

**Sama Abdul-Aziz, DMD**  
**Jonathan Batlle, DMD**  
**Joshua Hurlburt, DDS**  
**Manish Juneja, DMD**  
**Justine Karanian, DMD**

**Hongsheng Liu, DMD**  
**Kyle Medeiros, DMD**  
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**Daniel Tracy, DDS**



Since 2005, the Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) and the MDS Membership Committee have joined forces to recognize the “10 Under Ten”—10 MDS Member dentists who have been in the profession for 10 years or less and are enthusiastic about their profession, organized dentistry, and patient care. To qualify for the 10 Under Ten distinction, nominees must have graduated from dental school in the past 10 years, be current MDS members, and have made a significant contribution to the

profession, their community, and/or organized dentistry. A call for nominations was sent to MDS Members in the fall and solicited on the MDS website and eNews. Nominations were reviewed, and final selections were made by the MDS Membership Committee in December 2022.

On the following pages, you’ll learn more about your colleagues who were selected as the 2022 10 Under Ten dentists—the future of dentistry.



## Sama Abdul-Aziz, DMD

**Current Residence:** Cambridge, MA

**Hometown:** Wayland, MA

**Office Location:** Massachusetts General Hospital

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, 2018

### **Your nomination submission mentions you are the program director of the MGH General Practice Residency in Dentistry. Tell us why you became involved in this program.**

I fell into this role, and hospital dentistry, serendipitously. I was drawn to dentistry because of its greater implications on overall health. While in dental school, I became fascinated with learning about medical conditions, their symptoms and management. Learning about medicine broadly helped me understand the patient more comprehensively and made patient care more fun for me. This knowledge allowed me to simplify otherwise complex patients by recognizing patterns and connections between their overall health and oral health. I applied this approach to a teaching initiative while I was in dental school and, in turn, discovered a passion for teaching. Around the same time that I discovered a passion for medicine and teaching, I was contemplating postgraduate programs. I discovered that a General Practice Residency was training in hospital-based dentistry in an academic environment that promotes teaching and lifelong learning. It was a perfect marriage of my interests. I was matched into the Massachusetts General Hospital General Practice Residency (GPR) in Dentistry and returned a couple of years later as its program director.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

I was drawn to healthcare from a young age due to a desire to help others, and found dentistry to be a unique field within healthcare. I became especially drawn to dentistry as I began to learn about the interconnectedness of oral health to overall health. I found that this was a facet of dentistry I hoped to delve into, and one I hoped I could make an impact in. Now as a practicing dentist, I appreciate the procedural nature of the field and the ability to develop meaningful connections with my patients.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

Working at a hospital, I often see patients that have not been able to seek dental care elsewhere due to their complex medical conditions.

I appreciate new patient comprehensive examinations, especially with those patients, as it is a chance to establish a connection and provide options to the patient to help them improve their health.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

If I didn't become a dentist, I would have loved to pursue a career in architecture. For a myriad of reasons, I chose dentistry and like to think that I am an architect of the mouth! I My mother had a career in architecture, and I especially enjoy marveling at buildings and discussing design with her. I enjoy traveling to see architectural styles of the past and present.

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

In my role as program director, it has become much easier to take my work home with me. Prior to this role, there was no way I could perform dentistry at home, outside of the office! Now, I have many responsibilities to ensure the GPR program is running effectively that are completed outside of the clinic setting. This was a hard adjustment, initially. With time, I have learned that staying organized, creating lists and systems, and setting boundaries ensure I am maintaining work-life balance. That being said, time management is an area that can constantly be improved upon and changes with evolving demands at work and in my personal life. I have found that being flexible and adaptable helps reduce the stress associated with handling the unexpected.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with family and friends, cooking new recipes, and playing tennis when the weather permits!

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS serves as a great source of knowledge and information for dentists and the public. It provides a sense of community and a network to dentists, which is important, as many dentists otherwise work independently or with a small cohort of colleagues. The MDS also works to advocate on behalf of the dental community, and the impact of this was evident this year as

there was a major piece of dental legislation on the state ballot.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

Though I am not yet out of my first 10 years of my career, I do not think I would do anything differently. However, throughout my career thus far, I have learned the importance of embracing change and challenges, and being comfortable feeling uncomfortable, as this is where a lot of important learning occurs! I try to impart these lessons to my residents, as well.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Perhaps this is too late by the time graduation comes, but save all your notes and lecture slides! The knowledge you receive in dental school is immense. It is difficult to extract all that knowledge the first time around, especially when patient care experiences are limited. As you begin to practice, you will be amazed by the different and new information you will begin to glean from those dental school slides and notes. And, for those planning to practice general dentistry, highly consider an advanced general dentistry residency program (GPR or AEGD). These programs help you establish mentors and broaden your horizons regarding the scope of dentistry.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

My mentors have played a tremendous impact on my career. I have turned to my mentors for guidance, support, and as inspiration for various career paths. My mentors have also helped open opportunities for me.



