

Council on Government Affairs

Vitale, Mark A., 2022, New Jersey, chair
 Gesek, Daniel J., Jr., 2024, Florida, vice chair
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 Crabtree, Mark A., 2023, Virginia
 Erickson, Doug M., 2025, Minnesota
 Feldman, Steven G., 2022, Maryland**
 Hisel, John E., Jr., 2022, Idaho
 Kent, Leigh W., 2024, Alabama
 Miller, Raymond G., 2023, New York
 Roberts, John R., 2025, Indiana
 Roberts, Matthew B., 2023, Texas
 Stanislav, Leon E., 2022, Tennessee
 Tauberg, James A.H., 2025, Pennsylvania
 Watson-Lowry, Cheryl D., 2024, Illinois

Yaghoubi, Roxanne, director
 Burns, Robert, J., manager
 Linn, David, N., manager
 McGee, Corey, A., manager

The Council's liaisons include: Dr. Linda Edgar (Board of Trustees, Eleventh District), Dr. Shailee Gupta (Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention), Ms. Susan Hadnot (Alliance of the American Dental Association), and Mr. Jakob Holtzmann (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.7., of the ADA *Governance and Organizational Manual*, the areas of subject matter responsibility of the Council shall be:

- a. Encourage the improvement of the health of the public and to promote the art and science of dentistry in matters of legislation and regulations by appropriate activities;
- b. Formulate and recommend legislation, regulatory activity, policies and governmental programs relating to dentistry and oral health for submission to Congress;
- c. Serve and assist as liaison with those agencies of the federal government which employ dental personnel or have dental care programs, and formulate policies which are designed to advance the professional status of federally employed dentists; and
- d. Disseminate information which will assist the constituents and components involving legislation and regulation affecting the dental health of the public.

* *American Dental Political Action Committee chair without the power to vote*

** *New Dentist member*

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

In the summer and fall of 2021, Congress was debating a Medicare dental benefit, and the Council's focus was on that issue.

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

Initiative/Program: The ADA's federal government affairs agenda on elder care.

Success Measure: A Congressional floor speech or hearing that discusses the need to provide oral health care to the most low-income, vulnerable seniors.

Target: A Congressional floor speech or hearing that discusses the need to provide oral health care to the most low-income, vulnerable seniors.

Range: Ten meetings with Congressional offices to educate them on elder oral health care and the ADA's policy that passed the House of Delegates in 2020.

Outcome: The ADA has met the success measure. The ADA's Congressional lobbying staff had hundreds of meetings with Congressional offices to advocate for the ADA's policy that any expansion of Medicare to include dental should be through a separate new program dedicated to providing comprehensive dental coverage to low-income seniors – not the Medicare Part B benefit proposed by Congress. Through these lobbying efforts the ADA was able to get a member of Congress to discuss the ADA's position during an important Committee hearing (see [ADA News](#)).

During the winter and spring of 2022, it became clear that thanks in part to the ADA's lobbying, Congress was unlikely to pass a Medicare Part B dental benefit. The ADA's focus in Washington therefore shifted with the guidance of the CGA leadership. The new goals align with the ADA's strategic plan, as well as with the ADA's work on promoting value to its membership while also supporting values, especially the values of dental students and new dentists.

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

Initiative/Program: The ADA's federal government affairs agenda on student loan reform.

Success Measure: A Congressional Committee hearing that discusses legislation that would allow the deferment of interest accrual on federal loans during residency programs and allow medical and dental students to apply for subsidized loans.

Target: Introduction of legislation that would allow the deferment of interest accrual on federal loans during residency programs and allow medical and dental students to apply for subsidized loans.

Range: The introduction of one to two Congressional bills that would allow the deferment of interest accrual on federal loans during residency programs and allow medical and dental students to apply for subsidized loans.

Outcome: Target met. For the first time, the Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act was introduced in both the House and Senate (see [ADA News](#)). The REDI Act would allow medical and dental residents to defer their student loans interest-free while in residency, saving them thousands of dollars in interest. Additionally, the POST GRAD Act, which would allow graduate and professional students with financial need to receive Direct Subsidized Stafford Loans, was introduced (see [ADA News](#)).

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

Initiative/Program: The ADA's federal government affairs agenda on Medicaid.

Success Measure: Congressional Committee passage of legislation supporting the ADA's goals on Medicaid dental.

Target: Introduction of legislation on the ADA's goals on Medicaid dental.

Range: One to two bills introduced in Congress on Medicaid dental.

Outcome: Target met. The ADA is working with Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) and other supporters in the House and Senate of mandating adult Medicaid dental benefits to support the Medicaid Dental Benefit Act (see [ADA News](#)). Additionally, the ADA is working with dentist member of Congress Mike Simpson (R-ID) on introducing a bill on reducing administrative burdens on Medicaid dentists, including audits, credentialing, and the payment of claims.

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

Initiative/Program: The ADA's federal government affairs agenda on dental insurance reform and third party payers.

Success Measure: House or Senate passage of legislation on dental insurance reform.

Target: A Committee hearing on dental insurance reform.

Range: One to two Committee hearings on dental insurance reform.

Outcome: Success measure met. Thanks to the work of the ADA, including the advocacy of dentists and students during Lobby Day and over a thousand emails sent to members of Congress by ADA advocates, the House of Representatives passed the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (see [ADA News](#)). This legislation would require all private group and individual health plans to cover medically necessary services resulting from a congenital anomaly or birth defect, including dental, orthodontic, and prosthodontic services.

