

Presidential Report

January 2021-June 2021

Greetings Members of the House of Delegates,

The last time I wrote to you, it was the first six months of my tenure as President of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS). Today marks the six-month journey into that adventure and the six months into my year as Immediate Past President. So please, allow me to share the journey of the last six months as your President.

January 2021 was a particularly difficult month for all of us, but particularly for me as your President. The month of January, before Yankee Virtual 2021, I spent more time conducting interviews with TV and radio stations than anyone should, justifying why we, as dentists, should be considered an essential portion of the health care community. Many of you were unhappy with my ability to lead the state leaders and deliver the vaccine to you faster than I was able to. For me, this felt like a personal failure. However, the reality was that we really could not change anything the state was doing at the time. We were “designated” and that is where we would remain in the line of vaccine recipients. By the end of the month, most, if not all, dentists and their teams were immunized if they wanted to be.

Your Board of Trustees met twice that month, accomplishing the following:

- We took multiple votes and actions to replace Robert Boose, EdD, CAE, our former Executive Director, with Mr. Kevin Monteiro, CAE, on many of the outstanding accounts that had not been changed over. It was exciting for your Board to welcome Kevin as he has been a long-time devoted, talented employee who the Executive Director Search Committee had confirmed as Executive Director earlier in the month.
- We voted on the next special session of the MDS House of Delegates for June 2021 to approve the budget.
- We discussed a proposal from EDIC that was brought forth by its leadership. Unfortunately, we were unable to determine an outcome of this process due to the nature of the request. This would be an ongoing project through my first six months as Immediate Past President.
- Dr. Paul Aswad, the Board Liaison to the Dental Practice and Benefits Committee, informed the Board that the major focus in the upcoming year for the Committee would be the shortage of dental assistants and dental hygienists to support our practices. This would be an ongoing project through my first six months as Immediate Past President.

The end of January brought us to Yankee Dental Congress—unfortunately, for the first time in the history of the event, we were not able to meet in person. While I think the Yankee team did an amazing job at creating an online platform for us, it was nothing like meeting in person, having coffee or cocktails, and connecting as we have done in the past. Fortunately, from a financial standpoint, Yankee was deemed a success and planning for an “in-person” event in June—Dentalpalooza—would be the focus for the next five months.

Our February meeting was lighter in nature due to the two meetings and Yankee in January. We discussed items such as the delegation going to the ADA House of Delegates in Las Vegas in October 2021, follow-up information about the EDIC discussion from the previous month, the request for nominations to replace Dr. Andrea Richman as an MDS Designated EDIC director and calls for nominations for the Etherington Award. The major outcome from

this month's meeting was to postpone definitely the discussion of the EDIC proposal from the leadership of the company.

Our March meeting brought forth the need to update more accounts due to the departure of our long-time Chief Financial Officer Kathy Boyce. Account changes were approved. We also approved the delegates and alternate delegates expected to attend the ADA House. Additionally, we approved the date of the MDS House of Delegates for January 26, 2022, and the nomination of Dr. Andrea Richman as a candidate for the Etherington Award for 2022.

By April, my term seemed to be whizzing by rapidly! April brought the announcement that we would be launching the new MDS Career Center, which would be replacing the MDS Classifieds. It was a great accomplishment by the MDS team, and our hopes are high that it will be adopted by members and non-members alike across the Commonwealth. Shannon McCarthy, managing director of business development and Yankee Dental Congress, brought the Board great news by informing us that Dentalpalooza was shaping up to be a financially and socially successful event to look forward to in June 2021. Over the course of that month, a Dental Workforce Task Force was set up to study the workforce shortages. In addition, Drs. James Lee and Jennifer Korzeb were appointed to be the Massachusetts representatives to the ADA First District Visionary Task Force.