## Jonathan Batlle, DMD

**Current Residence:** Chestnut Hill, MA

**Hometown:** Gainesville, FL

**Office Location:** Westwood, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, Fenway Health AEGD Residency

### Your nomination submission mentions you provided dental care to the LGBTQ community at the Fenway Community Health Center. Tell us how that experience has shaped your dental practice.

My Advanced Education in General Dentistry program at Fenway Community Health Center significantly helped shape the dentist I am today. Not only did I work with a variety of highly skilled dentists, but I got experience treating patients of all different backgrounds. Many members of the LGBTQ community come to Fenway Health because that's the only place they feel comfortable receiving their healthcare. Everyone deserves the same respect, no matter their race, gender, ethnicity, or financial status. Everyone is entitled to their own health and well-being!

### What made you choose dentistry as a career?

My mother and father were the main reason that I chose dentistry as a career. My father is a dentist and my mother is a hygienist, so I have been immersed in the profession my whole life. It wasn't until I went on my first dental mission trip to Ecuador that I committed to pursue dentistry as a career. I assisted my father with extracting a tooth on a child who was in significant pain. The overwhelming gratitude expressed by the child's mother really opened my eyes to the impact that dentistry can make in the world. Not only can you completely eliminate pain, but you can completely transform someone's self-confidence. It is such a blessing to be a dentist because of the positive impact on people's lives.

### What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?

For me, it would actually be a group of procedures. Nothing is more gratifying to me than taking a painful tooth with decay into the pulp and restoring it to full function. This involves a root canal procedure, followed by a post and core, then prepping the tooth for a crown. I use a Primescan Scanner to take digital impressions and a Primemill to deliver a same-day crown. To me, that is my favorite part of general dentistry. A patient can walk in with the tooth on the verge of needing an extraction, and I can restore it to proper form and function.

### What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?

One thing that would surprise people is that I DJ as a hobby. My roommate in dental school was a DJ all through college, so he introduced me. I love all types of music, and it's even more fun when you are the one mixing and blending them together. During the pandemic, many people adopted new pets such as cats and dogs, and I bought a mixer. It is so much fun playing great music for my friends and family to enjoy!

### When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?

I think the best way to manage your time is to plan your day the night before. Call me old school, but I have a small orange notebook that I use to write my tasks down and cross them out when I am done. I started doing this recently and my production has skyrocketed. I also set digital reminders using my watch and iPhone if I need a reminder at a specific time. Write it down somehow! That's the key.

### What do you do in your free time?

In my free time, I like to stay active as much as possible. My fiancé, Colleen Oleynik, and I share that same passion. Most days after work we meet at Lifetime Fitness to stretch, run, and lift weights. Dentistry is such a demanding profession physically and mentally, so having some time for self-care is crucial. No matter how busy your day is, you should always spend at least 20–30 minutes focusing on your health. In addition to the gym, we enjoy skiing, hiking, running, and taking dental CE courses. I also enjoy organizing events for the MDS Health and Wellness Committee. Stay tuned for more events!

### What impact does the MDS have on the profession?

Dentistry is such a unique profession because of the amount of organization we have in our dental societies. I am lucky to be a part of an organization like the Massachusetts Dental Society because they truly look out for the best interests of all dentists. I mean, look what we were able to do with the "Say Yes on 2" campaign! This is the first piece of legislation that has ever been passed to regulate dental insurance companies. This is only the first step,

and many other states may soon follow. I am fortunate to be part of an organization that fosters service and camaraderie. I am so appreciative that Meredith Bailey recruited me for a leadership position in the Massachusetts Dental Society. It has been quite rewarding so far!

### Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?

Looking back at the first four years of my career, I wish I would have gotten involved with the MDS sooner! The networking and advice you can get from more experienced dentists is truly invaluable. Even as a student, there are so many ways to be involved with the MDS.

### What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?

My biggest advice to a graduating dental student is to remain open-minded to learning anything and everything you can about the profession. Wait a few years to decide that you don't like a certain procedure. I have found that once you gain experience, procedures become easier and more enjoyable. Since I pushed myself early in my career, I can perform surgical extractions, molar root canals, and the placement of implants. A lot of this is because my instructors really pushed during my AEGD program to be the best dentist I can be. These procedures can be challenging, and it's extremely rewarding to be able to provide a wide variety of procedures to your patients. Also, surround yourself with mentors! I found amazing mentorship in my AEGD program and in the MDS, which really has helped propel me forward.

