learn from experienced practitioners and network with your peers.



Chuck Blakeman

Thursday, January 27

**How to Build a Practice
You'll Never Want To Sell**

8:00 - 11:00 am



Anne Koch, DMD

Friday, January 28

**Main Challenges for Recent
Graduates Performing
Endodontic Therapy**

1:00 - 4:00 pm



Andrew Tonelli, DMD

Friday, January 28

**A Practical Guide for Basic
TMJ Management for the
Recent Graduate**

8:00 - 10:00 am



Carl McManama, DDS

Saturday, January 29

**Exciting, and Not So Exciting,
Trends in Operative Dentistry**

8:00 - 11:00 am



Spear Education's leading dental educators are excited to encourage attendees to rise above recent chaotic times and maintain forward momentum despite unforeseen obstacles. Discover how to create a culture of inspired self-direction and results, plus so much more.



Mitch Ellingson, DDS



Amy Morgan

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Leading the Modern Dental Practice with Data!

8:00 - 11:00 am

How to Build and Grow an Inspired Dental Team

1:00 - 4:00 pm

For complete course descriptions, visit yankeedental.com/spear.

FREE EDUCATION ON THE EXHIBIT FLOOR

Please note that these courses will be held on the **Yankee Exhibit Floor** and will be subject to ambient noise.

NO CHARGE Registration Required

30+
ADDITIONAL
Exhibit-Sponsored
Courses

Attend one of these Exhibit-sponsored innovative courses held right on the Yankee Exhibit Floor free of charge. A special thank you to all of our sponsors. Without their support, these courses would not be possible.



Find these courses and more at yankeedental.com/ce-show-floor.

**WELLS
FARGO**

PAVILION

Wells Fargo wants you to get the most from your practice and it's here to help you through every step of your journey. That's why it's taken its experience working with dentists like you to create tools and programs that can help you through the process of starting, upgrading, remodeling, or relocating your office.

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BencoDental[™] PAVILION

Benco Dental presents five speakers who will offer insightful innovations, top-of-the-line communication techniques, and more.

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Crest + Oral-B

CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

The Crest + Oral B Center for Excellence has a wide variety of topics to be discussed: tools to improve patient care, new protocols and treatments in periodontal therapy, stannous fluoride, nutrition, and much more.

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PATTERSON[®]
DENTAL

PAVILION

Welcome back to the Yankee Dental Congress. Patterson's continuing education will inspire you with ideas for better client service and practice growth.

yankeedental.com/patterson



Membership

MDS Health & Wellness Facebook Group

The MDS Health and Wellness private Facebook group was formed by the MDS Dentist Health and Wellness Committee as a resource to help MDS members improve their overall health and well-being in light of a variety of stresses and challenges. The group is intended to foster discussion and serve as a place to share wellness tips that encourage you to stop for a minute, engage, and take care of yourself. If we are in a good place physically, mentally, and emotionally, then we are better equipped to help those around us. We encourage you to join your 500-plus colleagues who've already signed up at facebook.com/groups/mdshealthandwellness/.



Making It Easy for You to Renew Your MDS Membership

Thank you for being a member of organized dentistry. Please remember that annual memberships for the MDS, the American Dental Association, and your District Dental Society are now up for renewal. You should have received a renewal statement in the mail. If you haven't already submitted your dues, you can easily renew online at massdental.org or by calling the MDS at 800.342.8747, option 6.

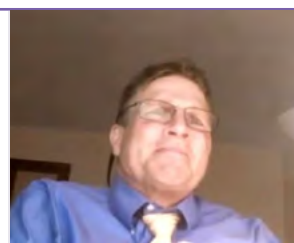
Monthly Dues Installment Payment Option

To make things even easier for our members, the MDS also offers a 12-month dues plan, which allows you to conveniently pay for membership throughout the year with no additional fees or charges. In order to participate, please complete and send in the Dues Authorization Agreement between October 1 and December 31. (You can access the form at massdental.org/12monthplan.) Debits to your checking/credit card will be made on or around the same day each month starting in January. In addition, contributions to the MDS-PAC, MDS Foundation, and other voluntary donations can be included as part of your monthly payments. Learn more and enroll at massdental.org/12monthplan.