Our May meeting brought a special visitor, ADA First District Trustee Dr. Richard Rosato, who shared an update on statistics and trends within the ADA membership demographics. Fortunately, even though it was a difficult year for all organizations, the ADA and MDS were holding up with renewals. We voted not to pay stipends to Board members this year given the financial difficulty that both the MDS and its valuable members had been through due to the COVID shutdowns. Our Executive Director Kevin Monteiro introduced Susan Griffin as the MDS managing director of accounting and finance. We received an update from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force from Chair Dr. Nicole Holland. The Board did go into executive session to discuss a report from Dr. Paul Aswad, Chair of the EDIC Workgroup.

Due to the decreasing incidents of COVID, we voted to lift the previous recommendations to the Districts regarding in-person meetings effective June 1. Finally, I shared with the Board the Executive Director Performance Goals and the draft Compensation Committee proposal, which would receive further review by members of the Board at the Board meeting in June.

To say June 2021 came fast is an understatement given the fact that some months through my tenure felt like years! During our June board meeting we accomplished the following:

- We voted to offer a vote of confidence to support First District Trustee Dr. Richard Rosato's candidacy for President-Elect of the ADA should he decide to pursue the candidacy.
- We voted to fulfill the unexpired term of Treasurer Dr. Philip Howells due to his retirement and move to Michigan. One member of the Board stepped forward and Dr. Jennifer Korzeb was welcomed as the MDS Treasurer for the remainder of the term. This retirement also left a void for a delegate to the ADA house, so we approved the move of Dr. Andrea Fallon from alternate delegate to full voting delegate for the Massachusetts delegation.
- We approved the policy on a per diem allotment for the ADA House, and postponed a vote on the Board stipends.
- Our Guest Board Members for the 2021-22 season were announced, as well as the Executive Director Compensation Committee's recommendation on metrics and compensation were approved.

June also brought us the first Dentalpalooza, which was deemed a total success! Personally, I have never had so much fun at a dental event. The entire MDS team deserves a huge round of applause for accomplishing not only presenting this, but also producing Virtual Yankee 2021 with a fraction of the staff we had prior to COVID. Over my tenure as a Board member and through my time on the Executive Committee, I have recognized how blessed we are to have such a dedicated group of employees to work with. While we may be the leaders and the head of the

organization, all of the work is accomplished by them. They are truly the machinery behind the success of the MDS and what makes us thrive year after year.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be your President. While I did not accomplish what I had hoped to, we accomplished a lot for the dentists of the Commonwealth during a very tumultuous time. I feel blessed that I was able to be here to experience it. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

MaryJane Hanlon, DMD
MDS Immediate Past-President

July 2021-December 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Writing this in late December, it is hard to believe it has been six months since my tenure began as your President of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) on July 1, 2021. When I was elected for this position, my platform focused on three goals: improving communication, strengthening the Districts, and cultivating membership. These three objectives are critical to navigating the changing demographics and needs of members and future members as the dental landscape continues to evolve, and are encompassed in the new Strategic Plan developed by your 2021-2022 MDS Board of Trustees. I am excited to share what the MDS has been working on over the last six months.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN and CORE FOCUS

The MDS Board of Trustees hit the ground running in July and August with two full-day meetings to establish and finalize the goals and agenda for the governance year. The MDS Board of Trustees successfully defined a core focus for the MDS to follow with a *new Purpose Statement: Empowering dental health professionals throughout their careers* and a *new Niche Statement: To be the leading resource for member success*. Both these statements reflect the importance of you, our members.

The Board also created a 10-year target and new **three-year Strategic Plan with 13 goals:**

1. Operating Income – \$8 million
2. Market Share – 77%
3. Reserve Balance – no lower than \$4 million
4. Net profit of \$1.5 - \$2 million from sustainable Yankee-branded events
5. Increase non-dues/non-Yankee revenue by \$500,000
6. Actively measure engagement, participation, and value
7. Create and execute a plan to improve member value
8. Create and execute a plan to improve retention of members less than three years in practice
9. Executing a clear advocacy plan
10. Increase collaboration with other health care organizations and dental education programs
11. Leadership development at the District and state level with the governance structure
12. Continued commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
13. Staff – 37 to 41 of the right people for the right seats

Led by MDS Executive Director, Mr. Kevin Monteiro, CAE, the MDS senior management team and staff carry out the vision and goals created by the MDS Board of Trustees, who represent you, the MDS members.

