

# Council on Communications

---

De La Rosa, Rebecca J., 2022, Indiana, chair  
 Krishnan, Prabha, 2023, New York, vice chair  
 Baker, Carol A., 2024, South Carolina  
 Banner, Wade M., 2024, California  
 Briney, Lynse J., 2023, Illinois  
 Frankman, Michael J., 2022, South Dakota  
 Hammi-Blue, Anne, 2024, Arizona  
 Isbell, T. Stotts, 2025, Arkansas  
 Jackson, Lindsey D., 2025, New Hampshire  
 Lawson, Amber P., 2022, Georgia  
 Lewin, Rachel L., 2025, Pennsylvania  
 Limosani, Mark A., 2024, Florida  
 Maestas, Tanya Sue, 2022, Texas\*  
 Noguera, Angela P., 2023, Washington, D.C.  
 Raum, Rhett E., 2025, Tennessee  
 Schaff, Riley A., 2023, Michigan, *ad interim*\*\*  
 Schott, Laura J., 2024, Texas  
 Shelton Wagers, Jill, 2022, Idaho

Nissim, Julia M., director

The Council's 2021–22 liaisons include: Dr. Brett Kessler (Board of Trustees, 14<sup>th</sup> District) and Ms. Justina Anigbo (American Student Dental Association).

## ***Areas of Responsibility as Set Forth in the Bylaws or Governance and Organizational Manual of the American Dental Association***

---

As listed in Chapter VIII, Section K.2., of the ADA Governance and Organizational Manual, the subject matter responsibility for the Council shall be:

- a) Advise on the management of the Association's reputation;
- b) Develop, recommend and maintain ADA strategic communications plans;
- c) Advise ADA agencies on branding;
- d) Advise on prioritization and allocation of communications resources; and
- e) Advise on communications and marketing for constituents and components, upon request.

## **Advancing ADA Strategic Goals and Objectives: Agency Programs, Projects, Results and Success Measures**

---

**Membership Goal: The ADA will have sufficient members to be the premier voice for oral health.**

**Objective 1:** Increase membership market share of lagging demographics by 2% per year.

**Objective 2:** Maintain a net-positive gain in membership recruitment of all dentists within 70% or more of constituents.

**Objective 3:** Maintain an overall retention rate of 94%.

**Objective 4:** Increase overall average rates of conversion across membership categories by 1% per year.

---

\* *New Dentist member*

\*\**Replaced Dr. Thomas Lambert, 2023, Michigan*

**Initiative/Program: Integrated Marketing**

The Council's Integrated Marketing Workgroup explores and develops marketing ideas to support acceleration of early career dentist market share. The ADA Team activates tactics tied to the strategic direction from the group.

**Success Measure:** Meet or exceed industry standard benchmarks for engagement in digital/social tactics for early career campaigns. Engagement in campaigns supports Objective 1 of the Membership Goal.

**Target:** Create one engagement campaign per quarter, targeted at early-career dentists' needs supported by the ADA.

**Range:** N/A

**Outcome:**

Q1-April 2022:

- Delivered a round-up of career resources in a two-part email series, customized by practice type that drove a 43% average open rate – double the industry standard.
- Promoted a mix of specific financial benefits (student loan refinancing, tax resources, etc.), leaning into “smart saving strategies” messaging that was among the top performing ads on dental trade websites and paid social media ads from the ADA.

Q2-Q4 2021:

- Focused on the engagement of early career dentists, yielding nearly 2,000 registrants for ADA Accelerator webinars about leadership, wellness and finances
- Provided guidance to tailor email content to members pending renewal, with a 3.8% click-through rate, which is far higher than industry standard of 2.3%.

**Initiative/Program: Communications Effectiveness**

The Council's Communications Effectiveness Workgroup monitors ADA publications and channels to review the coverage of priority member-value topics, such as third-party payers, wellness information and diversity and inclusion, from the dentist's perspective. The group identifies potential gaps in coverage and provides the ADA team with guidance to improve real time communication to members. It also fields “quick pulse” surveys with a sample of dentists to obtain additional data around a priority topic and why it matters from the dentist point-of-view (POV).