How to Renew

To renew online, log in to your account at massdental.org/My-Membership and select "Renew My Membership" at the top of your profile page. If you have any trouble logging in, simply select "Forgot your password?" and enter your email address to reset your password. You can also send a check payable to the Massachusetts Dental Society to 2 Willow St., Southborough, MA 01745. If you prefer to renew by phone, you can call 800.342.8747, option 6.

If you have any questions, please call the Member Assistance Center at 800.342.8747, option 5, or email membership@massdental.org. We appreciate your membership and look forward to continuing to serve you.



Former Trustee Shares Experiences in Second Member Stories Series

On Tuesday, November 2, the MDS Dentist Health and Wellness Committee (DHWC) held

the second in its Member Stories Series with former Metropolitan District Trustee Dr. Jim Cinamon. Before his retirement in 2018, Dr. Cinamon maintained a general dental practice in Framingham for more than 30 years. During the session, he shared some of the knowledge he'd gleaned from his years as a dentist and discussed the mobility challenges and limitations he has faced over the past 15 years.

If you were unable to attend this event, you can watch the recording (and the recording of the first Member Stories session with Dr. Eric Block from last April). Visit the Dentist Health and Wellness Program tab at massdental.org/dhwc to access the links to the recordings. Note that while registration is required to watch, there is no charge.

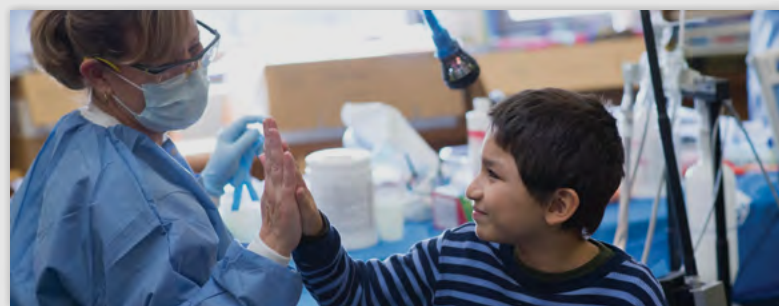
Member Stories are shared in an up close and personal "TED-Talk" fashion, which the DHWC hopes can create a community where dentists can share their stories, struggles, and strategies, and learn from one another.

Do you have an impactful experience to share with your colleagues? Email membership@massdental.org if you are interested in potentially speaking at a future MDS Member Stories event!

N95 Fit Test Kits Available for Members

Fit testing is required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) before a dental professional wears a mandatory N95 respirator on the job, and must be assessed at least annually. In addition, fit tests should be performed: when you switch the model, make, or size of a respirator; when any facial changes occur; or with significant facial weight fluctuation.

Need a fit test for your practice? The MDS has a limited supply of complimentary Gerson Qualitative Fit Test Kits available for members, while supplies last. Please fill out the Contact Us form at massdental.org/contact and include "Fit Test Kit" in the message box. Someone from our Membership Department will reach out to you after the form has been received.



Your Year-End Giving Makes a Real Difference

The Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) Foundation, through its grant programs, continues to improve access to care for thousands of residents of the Commonwealth. With the need greater right now than ever, grants from the MDS Foundation support community organizations as they strive to provide critical programs for the neediest populations. With the end of the year approaching, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support the MDS Foundation's efforts to improve oral health care access. You can visit massdental.org/foundation to donate today!



MDS Career Center

Connecting Talent with Opportunity

The MDS Career Center offers a centralized online job portal for dental professionals. This service will increase your ad's visibility to qualified applicants in your area.

Find Your Next Hire Today



Post your job where the industry's most qualified dental professionals go to advance their careers.



Reach top-notch MDS Career Center job seekers via our exclusive Job Flash™ email.



Search our Resume Bank using robust filters to narrow your candidate search.

MDS members receive a **50% discount** on all ad placements.

massdental.org/career-center

Practice Management

Clearing Up MWRA Permit Confusion

In late August, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) sent a letter to all industry wastewater permittees—including dental offices that are D1 policy holders—referencing an amendment that now has a requirement for submittals to be emailed in addition to post mailed. (D1 permits are required for all dental offices with amalgam waste.) This letter generated much confusion and several calls to the MDS Member Assistance Center. The MDS has been informed by MWRA Director of Toxic Reduction and Control Matthew Dam that there is no action that D1 dental permit holders need to take with this amendment now unless the office is selling or transferring ownership.