### What role have mentors provided in your career?

Mentors have significantly helped shape the person I am today. It's important to have mentors inside and outside of dentistry. My biggest mentors are my parents, as they have helped guide me through life and are always looking out for my best interests. I have also found amazing mentorship in the Massachusetts Dental Society. Having mentors in my AEGD residency gave me confidence to perform procedures that were outside of my comfort zone. Surrounding myself with people smarter than me has always been beneficial to my development as a dentist and as a person.





## Joshua Hurlburt, DDS

**Current Residence:** Boston, MA

**Hometown:** Grand Ledge, MI

**Office Location:** Newton Centre, MA

**Specialty:** Pediatric Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

### **Your nomination submission mentions you are active in the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism promoting oral health among the autism community. Tell us what inspires you in your work with autistic children.**

Working with children with autism is exceptionally rewarding. Just how everyone has a different personality, every child on the autism spectrum is their unique, individualized person with their own personality. It takes time to talk with parents and/or caregivers to start to understand the child at hand. I love being able to sit down with families and develop strategies on how to get their child adjusted coming to the dental office while creating a sensory-friendly environment and teaching them how to properly care for their child's oral health. It is so rewarding to see parents of children on the autism spectrum be at awe at how much their child can actually improve at the dentist and actually be excited to come back and visit.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

I always knew I wanted to work in healthcare and help families out, but initially, I was unsure how I would go about that. When I started out in college, I took a research class where we had speakers from all sorts of scientific and healthcare fields. One week, we had one of the associate deans from the dental school come and talk to us and it was eye-opening for me. I never thought about dentistry as a career before, and the more I looked into it, the more and more I fell in love with it. I shadowed dentists and I felt lucky that I found a profession that would allow me to combine my passion for science with my desire to want to help people every day.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

My favorite procedure to do is placing sealants. Sealants tend to be an easier segue into restorative dentistry for children, as it involves more than cleaning their teeth but less than needing a shot for resins and crowns. So, when the day comes that a child needs more invasive dental work, they are more likely to trust me and be more at ease with the entire dental process because they had a great and easy experience with the sealants. Not only can placing sealants

be a great way for children to get comfortable with going to the dentist, the sealants also greatly reduce the caries risk on teeth—so it is a win-win for all!

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

Before dentistry, I actually worked in conflict resolution. I worked mostly with college-aged students and helped them understand the root causes of their conflicts and strategies on how to resolve them. I even ran a number of mediations among roommates, property owners, lawyers, parents, and more. From this experience, I was able to learn how to effectively communicate with others and how to resolve conflicts in a peaceful yet meaningful way.

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

The cheesy truth is, I absolutely love my job and what I do, so when I come to work, I don't really feel like I am "working." I get to help kids every single day and help parents and families learn how to properly care for their oral health. I really think that is so amazing, so on those harder days I just remind myself of all the good we do and it helps a lot. Besides that, I surround myself with great friends and family, so when I am away from the office you can still catch me always smiling.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

I am a lifelong learner, so during my free time you can find me watching documentaries (usually historical ones), listening to podcasts, or learning whatever new language I find interesting at the moment.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS has a tremendously positive impact on our profession. Not only does the MDS provide a voice for all dentists, it provides great opportunities to meet and network with other dental professionals.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

I am not really sure I would do anything differently. I have learned from each and every experience I have had with dentistry, whether

that be a "good" or "bad" experience—I still was able to grow as a practitioner and become the pediatric dentist that I am today.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Believe in yourself and be confident! You accomplished so much just by graduating dental school itself. You know your dentistry, now it is just time to put it into action. Don't be afraid to ask for help or run over to your laptop to pull up the latest articles on a new procedure, but still hold on to your confidence.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

Mentors have been unbelievably helpful during my career. It started out way back in dental school when my pediatric dental professor saw that I was a pediatric dentist before I saw it in myself. I still will call him up here and there when I am stumped on a case, and I have continued to learn from him. This continued during residency, and I have built great relationships with my faculty and I am thankful to call them friends of mine. One of my most recent mentors has run a very successful practice and has taught me so much about patient care while learning the ins and outs of running a business. Without ALL my mentors (dental or not), I certainly would not be where I am today. Like the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," you can also say: "It takes a village to raise a pediatric dentist."