GOVERNANCE REFORM and IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Phase II of the governance reform commenced July 1, 2021, and the MDS Board of Trustees is now entirely comprised of Regional Trustees and the Executive Committee has been eliminated. The MDS Board of Trustees presently consists of the MDS Officers, six Regional Trustees, one At-Large Trustee (a position created by the new governance reform), and four non-voting Guest Board members. This streamlined composition allows the MDS Board of Trustees to expeditiously execute projects and ideas while providing the flexibility needed today.

The new governance reform also amended the size of the supreme governing body of the organization, the MDS House of Delegates, without changing the representative voice of the Districts. Streamlining the number of delegates creates a more efficient way to move through new business, approve *Bylaws* changes, and affect policy so we can continue to protect our ability to provide care to our patients. The representative voice of every District is critical as the decisions made are member driven, and the new size allows Districts to select their most engaged caucus. The number of pending resolutions and issues will change from year to year, and it is critical that the Districts consider their yearly calendars early to allow for ample time to meet and prepare their representatives.

Within this new governance structure are several new communication platforms under consideration, as well as some that have already been implemented to improve bidirectional communication between the state and members. Since September, every MDS member has received a customized “Regional Trustee Newsletter” monthly with a personal note from your Regional Trustee along with valuable information about what is happening at the state, as well as information from Districts within the Region. The MDS Board of Trustees looks forward to hosting Town Halls in 2022 with the opportunity to personally speak with members and hear your concerns.

The Committee of Chairs and Chairs-Elect was created as part of the governance reform by the Governance Task Force and held its first full year of meetings in 2020-2021. As Vice President and Chair of this Committee in 2020-2021, I have personally witnessed the value of directly connecting the state leadership to the District leadership. This crucial platform also connects District leaders with each other and sharing perspectives from across the state has resulted in creative solutions to common questions in addition to raising awareness about new concerns stemming from local issues. These dedicated monthly meetings foster collaborative discussions on timely topics, such as the leadership pipeline, practice issues, and supply chain challenges. There is also a regularly published newsletter by the At-Large Trustee called the “District Outreach Communicator” (DOC), which relays information to the District leadership.

Another new initiative implemented this fall aimed to increase communication between the state and the District treasurers. The MDS Treasurer and MDS Managing Director of Accounting and Finance have been meeting monthly with the District treasurers to review accounting practices and provide an exclusive platform for open communication. These meetings have been successful and appreciated by the Districts.

STRENGTHENING THE DISTRICTS and CULTIVATING MEMBERSHIP

The 14 individual Districts are the grassroots of our organization and are critical to demonstrating member value. In addition to representing the voice of members at the MDS House of Delegates, the Districts provide a personal connection to every single MDS member, and District events are often the first point of contact for new members. Local Districts also offer vital support networks and have been an instrumental source of assistance to members, especially over the last year.

Creating a personal connection is critical to cultivating and maintaining our membership base. Many dentists have relayed that one of the greatest benefits they receive from organized dentistry is mentorship, and that spans the

length of careers. Belonging to an organization comprised of like-minded professionals who are all working toward a common goal is priceless. Mentors can be instrumental to career and personal growth. Faculty members are committed to the profession and are guiding and supporting the next generation of dentists every day. Engaging this group of professionals who are already mentoring new dentists will cultivate MDS membership. Having a network of dedicated professionals to connect with is a unique offering of organized dentistry, and the MDS is working on programs that will continue to foster these relationships. Mentorship programs are key to cultivating membership and strengthening the Districts as we work to shape the future of our organization and profession.

When the Districts are strong, the MDS is best able to represent all members. Continuing to evaluate ways to support the Districts with the customized resources they need to provide member value is a priority. District leaders work hard to create a calendar with a variety of events that are both professionally and personally rewarding. District leaders have capitalized on the recent necessity of virtual events and have hosted webinars and socials with other Districts from across the state, allowing dentists to collaborate without geographical challenges. Individual Districts have a dedicated page within the MDS website and District email communications are sent out on Thursdays with information provided by the District leadership. There is also a master calendar at the bottom of the MDS homepage that lists all District and state events.