The next compliance report is due April 30, 2022. The MWRA will be mailing all D1 permit holders a compliance report form, along with submittal instructions, in the February/March 2022 timeframe. All permit holders should have a copy of their permit. The required submittal information on page 5 of the D1 permit lists:

VI. THE REPORTS AND NOTICES YOU MUST SUBMIT TO THE MWRA:

A. Biennial Report due April 30 every two years: You must submit a Biennial Group Permit Compliance Report (Compliance Report) to the MWRA by April 30 every two years, on even calendar years, on a report form provided by the MWRA (unless the form requires a different report date). The MWRA will provide you with the report form by March 15 every two years. You must contact the MWRA by March 31 if you did not receive your Compliance Report form so that a form may be provided to you. You are not excused from filing the Compliance Report on time if you did not receive a copy of the report form, unless you notified the MWRA in writing by March 31 that you did not receive that form.

If you have any questions pertaining to the permit conditions or any information set forth in this revision, please contact MWRA Industrial Coordinator Keary Simmerman at Keary.simmerman@mwra.com or 617.305.5638.

Board of Trustees Adopts the ADA's COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendation

At its August 20, 2021, meeting, the MDS Board of Trustees voted to adopt the American Dental Association (ADA) recommendation that strongly encourages dentists and their team members to be vaccinated for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. The ADA, which notified members of this recommendation in a July 28 email, is not currently calling for mandated vaccinations. Then-ADA President Dr. Daniel J. Klemmedson stressed that the policy urges vaccination in agreement with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, but that the CDC isn't calling for mandated COVID-19 vaccinations for health care professionals at this time.

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccines, please visit massdental.org/vaccine-information.

Massachusetts DPH Offering Free Online COVID-19 Vaccine Training

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health Immunization Division has launched a complimentary accredited online training course for providers interested in becoming COVID-19 vaccinators. "COVID-19 Vaccine Training: Storage, Handling, Administration and Safety" is available to all health care providers, pharmacists, EMTs, dentists, dental hygienists, and vaccine coordinators.

After completing the course, providers will understand: the process for ordering and receiving the COVID-19 vaccine; COVID-19 vaccine storage and handling requirements (including transport requirements); how to manage vaccine inventory, including accessing and managing product expiration dates; ACIP COVID-19 vaccine recommendations; the vaccine provider's role in vaccine administration; the principles of COVID-19 vaccine preparation; and vaccine adverse reactions and reporting.

Learn more and register at <https://macovidvax.populationhealthexchange.org/>.



Practice Management Q&A

Question: Can I Hire and Train a Dental Assistant Myself?

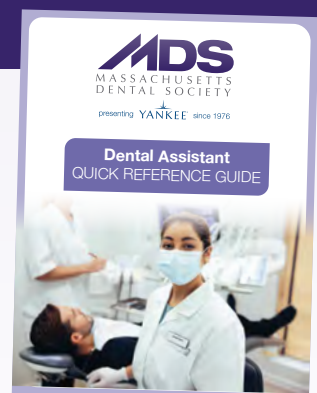
Answer:

The MDS recognizes that finding dental assistants in today's economy is very difficult and encourages members to consider hiring someone brand new to the field and provide on-job-training (OJT). Your candidate needs to be at least 18 years of age, not previously licensed or registered as a dentist, dental hygienist, or dental assistant, and not in violation of any rule or regulation by the Board of Registration in Dentistry (BORID). There is no specific form to complete, but you will need to submit a notarized letter of

intent to BORID for each OJT candidate. In order to qualify, the OJT candidate must have zero prior experience working in a dental office. The MDS recommends that you send the notarized letter of intent on your practice letterhead and include:

- Name of dentist and license number
- Name of OJT trainee
- Dentist's signature

Please note that BORID must receive the notarized letter before the period of unlicensed training may begin. An OJT candidate may practice as a dental assistant under the supervision of a Massachusetts licensed dentist without being registered by BORID for a preliminary, one-time period of up to six consecutive months to commence from the beginning of the initial period of OJT. If you need more help, the MDS-produced "Dental Assistant Quick Reference Guide" provides the information you need. Download your copy at <https://www.massdental.org/~media/MassDental/Members/Member-Resources/Laws-and-Regulations/Dental-Assistant-Quick-Reference-Guide.ashx>. Additionally, the MDS Dental Practice and Benefits Committee is hosting a webinar on the dental assistant shortage on Tuesday, December 7, at 7:30 pm. Register at https://massdental.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_qan8jHHDQR2o6zouXJOexg.



