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Dear Colleague:

We've just completed our annual **National Recruitment & Retention Report** that tracks membership market share for active licensed dentists. We're very pleased to say the results are excellent. Some highlights:

- Market share increased .5% to 71.8%, just .2% below our goal of 72% for end of year 2006.
- For 2006, the number of active licensed members increased 1,458 to 128,020.
- Since 2001, the ADA has gained 10,742 active members.

What does this mean for the practicing dentist? As long as the ADA represents such a large percentage of dentists, we're listened to when we represent you and your interests on Capitol Hill and in regulatory agencies. We appreciate your continuing membership and the clout it gives us when acting on your behalf.

With **Give Kids A Smile** about to celebrate its 5th anniversary, and with record numbers of programs and volunteers signed up for the Feb. 2 event, we believe the time is right to take the program to the next level. Our vision is that a variety of Give Kids A Smile activities take place around the country throughout the year, with follow-up care, financial help for existing or new programs and bringing other access programs under the Give Kids A Smile umbrella being key components. We hope you saw the Jan. 22 *ADA News*, where the expansion was announced, including coverage of the initial meeting of the new Give Kids A Smile National Advisory Board here at the ADA. This new advisory board is unlike other ADA governance bodies, consisting of representatives from the ADA Board of Trustees, the ADA Foundation Board, the ADA Council on Communications, industry and the public health community.

CareCredit, an endorsed provider of ADA Member Advantage and many state dental associations, has made a founding contribution of \$100,000 to the new Give Kids A Smile Fund in the ADA Foundation. We hope the new fund will be able to award grants to new or existing access-to-care programs and offer other incentives to come under the Give Kids A Smile umbrella. Our thanks to CareCredit for stepping up to support Give Kids A Smile and for being such a good corporate citizen.

See *U.S. News and World Report* for the magazine's annual "**best careers**" issue. We're pleased to say dentistry made that list. An [executive summary](#) and an [interview](#) with ADA President Kathy Roth are on the magazine's Web site.

Scheduled for completion in 2015, the **National Health Information Infrastructure** (NHII) will be a communications system comparable to a network of highways, roads and pathways on which all health information will travel. Its purpose is to enable patients' electronic health records to be accessed and added to by all health care providers electronically (with patient authorization), virtually anywhere in the country, via the network. In an effort to keep you informed about how NHII will affect your practice and what we're doing to advocate for dentists on health information technology issues, we began coverage of the topic in the Jan. 22 *ADA News* with an article examining what NHII will mean for dentists. The Feb. 5 issue will include a piece exploring ADA views on NHII. Coverage will continue with articles on NHII appearing regularly in *ADA News* throughout the year along with updates in ADA e-mail publications. This information and additional resources are available through an online repository of NHII materials on ADA.org (www.ada.org/goto/nhii) to help you learn more about NHII, how it will affect your practice and how the ADA can help.

Once again, our **Science in the News** is way ahead of the curve in providing you good analysis of issues in the public eye. Last month Science in the News reported on [ADA.org](#) on a study that claimed to have found a link between periodontal disease and pancreatic cancer, well before an account of the study hit the news wires last month. If patients ask about the study, the essential talking point is that it didn't establish a cause-and-effect relationship between periodontal disease and pancreatic cancer. See [ADA.org](#) for details.

We wanted to call your attention to an editorial that ran in *The New York Times* on December 26, "Paying Doctors for Better Care," that raises several interesting questions around the **pay-for-performance** issue. According to the editorial, "...the current fee-for-service reimbursement systems used by Medicare and other insurance programs perversely reward doctors for the volume of services they provide and pay little or no attention to the quality of those services." It then goes on to cite legislation passed by Congress late last year as a "modest step" toward addressing that inequity by paying doctors a small bonus for voluntarily reporting on the quality of their care. "If Congress decides to move the program forward, such data might in time be used to reward doctors who practice the best medicine," the editorial continues. The Times claims that more than 100 pay-for-performance programs already exist under the sponsorship of health plans, employer groups and Medicare and that a 2004 poll found that a large majority of physicians favor payment based on quality of care. As we all know, it doesn't take long for trends in medicine to find their way into dentistry so we'll monitor this issue closely and share developments with you.

Under a new law sponsored by the California Dental Assn., children in the state must have a **dental checkup** by May 31 of their first year in public school. Parents who object or can't afford it can be exempted from the requirement. Schools will provide forms for parents to take to dentists to fill out on the condition of their children's teeth. According to the 2000 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health, more than 51 million school hours are lost each year because of dental-related illness. Dental

disease was cited as the "single most common chronic childhood disease." Illinois passed a similar law in 2004.

Always looking for ways to improve its appeal, **JADA** has introduced a new feature in the ever-popular realm of commentary. *JADA's* "Essay," as it's known, will appear several times a year and showcase the thoughts of invited commentators from various walks of life—health care providers, government leaders and experts across the board. In the first installment, appearing in the January *JADA*, renowned dental researcher Bruce Baum, DDS, PhD, spotlights a need for improved training for dental students in the biological sciences and medicine. Among other observations, Dr. Baum notes that the 65-and-over age group will double within the next 25 years. As a result, dentists will be seeing more and more patients plagued by chronic systemic ailments. And, he warns, you'd better be prepared.

Dentists in general practice who owned their practice earned an **average net income** of \$185,940 in 2004, according to a new report published by our Survey Center. "Income from the Private Practice of Dentistry," the first report published from our 2005 Survey of Dental Practice, also shows that specialists' average net income was \$315,160 that year. In the past five years, general practitioners' net incomes increased 11.7%, while specialists' incomes grew 20.6%. In addition to net income figures, the report includes data on dentists' expenses, gross billings and sources of gross billings. Five-year trend charts are included for many of these statistics. The report can be ordered from the ADA's Member Service Center (800-947-4746, www.adacatalog.org). The cost (item code SDPI-2005) is \$100 for ADA members, \$150 for nonmember dentists and \$300 for commercial firms, plus shipping and handling. This report is also available as a downloadable file (SDPI-2005D, same prices apply) when ordered online.

Our Salable Materials area is offering a new line of **Personalized Products** including brochures, postcards and laser cards, business and appointment cards, stationery, health history and sign-in forms, coloring books, wall art, magnets, tumblers, tote bags and cosmetic recall and reminder cards. The latest catalog offers a \$25 discount on orders of \$150 or more through March 31. These products can be viewed on [ADA Catalog](#) and are listed in the NEW Products, Personalized Products, Wall Art and Forms categories. Fifteen products from this new line are featured on the landing page of the e-Catalog during the product launch. For a hard copy of the catalog call 800-947-4746.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. On the left is the signature of Kathleen Roth, DDS, and on the right is the signature of James B. Bramson, DDS. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen Roth, DDS,
president

James B. Bramson, DDS, executive director



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