

Second letter from the ADA Trustee to NYSDA Districts – April 2023
Trustee's Corner

As everyone already knows, there is not a person out there who is enjoying the spring weather better than a citizen of Western New York. After a very difficult and at times dangerous winter, we are happy to experience the annual change of season. I hope all our members have had a successful first part of the year and wish for continued blessings to you and your families.

I want to begin this segment of my letter to you with the issue of membership. Unfortunately, membership in the ADA, and concurrently in our constituents and components, has been dropping for a number of years. At the present time, ADA membership is 57% of active and retired dentists. There has been a steady decline since 2007, with some up and down years before then. I firmly believe this is a multifactorial problem which requires a variety of solutions. I also believe there are component, state, and national answers. Many of our local components in New York are hard at work on initiatives tailored for their unique district needs or that can be shared with other components. Our constituent, New York, has developed a mentoring program under the leadership of our president, Dr. Jim Galati. The ADA is working on a variety of programs with dental schools (Signing Day, Lunch and Learns) and New Dentists (ADAPT, career path and wellness support) to promote membership with the latest generation of our profession. A culture of inclusion is being fostered at all levels of the Tripartite to help make prospective members of all backgrounds feel welcomed into our organization. It's going to take all of us to promote the advantages and benefits of membership to keep our organization and voice strong in the future. Membership is critical to the success and relevance of the American Dental Association. At the same time, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your many years of membership and your contributions to Organized Dentistry.

I attended the ADA Board of Trustee meeting from April 2nd through April 4th in Chicago. The beginning of the meeting was an evening social gathering with the New Dentist Committee, followed by a collaborative meeting the next morning. Discussions involved the tough issues confronting dentistry today, including the membership question. Many of the New Dentists pointed out some of the strengths and weaknesses they see in the American Dental Association. Strengths include advocacy at the federal and state level, continuing education, and the Strategic Forecasting Committee. Areas of improvement begin with communication to members, especially pursuant to social media. They also believe the ADA is taking steps to improve with key hirings of experts in this area. The ADA believes members will see better results in the very near future.

Also on the agenda, a group of DSO executives and the executive director of the ADSO organization met with the Board of Trustees for an open discussion on the current landscape of delivery of dental care. Each of the attendees discussed their background and history, delineated areas of agreement with the ADA, as well as offered examples of future opportunities for cooperation. Such opportunities could include the sharing of analytical data, solutions to workforce shortages, and collaborating on interprofessional education. A good discussion ensued on different modalities of patient care in dentistry and how there are many viable avenues for the future. It was agreed by all parties that it is in the best interest of dentistry to keep this conversation going, continue to find areas of common ground, and attempt to resolve disagreements.

As many of you know, the ADA is a membership organization that has a dental research entity, the American Dental Association Science Research Institute (ADASRI). The ADA Board recently approved switching ADASRI to operate as a 501(c)(3), a change from its former status as a 501(c)(6) LLC. Under the ADASRI Operating Agreement, ADASRI has a 10-member Board of Directors, the appointment of each of whom is approved by the ADA. Currently, it has 44 employees with labs located in Maryland as well as the ADA building in Chicago. Much of the testing of the products to be considered for the ADA Seal of Acceptance takes place in the ADASRI labs in the ADA building. The ADA is the only dental membership organization in the world that has a scientific research arm directly affiliated with it. It has been very successful since its inception in 2018. In 2022, it had 753 citations, 25 peer-reviewed published manuscripts, and 27 abstracts presented. It is involved in applied research (AR), evidence synthesis and translational research (ESTR), as well as innovation and technology research (ITR). You will see many scientific articles in JADA and many other distinguished journals originating from ADASRI.

My next written correspondence with you will be in the fall before the ADA's annual meeting in October in Orlando, Florida. In the meantime, the New York State Dental Association will be gathering in Saratoga Springs, New York, for its annual meeting from June 2nd to June 4th. The House of Delegates

will meet to debate and decide on a group of resolutions presented to it by component societies, the NYSDA Board of Trustees, NYSDA councils, and individual members. There will also be two contested elections for Speaker of the House and Secretary-Treasurer. As you know, the House of Delegates is the supreme body of the New York State Dental Association.

Best wishes to all of you for a happy, healthy, and successful summer. As always, if you need to get a hold of me, you can reach me via email at dowdb@ada.org or drndowd@gmail.com, as well as on my cellphone at 716-510-3217.

Sincerely,
Brendan

Brendan Dowd DDS

ADA Second District Trustee