MDS COMMITTEES

The MDS Board of Trustees developed the yearly tasks for each MDS Committee this year, focusing on ways to provide member value within the new Strategic Plan. The MDS Board of Trustees met with the Committee Chairs to review these charges in August and will continue to meet with the Committee Chairs for oral reports and status updates throughout the year. Every MDS Committee also has a dental student liaison from each of the three Boston dental schools, and we appreciate the enthusiasm and engagement of these liaisons.

Charges for the Committees include continuing traditional programs, addressing timely concerns, and forecasting future issues to proactively prepare our members. The importance of organized dentistry was clearly demonstrated throughout the pandemic and persists as we continue to face new challenges. The American Dental Association (ADA) and the MDS will continue to provide members with updated guidance as the environment evolves and regulations change. Patients are returning to practices, but supply chain issues and the workforce shortage have been exacerbated by the pandemic and are significantly impacting the profession. A dedicated subcommittee within the Dental Practice and Benefits Committee is assessing how we can mitigate this crisis and assist MDS members. In addition to a recent webinar, there are several projects being considered for implementation in 2022 to address staffing issues.

The MDS is actively reviewing how we can provide exclusive discounts on products and services to all members. Several Committees have projects that are focused on providing members with opportunities for mentorship and networking. The MDS is working on an initiative to connect dentists seeking employment with practices for employment or purchase, especially in areas of the state where providers are needed.

The MDS needs your feedback and is working on ways to be inclusive and provide all members with information via their preferred format. Please stop by the MDS Booth at Yankee Dental Congress 2022 to take a survey developed by the Membership Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. The Communications Task Force is assessing existing platforms and current communication strategies for member preference and interest. A thorough review of the existing MDS Board of Trustees Manual is also underway and the Board of Trustees voted to modernize our governance documents with all-encompassing pronouns.

For more than 47 years, the Yankee Dental Congress has been an annual tradition, and an event that New England dental professionals look forward to attending every year. The MDS and Yankee Dental Oversight Committee are thrilled to be back in person for Yankee 2022 as we “Explore, Educate, and Engage” together.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

One of the most important functions of organized dentistry is to serve as the unified voice of the dental profession. Health care is local, and it is critical that dentists speak to your local representatives, sharing the unified message of the MDS with your individual flair. An initiative to develop an advocacy leader in each District is underway to strengthen our advocacy efforts. We need your voices! To educate and engage members, the MDS has been hosting a series of webinars since September explaining pending legislation at both the state and national levels and sharing advocacy opportunities. Please visit massdental.org/Advocacy/Advocacy-Events to view previously taped webinars and mark your calendars for the upcoming monthly meetings.

We appreciate the many MDS members who have advocated on behalf of the pending MDS legislation and continue to provide personal testimony for: H.1181 - An Act Relative to Increasing Patient Choice Through Assignment of Benefits and H.1182/S.632 - An Act Relative to Medical Loss Ratio Reporting for Dental Benefits Companies.

In November, the MDS provided testimony at the MassHealth dental hearing, explaining the challenges our members face with reimbursement and potential barriers to provider participation. The MDS Board of Trustees voted to create a Task Force to assess these challenges and ways we can help improve access to oral health care in the Commonwealth to report.

The MDS Board of Trustees is continuously monitoring all pending and potential legislation that could impact our profession and putting strategies in place to act quickly in the interest of MDS members.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your membership. The MDS strives to be the ultimate resource, and that means something different to each of the 5,300 members the MDS represents, encompassing varying demographics of age, practice, and locations across the Commonwealth. I am proud to belong to such a special network of dental professionals, who abide by our Code of Ethics and unite through organized dentistry to improve the profession today for not only our patients, but also for future generations of dental professionals. As we enter 2022, the MDS Board of Trustees will continue to work to innovate, communicate, and find the best ways to provide you, our members, with the assistance and resources you need to be successful throughout your career.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meredith A. Bailey, DMD
MDS President