

Executive Director

As Executive Director, I herewith submit the following report:

Our Board developed and approved a relevant Strategic Plan for implementation beginning July 1, 2019. This plan provides the direction for the next three governance years. A three-year plan is a lifetime in any organizational world. This constantly changing world of organized dentistry forces us to become nimbler and more flexible to respond to the unforeseen challenges over the next 36 months. The focus on the Strategic Plan goals is needed to provide programs and information that are current, accurate, and relevant to our members.

The major governance transition plan has been finalized and the first year of its implementation started July 1, 2019. This transition plan is the roadmap for a new and more relevant governance structure to enhance District, Regional, and overall Society effectiveness to serve and represent our members better.

Governance

The 2018 and 2019 House of Delegates were significant in readying the Society for its transition to its new governance structure. President Dr. Janis Moriarty appointed a Governance Implementation Task Force to take the resolutions that had been passed at the past two House of Delegates meetings and continue to flush out the details needed for the transition, much of which is included in the resolutions before you today. The 2019-2021 Trustee Selection and Nominations Committee selected the first-ever three Regional Trustees and the first-ever At-Large Trustee, who will be on the Board beginning in July 2020. For the 2020-2021 governance year, there will still be seven District Trustees, with the full transition happening in 2021 when those Districts will also be represented by Regional Trustees.

Government Affairs

As the leading advocate for oral health in Massachusetts, the MDS actively engages with state lawmakers to ensure that the issues of our members and patients are front and center.

Through a renewed effort to build upon the success of Beacon Hill Day, our annual lobby day, we have put more of an emphasis on our grassroots meetings. These small, informal meetings with legislators allow members to have frank conversations with local senators and representatives. As these events

continue to grow throughout the state, we will undoubtedly improve our legislative position.

Discussions with legislators continue to focus on the dental benefits industry in Massachusetts. Although the insurance lobby in the state is aggressive and strong, our patient-focused message is breaking through.

As with any public campaign, it is vital for the profession to speak with one cohesive message and voice. With a collective, focused message, we can succeed in the legislative and regulatory arenas. We are always stronger when we work together.

Delta Dental

Delta Dental of Massachusetts is the largest dental insurance provider in the Commonwealth and this market share dominance must be closely watched for its impact on dentists and patients in the state. Therefore, the MDS Board continues to focus a significant amount of energy on the many issues related to Delta Dental, and the way it conducts business.

After a long wait, the Division of Insurance (DOI) issued its ruling in June 2019 on the Delta Dental of Massachusetts fee methodology for Delta's Premier and Premier PPO plans. Effective October 1, 2019, Delta Dental Premier and Delta Dental PPO fees were decreased by 8.8% (for non-incentive/standard fee schedule rates) from the corresponding 2018 Premier and PPO fees. However, a practice may be eligible for an incentive fee schedule of an additional 1% that would result in a 7.8% reduction. This incentive applies to locations where ALL providers participate in both the Total Choice PPO and Premier networks and accept electronic payment (EFT) from Delta Dental of Massachusetts.

The MDS Board's decision was to support the Delta fee methodology proposal. This was a difficult decision for the Board to make, as it included a rebasing for participating providers' reimbursement, but the decision was made after a thoughtful, comprehensive review, which included an independent actuarial analysis. While the Board was not happy to agree to a fee reduction, it valued maintaining the Delta Premier product and the continued DOI oversight while protecting patient care.

We believed that MDS and Delta had a mutual understanding that Delta would add an assignment of benefits (AOB) provision to all its offerings, which would help level the playing field for nonparticipating providers. Unfortunately, Delta has not moved forward with this action despite numerous conversations and requests from MDS leadership. The DOI will review the fee methodology results annually and the Board will decide whether to continue to monitor the proposal in the coming year.

In addition, MDS President Dr. Janis Moriarty created a Delta Audit Task Force that has been charged with reviewing the current audit practices in place at Delta. The Task Force has surveyed the membership and collected data from approximately 175 members. The Task Force will be bringing its findings forward to Delta and recommending procedural changes.

Delta Dental Antitrust Lawsuit

On November 26, 2019, state Dental Society leaders were informed that the American Dental Association (ADA) filed an antitrust class action lawsuit against Delta Dental Plans and the Delta Dental Plan Association. The lawsuit alleges that independent Delta Dental carriers across the country violated federal antitrust laws. MDS President Dr. Janis Moriarty is a named lead plaintiff on behalf of her own practice, as well as on behalf of the class of all Massachusetts Delta Dental providers if the court certifies this case as a class action. As described in the ADA statement:

ADA complaint alleges that Delta has engaged in anti-competitive conduct and violated federal antitrust laws by allocating territories of operation and dividing the national market in order to restrict competition and reduce reimbursement rates to dentists.