Practice Management

DENTAL PRACTICE INSIGHTS

from the **MDS** Dental Practice and Benefits Committee

Trust and Value Your Employees

Trust is paramount for a successful patient dental health professional relationship. It should also be the foundation for a successful practice work environment. The MDS Dental Practice and Benefits Committee encourages dental practice professionals to work together to create an environment where team members trust one another.

One way to create a practice based on trust is to value all of your employees. Your staff was hired for a reason, whether that's their experience, knowledge, or how willing they are to learn and grow within a role—so take the time to acknowledge the uniqueness they bring to the practice. Let your staff know that you see their hard work and place great emphasis on what they contribute to the team. Trusting your team members inspires them to perform better, communicate more, learn, and improve—all important goals for your practice. Remember this is an on-going process that takes time to evolve and requires effective communication and clear practice values.

MassHealth Reminds Providers Never to Share User IDs

MassHealth providers conduct day-to-day business with MassHealth electronically—via the Provider Online Service Center (POSC), point-to-point connectivity, and the Interactive Voice Response system. All users must have an authorized MassHealth user ID and password to access these systems and must abide by the Virtual Gateway (VG) terms and conditions that each user attests to upon initial sign on to any VG-hosted application (e.g., POSC). MassHealth wants to remind its providers that each user is solely responsible for the use of their ID and should not share it with anyone. Sharing user IDs is a violation of the terms that each user has attested to. MassHealth monitors shared user ID activity on a regular basis. Any user ID that violates the terms and conditions may be subject to termination.

Additionally, each provider organization must be sure that access to the POSC is accurately maintained to ensure that only those persons that should have access to the organization's data can view, submit, or receive information on behalf of the organization. This includes terminating user IDs once a staff person or affiliate has left your organization or terminated the affiliation. MassHealth encourages providers to establish and maintain a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual review of all user access to safeguard the organization's MassHealth information.

If you have any questions, you can contact the MassHealth Customer Service Center at providersupport@mahealth.net or call 800.841.2900.

Is Your Practice Coding Correctly?



The ADA wants to help your dental team master dental coding and achieve accuracy and efficiency when submitting claims. By taking the ADA's on-demand "Dental Coding Certificate: Assessment-Based CDT Program" course, your staff will practice identifying codes that apply to common pro-

cedures and treatments. When you register, you will also receive the *CDT 2022 and Coding Companion Kit*, which is required for the course and includes: *CDT 2022: Current Dental Terminology* print book and e-book; *CDT 2022: Coding Companion: Training Guide for the Dental Team* print book and e-book; and the CDT 2022 App for computers, iOS, and Android. Attendees will:

- Understand key terms used in dental coding
- Confidently complete the ADA Dental Claim Form
- Effectively use the CDT manual and its companion to find the right codes in real-world settings
- Become familiar with the 12 service categories and how codes are structured

Attendees can earn 4 CE hours after passing the assessment. Learn more and register at <https://ebusiness.ada.org/education/viewcourse.aspx?id=412>.

MassHealth Holds Hearing on Reimbursement Rates



On October 15, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services issued an emergency adoption of regulation 101 CMR 314.00: Dental Services (to be renamed as "Rates for Dental Services") per-

taining to MassHealth provider reimbursement rates (see <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2021/10/15/101-cmr-314-emergency-adoption-clean.pdf>). The rate increase is 7.33%, and the estimated cost for the state is \$23.6 million. The MDS Government Affairs Committee reviewed these proposed changes and provided testimony at the public hearing held remotely on Friday, November 5, 2021.

Learn more about MassHealth rates at mass.gov/regulations/101-CMR-31400-rates-for-dental-services.

COVID-19 Resources

The MDS continues to monitor COVID-19 and its impact on dentistry. Members can access a multitude of resources, including frequently asked questions and information on the COVID-19 vaccine, at massdental.org/coronavirus.

Member Savings Program

How the Right vCIO Can Help Your Practice Increase Profits and Reduce Risk

Steve Messineo

Mr. Messineo is business development officer at MDS Member Savings Program partner Citara Systems, Inc.