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

Initiative/Program: The ADA's federal government affairs agenda on health equity.

Success Measure: Establishment of a facility code for dental surgeries in operating rooms in hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers.

Target: A Congressional Dear Colleague letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requesting that the agency establish a facility code for dental surgeries in operating rooms in hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers.

Range: Fifteen to twenty members of Congress signing onto the Congressional Dear Colleague letter to CMS on dental surgeries in operating rooms.

Outcome: Target met. Twenty-five bipartisan members of Congress sent a letter to CMS urging the agency to establish a facility code for dental surgeries in operating rooms. Currently, there is no code specifically for this purpose, so a miscellaneous code is used, which has a very low reimbursement rate. Hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers are scheduling surgeries that have a higher reimbursement rate, and dentists are struggling to find operating room time. This an important health equity issue

because children, disabled, special needs, and frail elderly patients who face health disparities and have complex oral disease are not getting the care that they need. The Congressional Dear Colleague letter is an important part of the advocacy the ADA, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons are doing on this issue (see [ADA News](#)).

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

Initiative/Program: American Dental Political Action Committee grassroots program.

Success Measure: Successfully grow grassroots network and ensure network can communicate to members of Congress and staff.

Outcome: In 2021, 6,584 new advocates became part of the grassroots network. Almost 80,000 communications were sent to Capitol Hill, and more than 28,000 unique advocates took action.

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

Initiative/Program: American Dental Political Action Committee Tooth Talk Podcast.

Success Measure: Cover important advocacy-related topics through the podcast platform.

Outcome: Over 1,500 downloads for each episode.

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

Initiative/Program: ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day.

Success Measure: Educate dentists and students on pertinent issues before Congress. Assist dentists and students in advocating for these issues before members of Congress and staff.

Outcome: Around 400 dentists and students attended and participated in Lobby Day and 200 meetings were held with Congressional offices (see [ADA News](#)).

Objective 10: Dental benefit programs will be sufficiently funded and efficiently administered.

Initiative/Program: Fighting Insurance Interference Strategic Taskforce (FIIST).

Success Measure: Increase by 30% legislative and regulatory activity related to third-party payer issues in State Public Affairs (SPA) states.

Target: Increase by 30% legislative and regulatory activity related to third-party payer issues in SPA states.

Range: 20–30% of activity relating to third-party payer issues in SPA states.

Outcome: The target was exceeded. Twenty-six state dental societies received FIIST/SPA funding to engage in third party payer issues on the state level in the January through June 2022 SPA grant period. There were 27 proposed dental insurance reform laws put forward by 13 state societies receiving FIIST dedicated SPA funds, representing an increase in activity of 50% (13 of 26 states saw activity). To date, there are 11 new laws in 2022 with the result of a 41% conversion rate in 2022. The State Government Affairs (SGA) team also worked with a few state dental societies that did not request FIIST/SPA money

but were engaged in third party payer legislation nonetheless. One state society was successful in passing laws without SPA funding but with SGA's assistance.

Emerging Issues and Trends

In an election year, it is unlikely that much will be accomplished in Washington that will affect the ADA and dentistry. Most of the debate and federal governmental action will be on controversial issues that do not impact dentistry such as gun control. More victories on issues related to dentistry may occur in the states.

Responses to House of Delegates Resolutions

Resolution: 7H-2021, Professional Liability Insurance Legislation

7H-2021. Resolved, that the American Dental Association monitor and constituent dental societies be urged to monitor federal and state legislation for challenges to tort reform that would result in liability insurance premiums rising and leading to increased health care costs for patients, and be it further

Resolved, that the ADA should stand ready to aid and assist constituent dental societies experiencing a crisis of rising malpractice insurance premiums due to tort reform challenges.

Resolution 7H-2021 calls for the ADA to monitor tort reform legislation in Congress and to urge constituent societies to do the same at the state level. The Washington Office identified no malpractice insurance reform legislation in the 117th Congress. Also, the Department of State Government Affairs notified constituent societies about the policy. It has received no questions about tort reform in recent memory. Unlike the early 2000s, it does not seem to be a trending issue.

Self-Assessment

The Council is next scheduled to conduct a self-assessment in 2025.

Policy Review

In accordance with Resolution 170H-2012, Regular Comprehensive Policy Review (*Trans.* 2012:370), the Council reviewed the following Association policies and determined that they should be maintained.

- National Pretreatment Standard for Dental Office Wastewater (*Trans.*2019:305)
- Trade Agreements (*Trans.*1993:711)
- Federal Student Loan Programs (*Trans.*2019:297)
- Federal Student Loan Repayment Incentives (*Trans.*2019:297)
- Tax Treatment of Student Loan Interest, Scholarships and Stipends (*Trans.*2019:298)
- General, Pediatric and Public Health Dental Residency Programs (*Trans.*2019:295)
- ADA Support for Constituent Societies Dealing With Dental Mid-Level Provider Proposals (*Trans.*2008:502)

The Council has submitted resolutions to amend or rescind other Association policies based on their adequacy (or obsolescence) in modern times, appropriateness of language and terminology, consistence with other Association policies, and the merits of any revision(s). Those recommendations are contained on separate worksheets.

Council Minutes

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