

Annual Report to the House of Delegates, June 20, 2024, from the

Executive Director

As Executive Director, I herewith submit the following report:

Governance

The last regular House of Delegates meeting took place in January 2023. During that House of Delegates, the North Metropolitan District Dental Society presented resolutions that would modify some of the governance changes that occurred during governance reforms several years ago. The House, at the time, referred those resolutions back to the Board for further study and to report back to this House of Delegates. The Board immediately established a workgroup to review those resolutions and to present its findings to the Board of Trustees. Although the Board approved resolutions during the prior fiscal year, the Board again reviewed the same resolutions this fiscal year given that the composition of this year's Board is slightly different.

Before you at the House of Delegates are several resolutions that began with a district dental society and have subsequently been reviewed twice by the Board of Trustees.

Here is a snapshot on a few of those resolutions:

Structure of ascension to MDS President: MDS leaders have received direct feedback from current and past leaders that have described the current 5-year runway (2 years as Vice President, 2 years as President, and 1 year as Immediate Past President) as too long of a commitment, in addition to perhaps having already served on the Board of Trustees for several years. The proposed change will modify this commitment from 5 years to 3 years (1 year as President-elect, 1 year as President, and 1 year as Immediate Past President). This modification aims to increase the number of qualified candidates running for the highest elected position in the organization by reducing the number of years committed to the role.

Eligibility requirements for serving as Secretary, Treasurer, Speaker, and President-elect (two resolutions): These roles have specific duties and responsibilities, as established by the House of Delegates, that are imperative for the health of the Society. The individuals elected to these roles must have sufficient experience to hit the ground running on day 1 of their elected position. By minimally requiring MDS Board experience, the expectation is that individuals elected to these positions will have a baseline of knowledge and expertise to be more effective on day 1 than if they did not have that prior experience.

Past President votes at House of Delegates: Past Presidents of the MDS have tremendous historical and institutional knowledge that it would be of significant benefit for the House to enable Past Presidents to engage in the debate of the House fully by allotting a number of voting delegate positions to them.

Appointment of MDS Committees: Prior to governance reform, the Society utilized councils which each had a member from every district of the Society. With the elimination of councils, ensuring engagement on the committees from across the entire state has become more difficult. The existing committee appointment process does not guarantee the right to Trustees or the Board to create committee appointment criteria or offer names from their regions for consideration. This Society utilizes a geographic representation model by including regional Trustees on the Board. These Trustees are the primary conduit for districts to have a voice at the MDS Board level. By shifting the responsibility of appointing committees to the Board, Trustees will have a stronger voice in ensuring appropriate geographic representation on all committees. If passed, Trustees can work directly with the leaders in their districts to bring forward names to be considered by the Board of Trustees. It is a tall task and expectation for any president to be familiar with enough members in each district to populate each committee with sufficient geographic distribution.

Good governance is a continuous work in progress. It is the duty of leaders of this organization to frequently evaluate whether the existing governance structures in place make the most sense for the organization today and for where it wants to go. Sometimes organizations will realize after implementing changes that those changes are not

effective or have unintended consequences. The proposed resolutions address specific identified problems that will continue to persist without these needed changes.

Government Affairs

Thanks to the leadership of the MDS and the ADA, we raised over \$7 million leading to a landslide victory on the Medical Loss Ratio ballot in 2022. The efforts on the issue did not stop there, as MDS was fully engaged in the regulatory process to ensure the regulations were in line with the intent of the ballot question and voters. Final regulations were released earlier this year.

At the time of this report, MDS has two bills that are still active in the legislature.

H3880 – An Act relative to dental hygienist reciprocal licensure would establish a process allowing for foreign trained dentists who are licensed and have practiced dentistry in a foreign country for at least 5 years to be licensed to practice as a dental hygienist in the Commonwealth without additional examination. If passed, this legislation would help increase the pipeline of qualified individuals for hygienist roles across the Commonwealth.

H300 – An Act establishing a dentist diversion program would establish a dentist diversion program, direct BORID to develop and regulate the implementation of remediation programs for licensed dental professionals at risk of losing their license due to illness, substance use or other mental health disorders. This legislation would allow such programs as an alternative to traditional disciplinary action.

After a long hiatus due to the COVID pandemic and then timing with the legislative cycle, we are proud that the MDS will again be leading the charge in bringing dentists together in Boston for Beacon Hill Day 2025. Mark your calendars - the event is scheduled for Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Communications

The MDS is committed to being the leading resource for members success. To do so, the MDS leverages digital communication to stay in touch with members regularly. The MDS continues to provide members with timely updates on critical issues they need to know to support the needs of their dental practices. The MDS stays abreast of what is going on in the Commonwealth and communicates information on any regulations or policies that have an impact on the dental community.