Dental Practice Support

Throughout the year, the MDS has played a vital role in educating members on issues that impact the dental practice and the changing landscape of dentistry. One of the key challenges this year was educating members on how to make decisions on what networks to participate in.

Dental Practice Insights

The *Dental Practice Insights*, which is overseen by the Dental Practice and Benefits Committee, continues to be a well-received member benefit. This tool provides our members with a weekly tip that they can immediately incorporate into their practices. Tips over the past year have included information on the Board of Registration in Dentistry (BORID), state regulations, claims processing, human resource

management, credit card processing, dental benefit plans, and practice management. The email open rate for this weekly feature continues to climb and ranges from 28–60%, depending on the topic.

Lunch-and-Learn Webinars

The MDS Dental Practice and Benefits Committee introduced a series of complimentary lunch-and-learn webinars using Zoom web conferencing technology. These webinars focus on an important practice management topic and are designed to be viewed from the convenience of a member's office. This lunch-and-learn model, coupled with the MDS Learning webinars, provides a great opportunity for dental teams to come together and learn useful, practical information in a team environment. When appropriate, the MDS partners with a leading expert to help present the topic. The webinars are exclusive to MDS members. Webinars were held monthly throughout the year. Depending on the topic, one continuing education (CE) credit is available to participants attending the live webinar. Whenever possible, the webinars are recorded and posted on the MDS website; however, the recorded versions—apart from the “Pain Management” webinar—are informational only and not eligible for CE credit. Members can view the past webinars at <http://www.massdental.org/Member-Resources/Practice-Management/Practice-Tools/Webinars>. The “Pain Management” webinar is eligible for CE credits upon completing an online test.

The Lunch-and-Learn webinars have been very successful, and the evaluations have been most appreciative of this member benefit. Some topics covered during the year included:

- [Bonding and Cementation \(November 2019\)](#)
- [Successful CAD-CAM Restorations: Start with the Preparation! \(October 2019\)](#)
- [MassHealth DentaQuest Update \(April 2019\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Law \(April 2019\)](#)
- [Massachusetts Water Resources Authority \(MWRA\) Regulation Revision \(April 2019\)](#)

Member Assistance Center

The MDS Member Assistance Center (MAC) was launched in August 2015. The MAC, a member-exclusive service, was designed to help MDS members get the most out of their membership by providing dedicated staff to answer member questions. Members no longer must determine the right staff person to call for a specific question; they can simply call 800.342.8747 and get connected to a MAC representative. MAC representatives are

knowledgeable in a broad range of subjects, and in most cases, have been able to respond directly to member inquiries. When the answer is not available, representatives will track down the answer and find a resolution. The MAC averages 450–500 calls per month. Most of the calls are on practice management issues, dental benefits issues, regulation concerns, or membership renewals. MAC representatives also call new members to welcome them to the Society. In the future, MAC representatives will be also conducting outbound calls to help educate members about important issues impacting the profession.

Peer Review

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

Collaboration

The MDS has developed close collaborative relationships with several organizations to advance common interests and to help bridge the gap between medical and dental professionals. Collaboration has occurred with the Massachusetts Medical Society on its Oral Health Committee. Other external collaborations the MDS participates in include the Opioid Task Force, the Better Oral Health Committee, the MassHealth Advisory Group, Tobacco Free Massachusetts, the Oral Health Advocacy Taskforce, and the MassPMP Advisory Task Force.

Health and Wellness

The health and wellness of our members is very important to maintaining a thriving Society. The MDS Dentist Health and Wellness Committee has the important role of educating our members on health and wellness topics. To that end, Yankee Dental Congress 2020 will feature for the second year a Health and Wellness Pavilion. The Pavilion will include an entertaining and educational area that will highlight the Wellness Committee and the valuable wellness resources that will be available to members in the future. The pavilion includes Body Mass Index (BMI) analysis, posture analysis, personal training guidance, and complimentary chair massages. The Committee is also hosting a free yoga class and meditation program during Yankee for MDS members.

There will also be raised awareness of the Dentists Concerned for Dentists (dcdma.org) support group. An informational flyer providing a useful talking point to the question “*What is dcdma.org?*” and

opening dialogue to “*Have you heard about Dentists Concerned for Dentists?*” will be distributed in the Wellness Pavilion.

Community Outreach

In addition to the Wellness Pavilion at Yankee, the Dentist Health and Wellness Committee recognizes that one way for members to improve their health is to spend time helping others. As a result, the Committee is offering a variety of programs for members to volunteer his/her time throughout the year. These volunteer opportunities include:

- Rosie’s Place
- Habitat for Humanity
- The Food Bank of Western MA
- Cradles for Crayons
- Christmas in the City

Membership

The MDS continues to be one of the strongest Dental Societies in the country, with nearly 80% of dentists in the state participating in the Society. This is a major accomplishment. We know the profession is undergoing challenging times faced by increased regulations, pressure from dental plans and insurance companies on reducing fee schedules, and increased overhead; to stay this strong as a Society is a testimony to our members. Ninety percent of our members renewed this year. Your ongoing commitment to membership is vital to the continued success of organized dentistry and ultimately, the profession. The only way to protect the profession is to stay together—thank you for your membership.