## Manish Juneja, DMD

**Current Residence:** Franklin, MA

**Hometown:** New Delhi, India

**Office Location:** New Bedford, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

### **Your nomination submission mentions you held a webinar entitled “The Path to Becoming a U.S.-trained Dentist” and created a video as part of Predental Week. What are some of the tips you shared with dental students?**

When preparing to apply to dental schools in the U.S., it's important to research the schools you're interested in and familiarize yourself with their enrollment numbers and admission requirements. You can gain insight into the process by speaking with current students or alumni. Additionally, stay updated on recent research, improve your critical-thinking skills, and explore opportunities for publishing papers or working with faculty. A well-written personal statement can make a big difference, so take the time to craft one that effectively highlights your strengths and personal characteristics. And don't be discouraged by setbacks or failures—they can be valuable learning experiences that will ultimately help you succeed.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

I chose a career in dentistry because it offered a flexible lifestyle and the opportunity to use my creative and artistic skills to help others. I have found it to be a very fulfilling profession, and I feel proud of the positive impact I have on my patients' lives. Before deciding on dentistry, I researched the various options available to me as a dentist, such as teaching. Teaching in dental schools in India for several years before moving to the U.S. was particularly rewarding for me, as it allowed me to inspire and mentor the next generation of oral health care professionals.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

As someone with a master's degree in oral pathology, I find it extremely rewarding to assist patients in identifying oral diseases that may go unnoticed and can have a severe impact on both oral and overall health. Using my knowledge and skills, I have been able to spot lesions on radiographs in their early stages and refer them to oral surgeons for biopsy, preventing further deterioration. Additionally, I

find handling emergency situations particularly gratifying, such as helping patients in severe pain who have possibly not slept for a week and need same-day treatment.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

Not many people are aware that I play the guitar. The pandemic made my days more hectic as I was occupied with emergency treatment and dealing with added stress. To cope, I decided to pick up guitar playing again, after not playing for a long time. After two years of consistent practice, I am proud to say that my 11-year-old son and I are now able to play Indian Bollywood songs, which can also be found on my YouTube channel.

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

Managing time effectively is crucial. To achieve the best results, it's important to avoid multitasking and focus on one task at a time. The motto is "Do it once, do it right." It's important not to rush, even when completing large tasks, and to allocate enough time for quality work. In the office, it's important to avoid overbooking patients to avoid having to repeat work and deal with patient complaints. It's also important to set aside time for relaxation and self-care—for example, spending time with loved ones and playing a musical instrument.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

During my leisure time, I make it a priority to spend time with my family and deepen my understanding of music. One of my favorite moments is when my son and I play guitar together as a duo.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The Massachusetts Dental Society has been a great support system for dentists during the pandemic, offering a wealth of information and resources to help them navigate the challenges. Their hard work and dedication are truly admirable. One of the most significant contributions of the MDS is the platform it provides for networking with colleagues and experienced professionals in the field.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

Reflecting on my early years in dentistry, if I could go back and do anything differently, it would be to recognize that each patient is unique and requires a personalized approach. Not every treatment plan is the same and different patients have different needs. Being more versatile in my treatment options would have been beneficial for everyone involved in the care of my patients. This can be achieved through continuous education and finding the right mentor.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

My top advice for any new graduate in dentistry is to constantly ask yourself how you can improve in all aspects of your practice, whether it be specific procedures, communication skills, interpersonal relationships at work, or financial management.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

I regret not finding a mentor earlier in my career. I have been fortunate to have two mentors, one from dental school back in India, and the other being the lessons I've learned from my own mistakes. I have a friend who graduated before me and has played a vital role in helping me navigate difficult situations. It is crucial to have someone you can turn to for guidance, especially in the demanding field of dentistry. A mentor who is readily available to help with just a call away can make a significant difference in one's life. From discussing more efficient ways to perform a specific procedure, to managing complications, mentors have been a valuable asset to me, and I am grateful to have a friend always there to lend a hand.





## Justine Karanian, DMD

**Current Residence:** Northampton, MA

**Hometown:** Avon, CT

**Office Location:** South Deerfield, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

### **Your nomination submission mentions you have served on the MDS House of Delegates. Tell us how that experience has impacted your career as a dentist.**

My involvement as a delegate to the MDS House has allowed me to participate firsthand in the governance of our profession. It has given me an even greater understanding of the importance of district and state communications and how we as a profession work together on state and regional levels to accomplish specific goals and tasks that benefit all our MDS member dentists. It's very important to be actively involved in organized dentistry, and my involvement allows me to continue to provide the best care for my patients.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

Throughout my life, science has always captivated my interest. Growing up, I had a handful of different dental procedures, and I remember trying to watch what my dentist was doing in the reflection of the overhead light. My fascination and commitment with the art and science of dentistry piqued after I shadowed my cousin. It was then that I realized dentistry would afford me the opportunity to help people in a meaningful way, to work with my hands, to have a great work-life balance while allowing me to continue to explore the true art and science of the profession. Due to my own experiences in the dental chair, I knew I would have a higher level of empathy for my patients' experiences. I love what I do and love to help people realize that dentistry doesn't have to be painful or scary!

