

THE GENERALIST

FALL 2021

Your voice for excellence through education and advocacy



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

Larry Katkow, DDS, MAGD
President, Maryland AGD

Greetings AGD Members, Fellows, and Masters:

Summer is coming to an end, and there are some exciting developments with the Maryland AGD. We will be offering our Speaker Series CE lectures free to members beginning in 2022. There is one course remaining in 2021 - Dr. Michael Melkers - and it should be terrific. I also encourage you to consider one of the MasterTrack classes. They are open to all dentists - you do not need to be working towards your fellowship or mastership. The courses are limited in size to allow for close interaction with the faculty and with your peers, and there is a hands-on component to enhance learning. If you have questions about the Mastertrack program feel free to contact me or one of the CE Chairs - Dr. John Mohler or Dr. Eric Morse.

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Welcome MAGD New Members



**WE CAN ALL TAKE
STEPS TO PROMOTE
DENTISTRY AND
ENCOURAGE YOUNG
ADULTS TO PURSUE
A CAREER IN THE
DENTAL FIELD.**

**Region
5**

Delaware | District of Columbia | Maryland | Virginia

NEWS FROM REGION 5

*Eric Morse, DDS
Region 5 Director*

I hope this article finds everyone well. As kids go back to school and summer vacations wrap up, we all start getting back into our normal routines and this is no different for the AGD.

The constituents of the AGD Region 5 will be starting back up their continuing education programs in September, including Maryland. Nationally, the AGD House of Delegates meeting will be held Friday, November 19th through Sunday, November 21st. As of now, the meeting is back to an in-person event in Chicago.

At the AGD House of Delegates, your elected delegates will debate and vote on resolutions that will become AGD policy. These resolutions involve financial decisions within the organization, new initiatives, and setting national AGD policy. These policies are what dictate how and what AGD advocates for on a national level. As a member, you can help create and influence these policies.

If you have identified an issue in your practice or state, then it is likely going on in other states as well. Most resolutions that reach the AGD House of Delegates come from the state level. If you have an issue that you think AGD can help with, contact your local constituent. They will help you draft a resolution to be voted on at the state and/or regional level.

Once passed, the local constituent or region will submit the resolution to the national AGD. It will be reviewed by the appropriate national committees and Board. Finally, it will reach the AGD House of Delegates for discussion and a final vote by the elected delegates. This is how the AGD knows what is important to its members and how to advocate on their behalf.

One big issue that was brought forward in the region was that of a dental workforce shortage. For many areas across the country, including our own, dentistry has seen a significant shortage of dental assistants and hygienists. Even with increased wages, there are still not the numbers needed to fill the vacant assistant and hygienist positions.

The AGD Region 5 knows this and has been working with other dental organizations to fix this problem. The AGD and their partners are in the process of contacting legislators to make sure they understand the issues we are facing. We are working with current hygiene and assistant programs to determine barriers to accepting and graduating more students. We are trying to work with high school technological education programs to add dental assisting as an educational track.

One thing we can all do is contact our local schools and volunteer for career fairs. Promoting all parts of the dental team to younger kids will help increase the number of them wanting to join this great profession as they get older.



5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO RIDE OUT THE HIRING CRISIS IN DENTISTRY

Courtesy of PlanetDDS

The job “dental hygienist” has ranked in the top half of best 100 jobs on US News for several years running. And yet, dental practices are finding hiring a hygienist more and more difficult. According to the ADA, as of last month, more than 80% of dentist owners who are trying to hire are finding recruiting extremely or very challenging, particularly for dental hygienists and dental assistants. Many private dentists are understandably disheartened with the hiring process, finding it challenging to get qualified applicants, experiencing interview no-shows, poor attendance in recent hires, or having new hires quitting.

The shortage of dental hygienists and assistants pre-dated the pandemic, so the staffing shortage only became worse as the pandemic posed new challenges. Many employees left the dental workforce for various reasons, including concerns about workplace safety, the desire for more work-life balance, or taking early retirement.

With the looming possibility of a third wave of the pandemic, here are five things your practice can do to ride out the hiring crisis.