Social Media Presence

The MDS continues to use its social media platforms to communicate and engage with members by posting original, ADA, and third-party content that is shareable and highly visual. The MDS continues to grow its following on Facebook, the platform where the Society engages the most with members, and on Twitter, where the MDS engages with policymakers, the news media, and other thought leaders. The MDS uses its Instagram account to showcase photos of the Society’s activities and events, and the MDS is using LinkedIn to recognize professional achievements by our members and to promote continuing education and networking opportunities.

In addition to providing content that can be shared on our members’ own social media platforms, we have focused on raising public awareness of the Society and elevating the reputation of dentists among the general public and key influencers. Through paid social advertising, we are now reaching a much broader audience and positioning the Society as the leading oral health authority in Massachusetts.

A new *Word of Mouth* educational video series was launched in January 2019 to create shareable content for social media. These short videos build on the Society's *Word of Mouth* consumer magazine by sharing infographics about various oral health topics. Since its launch, the Society published nine different videos that reached nearly 700,000 Facebook and Instagram users in Massachusetts.

In August, the MDS also launched a new "Visit a Dentist" campaign on social media to direct the public to the ADA's Find-a-Dentist website and encourage Massachusetts residents to schedule an appointment with MDS members.

Publications

Journal

The Society's flagship publication, the *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society* had another strong year. The publication continued to provide content that highlights a wide range of clinical and practice management subjects to benefit readers. These topics include: a look at a trauma-informed approach to dental care; autogenous tooth transplantation; cybersecurity tips for protecting your dental practice; dental economics; BORID and CDC requirements for the dental practice setting; safety tips to prevent hearing loss; and the ADA's recognition of dental anesthesiology as a specialty. The *Journal* also continued to highlight members with features on 2019 William McKenna Volunteer Hero Dr. Pelly Chang and the annual 10 Under Ten recognition program through the Membership Committee.

The *Journal* was recognized this year by the International College of Dentists (ICD) in its national 2019 Journalism Awards. The Fall 2018 special theme issue on ethics in dentistry received a Golden Pen Honorable Mention award for the "outstanding series of articles on Ethics in Dentistry."

Last year, the *Journal* had \$74,283 in display and classified advertising revenue, which helps to greatly offset printing and mailing costs. Additionally, advertising rates increased on July 1, 2019, for both display advertising and classified advertising.

MDS Connection

The *MDS Connection*, the Society's online newsletter, continued to provide members with important practice management and regulatory information. Each issue features 2-4 pages of practice management topics, such as information on the mandatory poster updates for the minimum wage increase and prescription monitoring. The newsletter regularly features educational and informative content on the MDS Foundation, advocacy efforts, membership initiatives and events, Member Savings Program partners, and governance.

In 2019, the *MDS Connection* saw classified ad revenue of \$21,859, which is offset by zero production costs.

Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth is the Society's semi-annual consumer oral health newsletter and is made available in print and digital formats. The MDS encourages members to share the articles with their patients, either in their reception area or via their social media channels. Three copies of each issue are mailed to all MDS members in active practice, and they are encouraged to request additional copies for their practice or community events. Additionally, three copies of each issue are mailed to each of the 363 public libraries in Massachusetts. Library directors are also encouraged to request additional copies for their reference sections. After each issue mails, we routinely receive multiple calls from members and libraries requesting extra copies. Copies of the publication are also sent to several schools with dental assisting programs.

The Winter-Spring 2019 issue, which featured the youth vaping epidemic as the cover story, drew a great amount of interest from members, with an unprecedented number of requests received for additional copies. The Summer-Fall 2019 issue tackled another hot topic for dentists and patients alike: online orthodontics. This issue was well-received by members. Other article topics featured last year include: the importance of brushing your teeth for two minutes twice a day; the use of mouthguards to for tooth grinding; oral and throat cancer; and how much toothpaste children should use.

The International College of Dentists (ICD) recognized the Summer-Fall 2018 *Word of Mouth* issue with its the Newsletter Award—the ICD's top award for newsletters. The award was given at the 2019 American Association of Dental Editors and Journalists Conference in September.