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

As a general dentist, I really enjoy the variety of procedures I perform on a daily basis. If I had to pick a favorite procedure, it would be crown preparations utilizing CAD/CAM technology. I love how interactive it can be with my patients, and it allows them to understand the procedure on a different level. It's advantageous to

the patient to deliver the definitive restoration on the same day. Additionally, I love being able to customize each crown in the office in order to achieve the most aesthetic results, which incorporates the artistic side of dentistry.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

How much I love watching *Jeopardy!* And that I would love to be a contestant one day!

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

Time management can be challenging when you are passionate about what you do for a living. However, I think it's important to separate work and home life. Once I walk out of the office, I leave my work responsibilities behind me; and once home, I relax into my home life, always with music in the background (especially while I'm cooking dinner!).

### **What do you do in your free time?**

Anything active that gets me outdoors—hiking, snowboarding, bike riding, playing sports, going to the beach, etc. Spending quality time with my family and friends is extremely important to me, as well.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS has a very profound impact on our profession in a variety of ways and provides many invaluable resources to its members. As an organization, the MDS advocates for our members and profession, as well as for our patients—as evidenced by our recent MLR victory! It's important to provide a unified voice in order to promote positive change. I'm proud to be a delegate to the MDS House as well as a guest board member of the Board of Trustees.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

There is not much that I would change or do differently. The path that I took has led me to become the dentist and person that I am today.

I feel very fortunate to have found an incredible, well-established private practice to join right out of dental school. If I were to do one thing differently, it would be to establish a work-life balance from the very start of my career.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Dentistry can be physically demanding . . . pay attention to your ergonomics and be sure to make time for exercise in order to keep your muscles and body strong. Additionally, dentistry is always changing and evolving. In order to be an exceptional dentist, it is important to be passionate about continuing education and lifelong learning beyond licensure requirements.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

My mentors have played a significant role in my career. From guiding me to dental school, to shaping the way I practice dentistry on a daily basis, to my involvement with my local district and MDS, I would not be where I am today if it weren't for my mentors.



## Hongsheng Liu, DMD

**Current Residence:** Lexington, MA

**Hometown:** Henan, China

**Office Location:** Methuen, MA

**Specialty:** Endodontics

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

**Your nomination submission mentions you participated in the accreditation process for the Department of Endodontics at Boston University School of Dental Medicine. Tell us about how being part of this process has influenced your dental career.**

The accreditation is an examination for our program at the national stage. Working with all the requirements and preparing all the materials are very exhausting during that time. However, as a course director in the BU endodontic program, I have learned how to organize and prepare every detail of my course to meet national standards, or to show we are better than the standards. Being a part of this process and helping to pass the accreditation makes me proud of our endodontic program and encourages me to work harder to make my residents ready for their future career.

**What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

It was totally coincidental for me to choose dentistry as my professional career. My father passed away very early when I was young. I have seen how much stress my mother was in when he was ill. At that time, I decided I would work in the medical field after college. However, when I was applying to the best medical school in China, as a subconscious thought, I decided to send my application to their dental school at the same time. Fate told me that I would be a dentist instead of a surgeon. The dental school picked me instead of the medical school. I accepted it and found out I LOVE it and feel very lucky to be a dentist, actually!

**What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

Of course, my favorite procedure is root canal treatment. It is almost ten years after my graduation, and it is amazing that my eyes still light up every time I see my finishing PA with lateral canals. The root canal system is very complicated and unique on every tooth I have seen. Doing a root canal treatment feels like solving a complex puzzle and gives all different levels of difficulty. It challenges your patience, your focus, your passion. When you win the game, your reward is your patient's appreciation with a big smile on their face and a great relief from

getting rid of their pain. Nothing is better than enjoying playing the "game," helping people, and most importantly, getting paid.

**What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

Everyone in dentistry is very careful to protect their hands, because that is our career. Five years ago, I started to learn how to ski and really love it. From then on, I have been skiing every winter whenever I can. My friends call me crazy since they know how much risk I am taking. I have had some bad falls and luckily, nothing was broken. Knock on wood.

**When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

I have been working very hard since I started my own office. Throughout the years, I realize the work never ends. What we should do is just do our best to get everything under control and finish within the working hours. I don't bring work back home. As a routine, I finish all my work during the day and never bring it to the next day, either. We have so many things in our life, work is only one part. I used to take work as the first option. Now, I realize my family and my life are the most important part in my life. No secret to share, unfortunately. Just enjoy our lives and work hard.

**What do you do in your free time?**

I enjoy nature very much. I bring my family to hike during summer and ski during winter. Reading is another important part of my free time.