Know Your Team

Over 95% of dental hygienists and 85% of dental assistants are female. Think about that. A 20 to 1 ratio of dental hygienists are women. And yet, on average, female dental assistants still only earn 97% of what male dental assistants earn. Addressing this and other pressing issues for female dental staff is a way you can make your dental practice more attractive when recruiting. In addition, many of these female hygienists and assistants are mothers.

The mental toll that the pandemic has taken on mothers is well documented. With the extreme shortage of dental hygienists, assistants, and administrative staff, it's essential to make your practice attractive to new talent, and it's equally important to retain existing talent.

Here are some things independent dentists can do to retain and recruit dental hygienists and assistants.

1. Offer Flexible Schedules

Having a good working relationship with your staff members means keeping the lines of communication open. Have honest conversations with your team members to find what work schedule works best for them. And then, to the extent possible, determine what scheduling changes can make everyone's lives easier. Perhaps it makes more sense to schedule the most complex procedures in the morning and easier, routine procedures in the afternoon so your team can leave the office feeling energized, not stressed. Would a compressed schedule with one day off be beneficial to your staff members? Finding ways to make work less stressful and more balanced helps improve job satisfaction, employee retention, and productivity.

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VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE & WORK

*Jean Carlson, DDS, MAGD
Member-at-Large Eastern
Maryland AGD Board of Directors*



Upon graduation from dental school in early 1984, I was advised by the placement officer at West Virginia University that dental associateships in West Virginia would be very hard to find due to the difficult economy at the time. Taking his advice and looking somewhat farther afield, I found a good position in a busy general practice in downtown Washington, D.C.

Dentistry in a big city was quite different from the small towns where I had lived and studied. For one thing, the patient population was diverse and cosmopolitan. Also, the number and type of specialists was a bit overwhelming.

It wasn't long before I realized that if I wanted to be a competent general dentist among hundreds of others, I was going to have to avidly pursue continuing education. AGD-sponsored courses provided much of the additional training I felt I needed to sharpen my skills.

Twenty years later, life changes took me out of the city and over the Bay Bridge to Cambridge, Maryland, where I was finally able to purchase my own practice. Dentistry in a small town was, once again, very different from my previous experiences in the city. The Eastern Shore had very few specialists and I again needed to broaden my skill set to be able to meet the needs of my patients in a rural area.

Through encouragement from some of my peers, and because of major changes in restorative techniques from my training in the 80's, I made the decision to join AGD and dedicate myself to a thorough makeover of my dental education.

With finally achieving my Mastership in AGD and then serving on state and national committees, I have not only been able to offer a wide variety of services to my patients, but also to give back to a profession and an organization that has richly rewarded me over an almost 40 year career.



UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 1, 2021
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Infectious Control
Speaker: **Lori Serna-Pate, RDH, MEd**
Maryland Virtual Academy

OCTOBER 1, 2021
10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Pharmacology
Speaker: **Richard Wynn, PhD**
Maryland Virtual Academy

SPEAKER SERIES
OCTOBER 22, 2021
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Occlusion & Case Planning
for Everyday Practice**
Speaker: **Michael Melkers, DDS**
Maritime Conference Center

MASTER TRACK PROGRAM
NOVEMBER 12-13, 2021
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Pediatric Dentistry &
Orthodontics**
Speaker: **Carla Cohn, DMD**
Maritime Conference Center

AGD HOUSE OF DELEGATES
NOVEMBER 19-21, 2021
McCormick Place, Chicago

Visit www.maryland-agd.org
to learn more and register!

Did you know?

To reduce environmental impact, Maryland AGD communicates updates & announcements via email. Be sure to put Maryland AGD on your priority list so you get all the news!

Tips for Riding Out the Hiring Crisis

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2. Offer Referral Bonuses

Because dentistry can be a small world, you never know what contacts your staff might have. Consider offering a referral bonus to your team members if they refer a candidate that you hire. Leveraging your own team member's network is also a great way to "pre-screen" candidates during the interview process. Once they're hired, you have a built-in rapport with your team member, which helps the new hire integrate faster into your practice.