Communication Task Force

President Dr. Janis Moriarty appointed a Communication Task Force (CTF) in November and charged it with evaluating communication with members and making recommendations for communication improvements. This will be done in phases, and in conjunction with the new governance reform. The CTF is Chaired by Dr. Cameron Shahbazian and includes Drs. Eric Block, Lindsay Bruneau, Lea Hachem, Philip Millstein, Sirisha Rao, Carlin Weaver, MDS Vice President/Board liaison Meredith Bailey and staff liaison Ellen Factor, managing director of membership and dental practice. The first phase the CTF has started working

on is evaluating member satisfaction with our existing systems of communication. The Task Force is soliciting member feedback in a communications survey and will use the information obtained from the survey to help determine next steps for group to focus on.

Yankee Dental Congress

Yankee Dental Congress will once again deliver exceptional attendee experiences to 26,000 dental professionals who visit the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) every January. Yankee 2020 will offer innovative learning in an interactive and vibrant environment. Yankee continuing education courses provide attendees with some of the best opportunities to learn and network in the country. We have many new offerings for 2020 including: Expert Insights, Pediatric Pavilion, Product Spot Light Lounge, MDS Clinician Corner, and the Dental Apnea Sleep Team, to name a few.

We continue to have several buying incentives at Yankee for our members: the Yankee Rebate Program, the Spend and Get Event, and the very successful Super Saturday Raffle, which was introduced at Yankee 2019. These promotions, along with the show specials provided by our exhibitors, make Yankee the ideal time of year to purchase a new piece of equipment or stock up on other materials.

Some new promotions include: the MDS Platinum Pass where MDS members can register along with two other colleagues or staff and receive two paid courses each (up to \$99 each) for \$599. We are also introducing the Yankee Escape, where you can test your dental knowledge and puzzle skills on the Exhibit Hall floor and win a Starbucks Gift Card.

Our goal is always to improve the MDS member experience at Yankee. We will bring back the wildly popular Spin to Win promotion and a new Smoothie Reception, as well as a Neighborhoods of Boston Reception and Family Time. Many members will also attend the free pain management courses that are being offered along with the courses in the new MDS Clinician Corner.

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

Member Savings Program

The Member Savings Program entered into agreements with several new companies this past year. We now have 30 programs offering discounts to members.

In March, we added HR2fit, a full-service Human Resources company. In April, we added PureLife for medical waste disposal and removal of old X-ray machines. In May, we replaced our former Officite program with Prosites, a web design firm, and added RTR Financial, a revenue collections agency.

With the new BORID regulations coming into effect for January 2021, we have partnered with Veradigm for e-scripts.

We have terminated relationships with Bank of America Merchant Services credit card processing as well as its investment firm, Merrill Lynch, due to lack of member interest.

All of these new programs not only provide a great discount for MDS members, but also generate non-dues revenue for the MDS. All of these new companies agree to pay a flat fee, and purchase exhibit space and advertising.

Conclusion

This was a very active six months for President Dr. Janis Moriarty. She has faced some very difficult and important issues from day one. Dr. Moriarty has guided us with a collaborative and professionally engaging style. Under her leadership, we have stayed the course in implementing the first six months of the governance transition changes while meeting the daily challenges to organized dentistry.

Over the years, I mention to Presidents that there is always some unexpected issue that causes a challenge. These challenges, if not handled directly and effectively, could cause the organization to get diverted from our planned activities. Presidents need to rise to the occasion to lead the Society and keep us on track. President Dr. Moriarty has and is providing that leadership. She established herself immediately as an effective MDS leader as well as in the First District and the ADA. She represents the MDS very well.

Dr. Howard Zolot has been a supportive past president. He continues to represent us as part of the Executive Committee deliberations and with the Board. His legacy is based on years of fiscal oversight as Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer. His fiscal expertise is acknowledged by his peers.

I think the best asset the Society has is its staff. I have enjoyed working with them. Many of them I have hired or promoted. I have watched them get married, have children, work toward advanced degrees, and be part of a very collaborative working culture. I want to commend Kathleen Boyce, CPA, our Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer. She and I are

the two executive staff positions that oversee and manage the operations of 40 staff to produce a successful Yankee and accomplish major activities in our Strategic Plan. I admire her professionalism and ethical behavior.

In addition, I want to say how proud I am of all my staff. They make the Society look good to our members daily. I want to give special recognition to Ellen Factor, Shannon McCarthy, Kevin Monteiro, and Colleen Chase who continually amaze me when we work on major emerging issues or any crisis the Society is facing. Their work is exemplary.

Finally, this will be my last report to the House of Delegates. Edwina and I are truly grateful for all the support we have had from all of you over the past 17 years. There are too many people to thank in this report. Just know we appreciated the working relationships and professional friendships over these years.

It has been an honor to be your Executive Director and part of a premier professional society. A trusted mentor once told me that I should leave any job better than when I found it. I will be doing just that in a few months. So, too, will my successor.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert E. Boose, EdD, CAE