**What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS represents us in our society. Our profession is very hard and running a business sometimes is even harder. Talking to legislators and fighting with insurance companies are consistent battles for all of us. We must unite to make our voice louder and stronger in fighting for our rights. With everyone actively participating, we have a chance to change.

**Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

I think my decision throughout these years has been good, luckily. I am a very conservative person. If I had enough ambition and confi-

dence when I first walked out of dental school, I would have opened my own office much earlier. If you are competent with dentistry, you should trust your ability to be successful at a very early stage of your career. Starting your own business early will build up your solid financial plan at an early age.

**What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Practicing dentistry is a great career. I hope you can find the joy of working in dentistry. We have a career-long learning process, too. Once you get comfortable with normal dental work, you should take more CEs on advanced dental techniques. If you are very interested in a specialist career, I hope you can find that calling after you tried general dentistry for several years.

**What role have mentors provided in your career?**

I consider one of my BU alumni, who is a world-known endodontist, as my mentor since I joined BU endodontics. He showed everyone how to achieve the most beautiful root canal treatment. Looking up to someone who has such a high quality of work is very inspiring for me. He raised my bar of work quality from the first day I met him, and that bar never gets lowered.





## Kyle Medeiros, DMD

**Current Residence:** Somerset, MA

**Hometown:** Fall River, MA

**Office Location:** Fall River, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

**Your nomination submission mentions you have served on the advisory board for the dental assisting program at Diman Regional High School. Tell us about how your experiences on this board can shape young dental students.**

Bringing a fresh perspective from someone who uses the most up-to-date technology in dentistry has changed the curriculum taught to the dental assisting students. I was able to encourage the school to invest in an intraoral scanner and 3-D printer to keep the students on the cutting edge. Serving on this board has also given me the opportunity to offer my offices as a place for the students to get hands-on experience to bridge the gap between what they are taught in the classroom and what is expected in the workplace.

**What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

This may be cliché, but I truly feel dentistry chose me. I did not have any family members in the dental field, nor did I have some traumatic dental experience that sparked my interest in dentistry. Ever since I can remember, I have always loved going to the dental office and being amazed with the intricate instruments and buttons. I would often play with the suction and air water syringe when the hygienist stepped out of the room. In high school, I started shadowing a dentist. On the first day, the dentist inserted a complete upper denture and the patient broke out in tears of joy as she looked into the mirror. Seeing firsthand how a dentist could impact the life of another person really made an impact on me.

**What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

I enjoy all aspects of dentistry, which is why I never had any interest in specializing; however, if I did have to pick a favorite procedure it would be extractions. Often patients are extremely nervous prior to extractions. I like being able to do a "scary" procedure and make it look simple. Patients have the misconception that extracting teeth requires strength, when in reality it's a game of physics.

**What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

I think people would be surprised to know that throughout dental school I commuted about an hour and a half each way and worked a few part-time jobs for construction contractors.

**When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

If there is a secret out there, I hope to find it one day. Dentistry is a very demanding trade, emotionally and physically. Owning a dental practice adds another full-time job on top of treating patients. Once the day's work is done at the office, I make sure to completely disconnect as best as I can prior to walking into the house. Once I'm home, I try to focus 100% on my wife and two little boys.

**What do you do in your free time?**

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family. We go camping as often as we can and just enjoy doing anything outdoors.

**What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS provides a voice for our profession. They act as a great resource and a strong advocate to continue the advancement of dentistry in the state.

**Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

Looking back, I do not think I would change anything. I have been through good and bad times in my career, but ultimately it has led me to where I am today. I am a firm believer that life experiences mold you into the person you are. Because of this, I feel like my past has made way for my future.

**What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

First, get to know your patients and let them get to know you. Patients feel extremely vulnerable going to their dental appointments. They are more at ease if they feel like they are being treated by a person instead of the "Dentist." Second, never think about money when treating a patient. If you treat patients with respect and provide quality treatment, you will be busy

enough and never need to worry about making money. Third, stay humble! No matter how much experience you have, dentistry is not an exact science and teeth can be unpredictable. I have seen subpar dental work last for years and perfect root canals fail in months. Never criticize dental work done by another dentist, as you have no idea what the circumstances were when they performed the dental work.

**What role have mentors provided in your career?**

Mentors played a huge role in my career. I was fortunate enough to find my first and major mentor at the age of 16. He taught me all aspects of dentistry and owning a dental practice, the good and the bad. Sometimes people only provide you with the good experiences, but I can tell you that you will learn more from bad experiences because they have an unforgettable impact. I was also lucky enough to find a few more mentors in different specialties and some not even in dentistry. This was important because they had a much different perspective that I was able to learn from and incorporate into what I needed.