**Success Measure:** Provide monthly feedback to ADA publications with data and insights from the dentist's POV related to coverage of wellness, diversity and inclusion, third-party payers and advocacy topics. Field quick pulse surveys as appropriate.

**Target:** Provide monthly feedback to ADA Publications.

**Range:** N/A

**Outcome:**

- The monthly feedback provided from this group has helped to shape a variety of ADA stories about workforce shortages, wellness and mental health, financial planning, dental insurance and advocacy – all topics identified as critical member value benefits from the 2021 Council on Communications Trend Report.
- The group also executed a quick pulse survey about dental insurance support and solutions, which revealed critical data about members' awareness of these benefits, plus members' communication preferences.
  - More than half (58%) of survey respondents were not familiar with the tools and services the ADA offers to support members' questions and issues with dental insurers.
  - Women have a slight preference for email from local/state society and social media whereas men have a stronger preference for national ADA email.

**Public Goal: The ADA will support the advancement of the health of the public and the success of the profession.**

**Objective 9:** The ADA will be the preeminent driver of trusted oral health information for the public and profession.

**Initiative/Program: Leadership Connections/Spokesperson Workgroup**

The Leadership Connections and Spokesperson Workgroup has three focal points:

- Collaborate with ADA Information Technology (IT) to improve ADA Connect for real-time leader engagement and information-sharing across councils;
- Provide strategic guidance regarding how to engage within private, dentist-only social media groups and close the gaps between dentists' needs and ADA; and
- Guide staff in the recruitment and maintenance of dentists as ADA media spokespersons, who convey credible information on oral health to the public through media interviews.

**Success Measure:**

- Launch an ADA Connect "living room" (a common area on ADA Connect accessible to all councils) by Q3 2022, per Resolution 103-2020, Reexamine Council on Communications Liaison Program (*Trans.2020:274*), which was referred to the Council on Communications and reported back to the 2021 House).
- Create a pilot program to collaborate with and support practitioners participating in closed social media groups, so that they can feel empowered to speak to misconceptions or needs from closed media groups, and provide applicable ADA resources as appropriate.
- Grow the ADA spokesperson program by at least 1-2 qualified spokespersons per year.
- Through thoughtful vetting of spokesperson candidates, ensure the ongoing high caliber of a public relations team that maintains 90% positive/neutral media sentiment quarterly on news coverage that cites the ADA.

**Target:** N/A

**Range:** N/A

**Outcome:**

- The ADA added one new media spokesperson and achieved 97% to 99% positive/neutral media sentiment in coverage through Q2-Q4 2021, and Q1 2022, with an audience of 18 billion and counting.
- The ADA Connect "living room" is built and on-track for council member use in Q3 2022, fulfilling this action-item from the Council's 2021 Annual Report responding to Resolution 103-2020.
- Social media pilot program is in development now (Q2-Q3 2022) with an expected launch by Q4 2022.

**Emerging Issues and Trends**

---

For the long-term health of an organization's reputation, its leaders must continuously address breaking issues in an agile fashion. The Council is engaging in real-time communications strategy work around emerging issues in three key ways:

- **Sharing the dentist perspective in real-time for ADA breaking issues:** As the dentist perspective is critical to effective communications, the Council provides this perspective for emerging issues, sharing questions they're hearing from members and sharing information back to constituents in real-time, to help the ADA Team to quickly disseminate clear, accurate information to members nationally.