Many dental practice owners I have talked to view their IT network (i.e., computers, servers, internet connections, communication systems, anti-virus protection, etc.) as a necessary expense of doing business these days. Unfortunately, those who do are missing out on a greater return on investment in their IT networks because more often than not, they don't have an IT network plan that aligns with the growth goals they have for their dental practices. This is usually because they don't have an understanding of how their computer networks can make their practices more money, nor do they have an expert they can rely on to show them how.

Additionally, their view of IT systems as a necessary and costly expense often puts them at greater risk for exposure to ransomware and other forms of cyberattacks because they are often trying to reduce their expenses around IT to save money.

Some dental practice owners will even try to manage their computer networks on their own, including trying to do their own computer updates and purchasing basic anti-virus programs that don't provide the necessary protection they need for their practices to avoid being hacked and potentially being exposed for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violations. This self-managed approach can save them a little money in the short term but can cost them dearly in the long term if a breach were to occur.

Finally, many dental practice owners or their staff will often say, "We have an IT provider. We are all set." They may be right, but part of making any practice system work is making sure one evaluates that system periodically for performance.

Unfortunately, most managed IT service providers do not perform quarterly reviews on the IT networks they manage for the dental practices they work with. Additionally, dentists and their staff don't ask for these reviews because they are too busy focusing on day-to-day operational tasks, including treating patients. This again increases their risk for loss related to IT instead of helping them increase profits.

So, how does a dental practice owner and their staff take advantage of all the components of their IT network to increase profits in their practices? The answer is by working with a virtual chief information officer (vCIO), who is an IT network and business expert who understands how all the components of a practice's IT network can work together the right way to optimize performance, security, and profits for a practice.



Essentially, a vCIO is to a practice's IT network as a dentist is to the health and well-being of their patients' teeth. vCIOs encourage a preventive and proactive approach to IT network planning and management, much like dentists encourage patients to brush and floss their teeth to avoid major dental problems.

Working with a vCIO allows a dental practice to make the proper investments in its IT networks as it grows that are in alignment with best practices, performance standards, and security standards that all dental practices need in order to be profitable and reduce risk.

An exceptional vCIO will meet with practice owners and managers on a quarterly basis to review performance and develop planning around a practice's IT needs—including HIPAA compliance reviews, hardware updates, and cash-flow planning—for periods of up to two to three years in the future. This provides the dental practice owner with a vision for increasing profits and reducing IT-related risk as the practice continues to grow.

If you are interested in evaluating your current IT network provider's IT plan and vCIO performance, Citara's Member Savings Program partnership with the MDS will allow you to do so for free! Just visit massdental.org/Citara-Systems for more information or to schedule your complimentary IT network review today.



ADA TV Is Your Waiting Room Superhero

ADA TV—an MDS Member Savings Program partner—is a user-friendly, high-tech entertainment and marketing system for waiting rooms that empowers your dental practice to customize and stream content that will educate, entertain, and promote your services to patients on the TV located in your reception area.

Upgrade your waiting room with ADA TV—a better, faster, and stronger Amazon Fire TV Platform—for just \$75 a month. Sign up at https://new.pbhs.com/ada_email_ada_tv_sep21/ and you'll receive a complimentary Amazon Fire TV Stick (while supplies last).

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¹ All programs subject to credit approval and loan amounts are subject to creditworthiness. Some restrictions may apply. The term, amount, interest rate and repayment schedule for your loan, and any product features, including interest rate locks, may vary depending on your creditworthiness and on the type, amount and collateral for your loan. Products and restrictions are subject to change. Bank of America may prohibit use of an account to pay off or pay down another Bank of America account.

² For the limited time beginning with Practice Sales Acquisition (PSA) applications submitted on September 13, 2021, and ending with applications submitted on or before March 31, 2022, and booked and funded by June 30, 2022; a promotional fixed rate of 1.89% per annum for the first 24 months of the loan will be applied for qualified, approved loans only. Excludes all other Practice Solutions products, including, but not limited to: refinances, established, startups, debt consolidations, commercial real estate, and any product that contains a variable rate. Not eligible with interest only payments. To be eligible for the interest rate offer the loan must be a minimum of \$250,000; loan terms must be 10 to 15 years in duration, include a five-year prepayment agreement; and the borrower, before loan closing, must have a demand deposit account with Bank of America that will serve as the primary business operating account of the borrower, and which demand deposit account must be maintained for the life of loan. If the borrower fails to maintain this demand deposit account with Bank of America at any time during the life of the loan, this promotional rate shall terminate, and the interest rate for your loan will increase by 1.00%. Your rate after the promotional period ends will be fixed for the remaining term, up to 15 years.