3. Post Job Openings on Your Website & Social Media

If you're hiring, let the world know! Make sure you have the careers section on your website up to date and announce new job postings on your social media channels as well. Although less commonly used by dental practices to engage with patient audiences, LinkedIn may be an excellent social media channel to find qualified candidates.

4. Retaining Existing Team Members

Investing in the professional development of your team members is time well-spent. For every team member that you lose, it costs you productivity, team morale, and revenue. Schedule weekly check-ins with your team to discuss professional development, address any of their concerns, celebrate wins, and work with them to help them become better dental hygienists or assistants. If interested, you can offer mentorship to help them take on more responsibilities for the practice or help them utilize dental software better.

To build a strong team, hold daily morning huddle meetings and set aside time once a week or month to discuss larger goals and strategies. With exit interviews, it's already too late to retain an employee. Consider holding "stay interviews" to continually give employees a reason to stay with your practice and proactively resolve any issues that might otherwise go unnoticed.

5. Using Technology to Help Bridge Gaps

Let's say you're doing everything you can to retain and attract talent, but you're still short-handed. This is unfortunately a reality for many practices as the hiring crisis is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Instead of overwhelming your staff with more responsibilities and increasing stress for you and your team, consider implementing technology that reduces the workload for your smaller staff.

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Meet 2021-2022 Student Chapter President

Vero Nica, University of Maryland School of Dentistry

My dental dreams all started in 7th grade when my dentist showed my mom and me a wax-up of her future veneers. At the time, my favorite hobby was painting nails, and I would often use various instruments like toothpicks to make flowers and acrylic to add textured designs. I was in awe by the detail of the wax-up and sat eagerly chair-side watching as my dentist meticulously worked and designed in my mom's mouth.

From then on, my passion for the profession grew as I continued to shadow my dentist with many other procedures. I was inspired by the technique and precision required in each and every treatment in dentistry. I can't believe that thirteen years later, I'm in my last year of dental school and now getting ready to prep my very first veneers case next week!



PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

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On a personal note, I have experienced many changes in my personal and practice life in recent months. My kids are excited to go back to school, and they've been trying to make the most of their summer. I have had the pleasure of hiring a new dentist for the practice. It is interesting to have someone new to discuss cases with and to help serve our patients. I have tried to continue volunteering some of my time pro bono to help patients who are in need of dental care. The Mission of Mercy - Denture Access Day was a success back in May, and I look forward to future Missions of Mercy. If you aren't aware, the Maryland Foundation of Dentistry's (MFD) Donated Dental Services (DDS) facilitates pro bono dental care for adults with intellectual, physical, and/or developmental disabilities who are unable to pay for their dental care. MFD services are once in a lifetime for the patients, and the patients are well vetted by the staff at MFD. There is no cost to provide basic treatment in your office (lab fees are covered if needed.) Please contact MFD and volunteer to see a patient - there is such a tremendous need out there. You can sign-up at <https://mfd-dds.org/volunteer>. Stay safe, healthy, and have a wonderful Fall season!



Tips for Riding Out the Hiring Crisis

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The right practice management solution can help automate tasks for your front desk and back office. It can streamline the day for you and your dental hygienist and assistant as well. Ask yourself:

- How much stress could you reduce for you and your billing team if your practice management solution could match up to 90% of your 835 claims?
- How much easier would it be for you and your front desk team if your practice management solution automatically sent text reminders for upcoming appointments and recall reminders?
- How can a practice management solution help me fill canceled appointments?
- What if your practice management solution ensured that all patients had every form completed before their appointment?
- What if your practice management solution offered intuitive user flows for your clinical team?
- And how much easier would it be if you had cloud-based anytime anywhere access to your practice data?

Finding ways that technology can bridge gaps is a cost-effective and scalable way for your practice to ride out the hiring crisis.