- **Committing to development of a strategic communications plan to address organizational culture change highlighting ADA change initiatives:** As the ADA begins to move from a membership model to a membership engagement platform, Dr. Cohlmiia sought the Council’s assistance in developing a five-year plan with metrics to communicate the “culture of change” taking place at the ADA—a culture that welcomes dentists from all walks of life and practice modalities. Strategic planning commenced in Q2 2022 and work will continue in 2023.
- **Creating the annual Council on Communications Trend Report:** In 2020, the Council created the first Communications Trend Report (Report) as an annual bellwether for reputation management themes that the ADA can help dentists navigate. The 2020 and 2021 Reports showed that emerging issues, such as COVID-19, are where the ADA has tremendous opportunity to impact the practitioner. Led by the Strategic Communications workgroup, research for the third annual Trend Report is in the field now and will be analyzed throughout June and July, with a final report debuting in Q3 2022.

The Report continues to build on identifying emerging issues for dentists and their patients, as well as gaps in communication between the ADA and dentists and dentists and their patients, to aid in data-based communications planning at all levels of organized dentistry.

Key themes of the 2022 surveys that will be compiled for the Report include:

- Annual benchmarking questions like, "How is the ADA supporting you on the following topics: advocacy, COVID-19 resources, insurance, staffing, wellness, diversity, equity and inclusion, practice management..." and more.
- Public/consumer beliefs about public health topics such as teledentistry, fluoridation, amalgam, vaccinations, marijuana use and COVID-19. A second version of this survey is also shared with dentists to gauge their perspective.
- New and emerging issue topics from the dentist’s perspective, including questions patients ask based on fake information, reasons dental team members leave current practices, pain management/prescribing, patient drug use and administration of vaccines.

**Outcome:** The Trend Report will be shared with national, state and local leadership in Q3 2022 as strategic inputs for reputation management and communications planning that delivers member value.

## **Responses to House of Delegates Resolutions**

---

**Resolution:** 77-2020—Elder Care Strategies on Public Advocacy (*Trans.*2020:255)

**77-2020. Resolved,** that in order to prepare the profession for the increased demographic shift to an older population, the appropriate ADA agencies should consider integrating the following elder care strategies on public advocacy as priority projects, and be it further

**Resolved,** provide information on elder oral health matters to the public by:

1. developing educational material, targeted at the families of patients, that addresses their role in assisting in oral care and make it available on the public facing ADA website
2. supporting and evaluating community based interdisciplinary programs that bring health promotion and prevention and care to seniors where they live and congregate
3. developing a public service campaign on both the oral-systemic connection and the dental management of the medically complex older adult

Proposed by the Elder Care Workgroup, per Resolution 97H-2020, Resolution 77-2020 was included in the Special Order of Referral Consent Calendar. The Council on Communications and Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention (CAAP) responded to Resolution 77-2020 via the Council on

Communications 2021 Annual Report. A few action items from the 2021 response were activated in November 2021, regarding the first initiative, focused on educational material.

November is National Family Caregivers Month, which presents an ideal opportunity to enhance the ADA's approach to promoting information targeted at families of patients regarding their role in assisting in oral care. The ADA, with guidance from the Council and CAAP volunteers, updated its most visited articles on MouthHealthy.org (the ADA's website for the public) within the [Adults Over 60 Section](#) in October 2021. Then, these articles were promoted on a variety of channels to raise awareness about what resources exist to address the unique needs and concerns of caregivers, as opposed to individuals.

Key outcome metrics of media coverage, social media engagement and website traffic include:

- A prepackaged news article from the ADA about oral health advice for caregivers was distributed during National Caregivers Month on November 12, 2021 and garnered 1,057 print and online placements with an audience reach of 152.1 million.
- Social media posts from the ADA's Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter channels had a cumulative audience reach of 44,533, plus 479 action engagements (likes and comments) and 161 click-throughs to topical content on MouthHealthy.org
- MouthHealthy.org articles on this topic had 9,578 views during the timeframe of November 1-December 31, 2021.

### **Self-Assessment**

---

The Council is next scheduled to conduct a self-assessment in 2024.

### **Policy Review**

---

In accordance with Resolution 170H-2012, Regular Comprehensive Policy Review (*Trans.2012:370*), the Council conducted its policy review in 2018 and is due for another in 2023.

### **Council Minutes**

---

For more information on recent activities, see the Council's [minutes](#) on ADA.org.