³ For the limited time beginning with applications submitted on July 1, 2021, and ending with applications submitted on or before December 31, 2021, and interim projects opened by April 30, 2022, can take advantage of a 2.99% per annum fixed rate of interest for the life of the loan on qualifying approved Practice Solutions secured term Start-up loans only. Start-up loan may be for a first, second or third start-up location. Promotional offer excludes: practice expansions, practice relocations, practice renovations and practice acquisitions (Shells & Jumpstarts). A prepayment fee will be applicable during the first five years of the loan term. Excludes Practice Solutions lines of credit, refinances of existing Practice Solutions loans, commercial real estate loans, equipment loans and any product that contains a variable rate. To be eligible for the fixed interest rate offer of 2.99% per annum for the life of the loan the borrower, before loan closing, must have a demand deposit account with Bank of America that will serve as the primary business operating account of the borrower, and which demand deposit account must be maintained for the life of loan. If the borrower fails to maintain this demand deposit account with Bank of America at any time during the life of the loan, this promotional rate shall terminate, and the interest rate for your loan will increase by 1.00%. Promotional rate is not applicable during the project phase of the loan, and during the project phase, the interest rate will be a per annum fixed rate of 12.00% for first time practice owners, and a competitive market rate for established practice owners.

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Guest Board Member Spotlight

Welcome to the Board of Trustees Spotlight, where you will get to learn a little bit more about the volunteer dentists who help lead the Massachusetts Dental Society and who advocate tirelessly for the profession and their fellow members.



Name: Elizabeth Alpert, DDS, MPH
Specialty: General Dentistry
Region/District: 5/Boston
Dental Education: University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine (DDS); University of Washington (GPR, PGY-1 Hospital Dentistry, and PGY-2 Special Care Dentistry); Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (MPH)
Number of Years of MDS Membership: Two

Why did you decide to seek the Guest Board Member position on the MDS Board?

It was a wonderful opportunity to learn from leaders in organized dentistry. From a public health perspective, I was excited to learn how the MDS evaluates and implements evidence-based policies promoting oral health equity throughout the Commonwealth.

Have you volunteered with the MDS in another capacity? If so, what made you volunteer?

Not yet! Since 2018, I loved being a part of the Seattle King/County Clinic Leadership Team, where we work to organize free dental, medical, and vision services over a four-day event. Now that I'm in Massachusetts, I'm looking forward to volunteering with the MDS. Volunteering has helped me find a direction in dentistry (public health!) that I am truly passionate about.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

Exploring New England's hiking trails!

What's one thing your colleagues would be surprised to learn about you?

Right now, I'm balancing four different jobs: private practice, teaching dental students at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), working on research through HSDM's department of oral health and epidemiology, and teaching dental hygiene students at the Forsyth School of Dental Hygiene. I love the combination of clinical dentistry and public health, and I'm always learning from those positions.

What one piece of advice would you give to a new dental school graduate?

Be kind to yourself. Dentistry can be so difficult, and unfortunately you tend to learn the most from your mistakes. Mentors and supportive colleagues help to keep things in perspective. Finding a path in dentistry that you are excited to pursue—even if it's non-linear/different from what you thought you'd be doing—definitely helps to find a better work-life balance.

If you weren't a dentist, what would you be?

A journalist or pastry chef!



Name: Ana Keohane, DDS, DMD
Specialty: General Dentistry
Region/District: 5/Boston
Dental Education: Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine
Number of Years of MDS Membership: Five

Why did you decide to seek the Guest Board Member position on the MDS Board?

I wanted to learn more about the different duties Board members have and to have a clear understanding of organized dentistry.

Have you volunteered with the MDS in another capacity? If so, what made you volunteer?

Yes, I have. I worked with Mrs. Kathy Held, who was part of the Yankee Dental Congress 2016 Program Committee, and who asked me if I wanted to join the Committee. I accepted the opportunity, and it was a great decision. I have been an active member of this Committee since 2016.

What is the most important member value that the MDS delivers?

For me, the MDS has provided the opportunity to learn about joining efforts with MDS members, and it has allowed me to work to contribute to the dental profession. Some opportunities have included participating in the different MDS Committees, serving as Secretary of the Boston District Dental Society for the second year, and now a Guest Board Member.