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

The MDS has been working hard on refreshing the MDS website. Please keep an eye out for more information over the next several months.

Dental Practice Support

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

Dental Practice Insights

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

health and wellness, state regulations, staff management, patient communication, and practice management. The Dental Insights (DI) subcommittee is producing 2 dental insights per month (published every other Monday). The insights consistently have a 45% or higher open rate. Recent insights created awareness on: • MDS Peer Review Service • MDS Legislative Efforts • License Renewal Procedures • Staff management Tips.

Member Assistance Center

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

Peer Review

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

Health and Wellness

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

The DHWC hosted several member events, including a yoga class, two mental health awareness events “In Our Own Voice” and “Beyond the Mask”, two pickleball events, Frosty 5K sponsorship, and “Healthy Golf Classic” statewide golf tournament. The DHWC also offered a Health and Wellness corner of the MDS Membership Booth at Yankee Dental Congress 2023 and 2024. This was an entertaining and educational area that highlighted the DHWC and valuable wellness resources.

The DHWC has grown its online presence with the launch of the “4th Molar Podcast: Beyond Wisdom,” with monthly episodes interviewing guests on various wellness topics. The DHWC also continues to provide content on its Facebook group dedicated to promoting health and wellness guidance to members. Approximately 576 members now participate in this active community.

The DHWC has been advocating for wellness related legislation, visiting Districts throughout the state to educate members on the act establishing a dentist diversion program legislation. The DHWC has also been working on a proposal for the establishment of a Wellness Ambassador Program within the MDS.

Dental Student Support

The MDS works closely with the three Boston dental schools and hosted several programs for students throughout the year. The showcase event was the student debate that included teams from Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine, University of New England College of Dental Medicine, and a pre-dental team. The event took place annually at Yankee Dental Congress 2023 and 2024.

The MDS hosted an apple-picking event on September 30, 2023, for MDS members and dental students. Over 100 dental students attended. The MDS also held a student day on October 14, 2023, in Pittsfield, MA. The visit aimed to introduce fourth-year dental students to the idea of practicing in the Berkshires, an area that often experiences a need for dentists.

The MDS conducted live Signing Day programs at the three Boston dental schools to encourage graduating students to transfer their membership from the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) to the MDS. The MDS also hosted a graduation celebration event for fourth year students, attended by over 100 dental students. The MDS also welcomed new students at the three Boston dental schools during their orientations. President Dr. Abe Abdul spoke

on behalf of the MDS at these luncheon programs encouraging students to get involved in organized dentistry and the MDS. The MDS additionally sponsored several student events throughout the year and attended vendor fairs at all three Boston dental schools.

Leadership Program

In 2024, the MDS Leadership Academy returned after taking a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This five-session hybrid program was designed to help dental professionals develop and sharpen their leadership skills and help advance their careers. Thirty-two participants attended this program, which started at Yankee with a presentation by Dr. Kathy O'Loughlin on Learning to Lead - 5 Stars of Leadership. Other sessions featured topics including Conversations that Count & Understanding Your Leadership Style and Wielding the Power of Leadership with Carrie Webber and Effective and Profitable Collaborative Care: Leveraging Communication Between Hygienists and Dentists with speaker Amber Auger. The Leadership Academy concluded with a round table dinner with MDS Leadership to discuss ways to implement their new leadership skills.

Membership

The MDS continues to be one of the strongest Dental Societies in the country, with approximately 74% of dentists in the state participating in the Society. This is an extraordinarily strong participation rate compared to other states in the country. The profession also faces increased regulations, pressure from dental plans and insurance companies on reducing fee schedules, and increased overhead. To stay this strong as a Society is a testament to our members. Ninety-four percent of our members renewed their memberships in 2024. Their ongoing commitment to membership is vital to the continued success of organized dentistry and the profession. The MDS is comprised of a diverse group of members with a shared passion for excellence.

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

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

The MDS membership committee is developing programs focused on engaging members as they start their careers. This is the most vulnerable time for dentists to decide whether to join their professional Society. The current dues structure is that the first year of membership is free, the second year is 50%, and the third year is full dues. New members must recognize the value and benefits of membership to keep them as members during the first years of membership.