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

CHARLES DORING, DDS

There were a number of bills dealing with issues concerning the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners (MSBDE). Two bills (**HB 708 & SB 836**) were very different bills dealing with the delays in disciplinary process and the disposition of summary suspensions. Legislators had valid concerns with a recent dental care case in Anne Arundel County that was covered in the news media as well as complaints from several trial lawyers that the board was taking way too long to conclude dispositions and summary suspensions for oral health professionals under investigation by the MSBDE. The MSBDE opposed these two bills and the MSDA took no position other than to provide input. During the hearing and subcommittee hearings in HGO, it was evident the legislators had concerns about the operation of the MSBDE as well as the nomination process to be on the board (covered in HB 1030 below). The MSDA suggested that all the above issues needed an in-depth review that was not possible during the legislative session and we advocated for a task force. In the end, the bill was amended and passed (SB 836) for the MSBDE to do a self-analysis and report back to the state legislature as outlined in the Doherty report.

The Maryland General Assembly passed two bills that improve the Maryland Healthy Smiles Program, **HB 547/SB 485**. This new law allows flexibility in scheduling preventive care services and getting reimbursed as long as 140 days has passed since the last preventive care services. This bill would go into effect January 1, 2022. This bill mandates that Medicaid follow the same guidelines as legislation we passed in 2012 dealing with insurance plans (excluding federal plans that will require an act of congress). **SB 923** extends post-partum medical/dental benefits under Medicaid for one year following the end of the woman's pregnancy. This bill takes effect January 1, 2022 subject to limitations within the State budget.

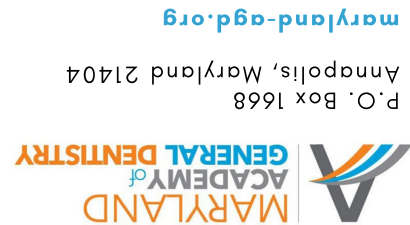
There were a number of bills related to Labor & Employment during a pandemic or emergency. The MSDA Lobbying team followed these bills very carefully and worked with lobbyists from other small business organizations to minimize the impact such legislation would have on dental offices. We feel these changes provide a safe working environment for dental teams while not being overburdensome.

Delegate Pena-Melnyk and Delegate Robbyn Lewis (District 46 Baltimore City) sponsored the Public Health Implicit Bias Training and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD) Bill (**HB 28/ SB 5**). The bill requires all health occupation boards to require a "Cultural and Linguistic Health Care Professional Competency" course to be completed for every license renewal after April 1, 2022. The OMHHD of the Department of Health must develop the course to be recognized by the various boards. This mandated CE may not be popular with some licensed dentists and dental hygienists but it must be stressed that this law effects all Maryland licensed health care professionals and it comes at a time when social and health care inequities are being reviewed under a microscope. Dentistry must be seen as a willing participant in ending any real or perceived public health inequities.

Dentist Day 2022 is scheduled for **February 16**, hopefully in person with a pre-Dentist Day virtual seminar as this past year. The LAC hopes to energize our membership for a good turnout as there may be several important bills this coming legislative session.

contact@maryland-agd.org
443-221-1188

Questions or comments?
We love to hear from you!



Maryland Academy of General Dentistry welcomes our newest members!

Yasmin Akhlaghi
Rockville

Yoochan Hong
Baltimore

Ishita Rahman
Annapolis

Mellanie N. Thompson
Silver Spring

Michael B. Ashley
Hyattsville

Akendra S. Johnson
Washington, D.C.

Mandana Shaya
Annapolis

Griffin Votolato
Providence, Rhode Island

Mirette N. Boushra
Lisle, Illinois

Eric Klein
Baltimore

Sheena Sikka
Bethesda

Gary E. Warner
Bowie

Devon B. Conklin
Baltimore

Chase Koetter
Baltimore

Yamuna D. Subramanian
La Plata

Edmond J. Woo
Kensington

Parmender Chamber
Boys

Bethany P. Leedy
Baltimore

Isaac S. Taddessee
Washington, D.C.

Secunda T. Wright-Perry
Clinton

Janice Grossman
Potomac

Nkem Obiechina
Rockville

Alonzo T. Thomas
Silver Spring

Matthew R. Yarmosky
Columbia