Have you been surprised to learn what the Board does? If so, can you explain what and why that surprised you?

I have! I am amazed by the knowledge each of the Board members has and how they work together. This allows them to make important and positive decisions that change the future of dentistry in Massachusetts.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I love to spend time with my family. I also love exploring new places.

What's one thing your colleagues would be surprised to learn about you?

I asked one of my close friends and he said, "Ana, you are easy to work with, and you are always happy and in a good mood. This makes people who otherwise may feel uncomfortable, comfortable."

What one piece of advice would you give to a new dental school graduate?

Get involved in your local and state Dental Society.

What one word best describes you?

Happy

If you weren't a dentist, what would you be?

A teacher. I enjoy teaching and mentoring others.

Guest Board Member Spotlight



Name: Dylan J. Weber, DDS
Specialty: General Dentistry
Region/District: 5/Boston
Dental Education: University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Dentistry
Number of Years of MDS Membership: Two

Why did you decide to seek the Guest Board Member position on the MDS Board?

Having served on the American Student Dental Association Board of Trustees, I was eager to further my involvement in organized dentistry after graduation. When applying, the opportunity of serving as an MDS Guest Board Member seemed to provide the perfect introduction to the functioning of the MDS while also providing a platform for me to represent and advocate for the newest dentists entering our profession.

Have you volunteered with the MDS in another capacity? If so, what made you volunteer?

During my first year of membership with the MDS, I served on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force and am currently Parliamentarian for the Boston District Dental Society. Being introduced to organized dentistry while in school, I have seen firsthand the unique ability we have to advocate for our profession. Most new graduates have not had enough experience to understand the importance of this advocacy. I strive to be an example for dental students and new graduates on the importance of our involvement in the MDS.

What is the most important member value that the MDS delivers?

The value of member benefits certainly changes based on which demographic of membership is being polled. In my experience as a recent graduate, support and advocacy have the greatest value thus far. The Class of 2020 entered the profession with our last four months of education completely erased. Additionally, we were faced with adjusting to being new clinicians while simultaneously navigating a pandemic no senior dentist was prepared for. Knowing the MDS was fighting for the protection of our members during this time is an invaluable member value.

Have you been surprised to learn what the Board does? If so, can you explain what and why that surprised you?

Entering my year as a Guest Board Member with previous board experience, I have been surprised by the camaraderie within the MDS. The friendships made thus far are insurmountable and a testament to how genuinely the Board cares about the members at large.

What's one thing your colleagues would be surprised to learn about you?

I was a spin instructor throughout dental school and intended to instruct after moving to Boston; however, the pandemic has put a bit of a pause to that goal. Send me a friend invite on Peloton!

What one piece of advice would you give to a new dental school graduate?

Get involved! The impact and presence of organized dentistry is so much more than a “lunch and learn” with free food in dental school. The opportunity for leadership development, education opportunities, and advocacy for our profession are critical aspects of our success as dentists. Start small—reach out to your local District for open opportunities. You will not regret it!

If you weren't a dentist, what would you be?

I would own a local storefront dedicated to artisanal home goods and décor! I have a passion for interior design and the excitement of hosting a well-curated dinner party. I would love to have the space to bring that passion to others.

Name: David C. Zaluski, DDS, FAGD
Specialty: General Dentistry
Region/District: 3/Southeastern
Dental Education: Creighton University School of Dentistry
Number of Years of MDS Membership: 12



Why did you decide to seek the Guest Board Member position on the MDS Board?

I was very impressed with the guidance that the MDS provided to members during the early days of the COVID 19 pandemic. March 2020 seems like a lifetime ago, but I will always remember it as the most challenging time to be a dentist. My office—like many across Massachusetts—was open for emergency treatment only. The MDS provided constant updates and guidance related to COVID-19. It organized personal protective equipment (PPE) donations. Seeing the work of the MDS made me proud to be a member. I decided that once we could meet again in person, I would volunteer.

Have you volunteered with the MDS in another capacity?

In the past, I have volunteered with the MDS at Fenway Park for Team Smiles, where MDS members and staff provided preventive and restorative dental treatment for children from Boston area schools. These events provide a great service, an opportunity for patients to connect with their local community health center, and a chance for members to work together for the community.

What is the most important member value that the MDS delivers?