Having served on an ADA workgroup reviewing the ADA membership model, I had tremendous insight to the ADA's data and research regarding the need for a new membership model, especially for early career members. In speaking with fellow state society executive directors from across the country, it is clear change is needed. As the ADA continues to develop its model, the MDS is already bringing forward a substantial change to the dues model for our early-career members. This model aims to give early-career dentists a reduced dues rate while beginning their careers. As the Health Policy Institute has previously reported, dental school graduates have approximately \$300,000 in student debt. This debt burden is in addition to other major milestones these members may be considering such as buying a home and/or car, getting married, starting a family, etc. The new dues model for these early-career members would lessen the MDS dues burden on them at a time when their personal financial situation may be the most challenging. The model is:

Year 1 - \$0

Year 2 - \$120 (\$10 per month)

Year 3 - \$120 (\$10 per month)

Year 4 - \$240 (\$20 per month)

Year 5 - \$240 (\$20 per month)

Year 6 – full dues

In the coming months and years, it will be critical for the Society to continue evaluating the current dues model to ensure we are offering a model that leads to future membership growth.

Membership Survey

In 2023, the (MDS) conducted a membership survey with Avenue M, a leading association management company. The survey had an 11% participation rate, which is well above average. In all, 677 people completed the survey. The Membership Committee has reviewed the survey findings and is using this data to help determine current critical needs, what members value most about membership, and the pain points they are experiencing. The key business concerns are:

1. Workforce shortages
2. Salary demands of staff
3. 3rd party /insurance

Member Savings Program

The MDS Business Development Committee is reviewing the current program companies of the ADA and MDS, stressing the importance of vetting them to enhance the effectiveness of the MDS Members Savings Program. The committee is considering numerous opportunities to improve the program's value to members and the MDS. Please look for future opportunities to provide feedback to the Business Development Committee as it continues its work.

The Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society

The *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society*, the Society's flagship publication, continued setting an example of editorial excellence this past year. The *Journal* is known for providing content highlighting a wide range of clinical and practice management subjects to benefit readers. The *Journal* continues to have a strong online presence through our digital version, which allows readers to access the publication on all devices.

Articles featured this year included a cover story about the incidence of human papilloma virus within the U.S. Latino population and the possible correlation with oral squamous cell carcinoma, a survey study that evaluated knowledge of oral cancer among fourth-year predoctoral students, an in-depth article on the difficulty of preventing dental and oral disease in children, the application of dental science to both criminal and civil law, and the first reported case of bilateral anchored disc phenomenon following extraction of a third molar. Our regular features for each edition included EDIC contributions on risk management, Clinician's Corner, Pathology Snapshot, and dental book reviews.

The *Journal* also continued highlighting members with the 2023 William McKenna Volunteer Hero Dr. Andrew Tonelli and the annual 10 Under Ten recognition program through the Membership Committee. Additionally, in the spring of 2024, we expanded the *Journal's* reach by partnering with the Rhode Island Dental Association to provide their members with the *Journal of the Massachusetts Dental Society*.

Yankee Dental Congress 2024 & 2025

Yankee 2024 was another tremendous success, highlighting that the convention is on the path toward returning to pre-pandemic success. Our increased attendance at Yankee 2024 allowed us to take advantage of the many networking opportunities, innovative continuing education, and a wide variety of exhibitors.

The two-day Multi-Site Summit continues to offer a unique experience for dental professionals interested in or already connected to multiple practice locations. The first of its kind, the Summit is a collaboration between multi-site owners and dental professionals that come together as top experts to discuss the evolving dental industry. Designed for business owners who have more than one practice, the summit will include topics on critical issues such as scaling, HR (Human Resources), insurance, and other key issues.

For Yankee 2025, the biggest news is bringing back entertainment for our 50th Yankee. We are excited to have Flo Rida at this year's Yankee, and our past attendees have been sharing extremely positive feedback with us on social channels. Stay tuned for more information on all the exciting social events at Yankee, the courses available, and new companies exhibiting on the show floor.

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

Yankee Study Club

The Yankee Study Club Spring 2024 Session wrapped up in June with close to 400 attendees. The programs have been developing with new topics including AI and Botox.

The Fall Program will be exciting with our first lunchtime program featuring Dr. Miguel Stanley kicking off the season on Wednesday, September 4th discussing treatment planning.

Some of the other topics the Study Club will be discussing are:

- Treating TMD
- Immediate Implant Placement
- 3D in Dentistry
- The Future of Dentistry

The sessions are held virtually. Attendees can register for the entire package at a discount, or individual sessions. Once registered, they also have the ability to watch the recorded session.

Respectfully submitted,
Kevin C. Monteiro, MBA, CAE