

Seventh Letter from the ADA Second Trustee District to the NYSDA Components
Trustee's Corner

Holiday Greetings and Happy New Year to everyone and their families. I hope you have had a safe and productive 2024. This is the seventh version of the Trustee's Corner, and I am already past the halfway point of my four-year term. As I have mentioned in the past, I have been honored and fortunate to represent the Second District at the American Dental Association.

I never thought I would be talking about this following subject in these terms but due to a couple of questionable articles, a court case and the results of the recently completed national election, water fluoridation has garnered a good bit of attention in the news. As we all know, water fluoridation at the proper concentration (7 mg/liter or 7 parts per million) has been honored as one of the top ten health discoveries in the United States in the twentieth century. It has helped countless communities reduce caries rate approximately 25 percent for more than three quarters of a century. Multiple well controlled studies over the years have proved its' efficacy and safety many times over. We also know the concept of antifluoridation has a small but strong contingent of folks constantly fighting the fluoridation process and our efforts to expand those activities. It is important you know the ADA is a science-based association with a long history of using well tested and proven facts as a basis for caring for the public. We are and will defend the important role properly titrated fluoride addition to community water plays in fighting tooth decay. You have and will see our well thought out responses as the debate continues in the national news. Historically, proven science has always carried the day, and I think it will again. The American Dental Association has continued to reinforce this science with renewed studies and maintains the same policy recommending fluoridated water at the proper concentration throughout the United States. Roughly three quarters of the communities in our country have properly fluoridated water and we feel that should be higher. Stay tuned as your Association continues to make sure the public is provided with the correct information and historically proven positive outcomes associated with community water fluoridation.

The membership model pilot has officially begun as of November 1st, 2024. The five associations participating are the states of Washington, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico as well as the Washington, DC. Each of them and their components will determine the rate they are charging for membership alongside the reduction in ADA dues. Free membership will occur for first year dentists and a monthly charge of \$12 (\$144 per year) for dentists in their second through fifth years. For dentists beyond that, the charge will be \$300 per year. Operations will be streamlined to improve the member experience. A member loyalty program will help strengthen the value of membership and increase the engagement of dentists. In the future, pilot additions will likely include full-time faculty membership dues reductions (starting in 2025), a group practice membership pilot, the previously mentioned loyalty program, an international membership pilot, as well as expanding the pilot to more states.

It is important to note there are several states interested in joining the pilot in 2026. I strongly feel the New York State Dental Association should join this program in 2026. It is an important step in leading to long term financial sustainability and increasing the membership percentage of dentists in the tripartite from New York State. Our state association cannot continue to do business the way we have done in the past. Our percentage of members will dramatically decrease in the next two years if we don't change our thought process on this issue. We must think outside of the box, and I believe the membership pilot model is the best way to go. Please discuss this with your trustee, local leaders and component executive director. I truly think the tripartite will excel with this new process. If we continue down our current path, we will drop below 50% membership at the state and national level in 2026, and well below that several years after. I encourage all of you to learn the facts and play an important role in the future your local, state and national organizations.

The American Dental Association continues to be a strong member of the FDI World Dental Federation (Federation dentaire internationale). This past September, I attended the annual meeting in Istanbul, Turkey and took part in various meetings concerning world oral health. It is important to note the ADA is leading the charge in policy discussions and decisions. As you know, we determine policy through the ADA House of Delegates, and our international delegation promotes these policies as much as possible to the rest of the world. Many smaller countries take these new policies to their own ministries of health for direct input on decisions concerning their national oral health directives. It is important to share our scientific knowledge and policies with the rest of the world to improve oral health internationally. As we all know, caries and periodontal disease are at the top of the list worldwide for non-communicable

diseases. In the fall of 2026, I will be traveling to Shanghai, China for the next annual FDI meeting to continue the discussion on oral health.

It is my hope that all of you have a constructive, healthy and safe year in 2025. I will be sending you my next correspondence in May or June. Please take care and remember you can email me at dowdb@ada.org or call me at 716-510-3217 if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely, Brendan

Brendan Dowd DDS

ADA Trustee, Second District