## Anisha Pandya, DMD

**Current Residence:** New York, NY (previously Boston, MA)

**Hometown:** Bridgewater, NJ

**Office Location:** New York, NY (previously Boston, MA)

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

### **Your nomination submission mentions you worked at the Boston Veteran's Affairs Healthcare System. What did you find fulfilling in your work with veterans?**

Serving those who have served our nation is such a special experience that I will always treasure. It's amazing to be able to give veterans the care they deserve, and in the process, it is so rewarding to learn of their service, unique perspective on life, and overall appreciation. Veterans are truly some of the best patients.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

I had a fantastic pediatric dentist who later brought on an associate who acquired the practice. I shadowed and worked with her throughout high school and college and was able to explore firsthand what a career in dentistry would be like. Additionally, many of my family members came from countries and situations with limited access to dental care, so learning more about the field and helping people attain great oral health was even more fascinating and motivating for me.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

If I had to choose, I enjoy the challenge of aesthetic cases because it allows me to lean on the artistic side of dentistry and it's really gratifying when patients are pleased with the results. But what really drives each experience is the relationships I've fostered with patients. Helping them overcome dental anxiety, improve their oral health, and achieve their end goal with whichever procedures are needed, makes completing those treatments that much more enjoyable.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

When I was younger, my biggest and most serious dream was to become the first female president of the United States. Not so much anymore!

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

I'm big on prioritizing and setting boundaries to prevent myself from getting overwhelmed. I also live by my calendar.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

I'm really close to my family, so I will take any opportunity to see them—being with loved ones is rejuvenating for me. I enjoy taking long walks, exploring museums, and trying out new restaurants. My husband and I also love traveling abroad to different countries when we both have time off.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

MDS has proven to be a leading association in protecting the field of dentistry and advocating for both dentists and our patients, not just in Massachusetts, but also nationally. On a smaller scale, it provides opportunities to collaborate with other like-minded people in a profession that is always advancing and can be somewhat isolating.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

I do really believe that everything happens for a reason and has led me to where I am today. All the challenges were worth overcoming and have only made me a better dentist and individual.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Continue to challenge yourself. Give yourself space to be uncomfortable because those are the times you'll grow and learn the most.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

My mentors are some of the best people. They have recognized my personal strengths and interests and have encouraged me to take advantage of new opportunities. I will always be grateful to have such a solid support system and look forward to being that for others someday.



## Samantha Parad, DMD, RN

**Current Residence:** Boston, MA

**Hometown:** Wakefield, MA

**Office Location:** Boston, Brighton, and Wakefield, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Tufts University School of Dental Medicine (DMD)

### **Your nomination submission mentions you provide dental care to adult patients with special healthcare needs. Tell us what inspires you to work with these patients.**

Before dental school, I was a practicing nurse, and these experiences grew into a passionate desire to integrate oral and systemic healthcare to treat vulnerable populations at increased risk of oral diseases. This passion, and my patients themselves, inspire me to ensure that patients with special healthcare needs reach both optimal dental health and their greatest potential.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

While I grew up in a home with a talented dentist, I don't think I considered dentistry seriously until I was a nursing student at the University of Pennsylvania, when I had an opportunity to explore dental medicine as a volunteer on the Penn Smiles Bus (Penn's mobile dental clinic). Although I enjoyed the patient interactions and intricate dental procedures almost immediately, the physical and intellectual challenges of inter-professional care and patient management are what continue to inspire me to this day.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

My favorite dental procedure is the comprehensive exam, which involves developing a patient-dentist relationship while integrating a patient's medical history with their dental complexities in order to establish an individualized treatment plan. It has been especially challenging and rewarding to complete a comprehensive exam and treatment plan for patients with special healthcare needs, who may be under general anesthesia and require evaluation and treatment under significant time constraints.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

At the age of 14, I was fortunate to become the youngest ice skater to be selected for Team USA's synchronized ice-skating team, the Haydenettes. I trained rigorously with my teammates—19 skaters from myriad backgrounds and countries—and through practice, determination, and teamwork, we became two-time national champions and two-time world championship bronze medalists.

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

I've been managing a busy life since as long as I can remember. While in high school, I balanced a rigorous skating, training, and traveling schedule, and later, my clinical nursing rotations and extracurricular activities in college forced me to develop time management skills. I think my biggest secret is my knack for accurately estimating the time required to complete a task. In any case, life is about priorities, and I make sure that my weekends are for quality time with family and friends.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

I enjoy spending my free time with family and friends. My action-packed weekends usually consist of several outdoor adventures (running, biking, hiking, traveling), indoor activities (fitness class, reading, cooking/baking), or a chance to relax and reflect.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS is fundamental in the development and progression of the field of dentistry and the protection of our practice. The MDS provides the necessary resources to dentists to assist with practice, lifelong educational opportunities, policy advocacy, and professional development. For me personally, the MDS has been a valued support system and has provided incredible opportunities for me to grow in dental school, throughout my residency, and now during my time as a dentist.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