I find that MDS membership delivers value throughout my career. At this point in my career, I enjoy the continuing education offered at the MDS headquarters and at Yankee Dental Congress. My favorite courses would have to be the Minuteman one-hour clinical sessions. I think they may be favorite courses for other attendees too. It's pretty common for them to sell out.

Have you been surprised to learn what the Board does? If so, can you explain what and why that surprised you?

During my Board orientation, one of the MDS staff showed me photos of the amount of PPE that was donated in April 2020. Nearly every inch of floor space in every cubical in every room at the MDS headquarters was occupied by bags and boxes of PPE! After the PPE arrived, MDS staff and volunteers sorted and distributed the PPE to doctors around the state.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

My wife and I have three boys, ages 4, 8, and 10. The boys are in Cub Scouts and enjoy camping year-round—even in the winter.

What's one thing your colleagues would be surprised to learn about you?

As a hobby, our family started keeping bees in our backyard. We started with our first hive five years ago and are still at it today. Two of our neighbors have joined us, too. I am fortunate to practice in a rural area in southeastern Massachusetts and get beekeeping advice from many of our patients. There is always something new to learn.

What one piece of advice would you give to a new dental school graduate?

Find, hire, and retain a great team! I have a great staff that works well together. A good team makes for a pleasant workday and a positive experience for you and your patients. If you are looking to work as an associate, take a moment to speak with the hygienists, assistants, and the front office staff.

If you weren't a dentist, what would you be?

An airplane pilot!

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

ASSOCIATE DENTIST—Part time for quality private practice located 20 miles southwest of Boston. One to two days per week. This fantastic opportunity can lead to practice ownership in 1–2 years. Some experience and/or GPR preferred. Please email advertising@massdental.org and put MDS Box 1506 in the subject line.

ASSOCIATE GENERAL DENTIST—A well-established group general dental practice looking for an experienced, dedicated associate dentist for a full-time position, with the possibility of a full partnership for the right candidate. Several years of experience or a general practice residency are advantageous. Senior partner has recently retired. Candidate must be a caring individual who is committed to providing quality patient care. We currently use Dentrix office management software, Gendex digital sensors, and the CEREC Digital Imaging and Milling system. As a thriving practice for over 40 years, our patient base continues to grow. Our patients are like friends and family to us. We have a great working atmosphere and relationship with our staff. Salary and percentage packages are available and negotiable. Western Massachusetts is a great area to live, work, and raise a family in. We are in close proximity to Boston, New York, and Vermont attractions. If you are interested, please send resume to Dr. Frank J. Mitera and/or Dr. Timothy J. Young, Ludlow Family Dentistry, PC, 257 Kendall St. Ludlow, MA 01056. Call 413.583.6574 or email us at dr.mitera@ludlowfamilydentistry.net. Our fax is 413.547.8909.

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ADVANCED RESTORATIVE PRACTICE FOR SALE IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY—Successful advanced restorative fee-for-service practice of 39 years is located in an idyllic college town in beautiful Berkshire County. This T.H.E.-designed four-operator, 2,000-sq.-ft., modern office in a standalone building with occupied rental apartment provides room for possible expansion. Desire to sell with flexible options to remain active in transitioning and mentoring as buyer desires. Contact dkny1962@rocketmail.com.

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How to Reply to an Ad with a Private MDS Box Number

Reply to an MDS Box classified ad by emailing advertising@massdental.org (include the Box Number as your subject line) or mail your response to: MDS CONNECTION Classified Box _____, Two Willow St., Suite 200, Southborough, MA 01745. All responses will be promptly forwarded to the advertiser.

Note

The ads published here were contracted prior to the launch of the new MDS Career Center and Classifieds Ad portal (see ads on page 8 and below). Ads placed after May 1, 2021, are posted exclusively online.

SELLERS—If you are considering the sale of your dental practice, we offer more than 25 years of dental experience to provide you confidential expert advice. We work closely with you, the seller, and your professional advisors to help mediate a transaction that makes good common sense while keeping professional fees as reasonable as possible. We take pride in the fact that we have never had to advertise a practice in order to sell it. We have sold some of the premier practices in the Greater Boston area and we look forward to helping you. Please contact Arthur B. Gordon, Northeast Dental Consulting, Ltd., at 978.774.2400. Fax: 978.750.1444. Email: arthur@thedentalbroker.com.

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