I am very appreciative of the experiences I have had thus far (and so early on in my dental career). Having had the opportunities to train at the largest teaching hospital, Harvard Medical School, and to return to Tufts University School of Dental Medicine as an assistant professor and the youngest faculty member, I would not have changed any of my career decisions. I am so grateful for my experiences, for my mentors and colleagues, and for where I am today.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

Keep your opportunities open! Although I was originally focused on working in private practice after graduating from dental school, I am so happy to have completed my general practice residency, which has opened so many more doors than I could have imagined. Had I kept a closed mind, I never would have been able to return to academia as faculty or work in such a wonderfully rewarding and complex hospital setting.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

My co-resident and I were incredibly fortunate to be mentored by one of our attendings, Dr. Jarshen Lin, who took us under his wing and treated us like family. He encouraged us to explore our professional opportunities, to pursue our personal passions, and to celebrate one another's milestones. He, his colleagues, and the community they helped to build, turned an incredibly challenging year into one of my happiest and most rewarding. While Dr. Lin will always be a mentor, he has also welcomed me as a colleague, and he continues to do so for his current mentees. I strive to follow his example as a teacher every day.





## Daniel Tracy, DDS

**Current Residence:** Providence, RI

**Hometown:** Holliston, MA

**Office Location:** Seekonk, MA

**Specialty:** General Dentistry

**Dental Education:** Columbia University College of Dental Medicine

### **Your nomination submission mentions you are a volunteer at the Good Samaritan Hospital dental facility in the Dominican Republic. Tell us about some of your experiences there.**

I've made two separate trips to the Good Samaritan Hospital in La Romana in the Dominican Republic. The office where I work (Perfect Smiles), partnered with Design Ergonomics and the Scheduling Institute, helped fund the dental clinic, which opened in 2018. At the time, the clinic was solely focused on emergency care. On our first trip in 2019, in addition to treating patients, we helped implement systems to increase patient comfort and to allow for the dental clinic to see more patients and shift toward comprehensive/preventative care. When we returned in 2022, it was really rewarding to see the passion that the local dentists had with regards to growing their patient base after having seen a decrease due to the pandemic. Dentists from across the Dominican Republic traveled to join us in the clinic to learn more about the systems our office uses and to help the local patients. In addition to the work at the hospital, we traveled in a mobile dental van to the sugarcane fields (bateyes) to provide dental services to the people who work and live in the bateyes with very limited access to healthcare.

### **What made you choose dentistry as a career?**

The mix of art and science was something that really appealed to me when I was considering a career path. I enjoy working with both my mind and my hands. I also love to help people and make them smile, so dentistry was the perfect career for me.

### **What's your favorite procedure to perform and why?**

My favorite procedures to perform involve cosmetic work. My favorite part of dentistry is being able to help someone smile with confidence, especially when many of these patients have spent years hiding their smile. I also really enjoy helping apprehensive patients feel at ease and no longer dread going to the dentist.

### **What is the one thing people would be surprised to find out about you?**

I learned how to cook by watching YouTube videos during the pandemic, and now it is one of my favorite things to do.

### **When it comes to work-life balance, what's your time management secret?**

This is something that I'm still figuring out, but it starts with having a great team that I work with every day at the office as a work family. I also feel that it is important to make time for activities that are relaxing or stress-relieving.

### **What do you do in your free time?**

I am a big Boston sports fan, especially the Patriots and the Celtics. I also enjoy cooking, yoga, snowboarding, and golfing.

### **What impact does the MDS have on the profession?**

The MDS is a great organization that helps connect dentists and dental professionals throughout the state and across the country. The annual Yankee Dental Congress is incredibly valuable for obtaining CE, networking, and growing clinical skills.

### **Looking back on the first 10 years of your career, is there anything you'd do differently?**

The last few years I have been stretching daily and doing yoga multiple times a week. I wish I had started this earlier in my career or even back in dental school. I feel that this will be a big benefit to prolonging my career in a field where many of us end up with back and neck pain.

### **What advice would you give to a graduating dental student?**

I would encourage a graduating dental student to start taking CE right away, even though the first license renewal cycle does not require it. I feel that there is a lot they can benefit from additional education right off the bat to better serve their patients.

### **What role have mentors provided in your career?**

I have been lucky enough to have a few accomplished dentists who have taken a mentor role with me in my young career. Through these individuals, I have learned a lot of the intricacies about practicing dentistry that are not taught in significant depth while in school, whether it be ergonomics, advanced treatment planning, treating patients with various forms of sedation, or interacting with insurance companies, among many other things.