

**AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS
February 17-18, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Council on Communications was called to order by chair, Dr. Prabha Krishnan, Friday, February 17, 2023, at 8:14 AM CT.

ROLL CALL

Council members present: Drs. Prabha Krishnan, chair; Laura Schott, vice chair; Carol A. Baker; Amber D. Cziok (via Zoom on February 17-18, 2023); Ann Hammi Blue; Lynse J. Briney; T. Stotts Isbell; Lindsey D. Jackson; Amir E. Kazim; Rachel L. Lewin; Mark A. Limosani; Angela P. Noguera; James J. Phillips, Jr.; Rhett E. Raum; Riley Schaff; Andrew W. Zucker; Tanya Sue Maestas, New Dentist Committee member.

In addition, Dr. Terry Fiddler, liaison, ADA Board of Trustees, was in attendance.

Council members and others not present: Dr. Jill Shelton Wagers; Ms. Shafa Nathani, representative, American Student Dental Association.

Council and other present staff: Ms. Julia Nissim, director, Communications; Ms. Ivy Woods, coordinator, Integrated Marketing and Communications; Ms. Yvonne Lewis, manager, Business and Administrative Services; Ms. Leslee Williams, vice president, Public and Professional Communications; Ms. Cathryn Albrecht, ADA senior associate general counsel; Ms. Wendy Wils, ADA deputy general counsel; Ms. Jenn Sutherland, senior director, Digital Marketing; Ms. Pamela Von Lehmden, vice president, Integrated Marketing & Brand Experience.

Other ADA officers and staff in attendance for parts of the meeting included: Dr. Raymond A. Cohlma, ADA executive director (virtual attendance 2/17); Mr. Robert Quashie, chief operating officer; Ms. Sandy Eitel, director, Council on Membership (virtual attendance 2/17); Mr. Steve Horne, sr. manager, Marketing Research (virtual attendance 2/17); Ms. Joan Podrazik, sr. manager, Communications and Analysis; Mr. Matt Rosetto, legislative liaison, State Government Affairs; Ms. Susana Galvan, sr. manager, Diversity Equity & Inclusion Program Innovation and Engagement; Ms. Christine Chico, director, Client Services.

PRELIMINARY

Adoption of the Agenda: The agenda was adopted with the stipulation that the chair could alter the order of the agenda when necessary to expedite Council business.

Recording of Mail Ballot Actions: It was reported that the minutes of the August 19-21, 2022 meeting, which were approved via electronic ballot on October 4, 2022, would be recorded in the Council's minutes in accordance with the *Standing Rules for Councils and Commissions*.

Opening remarks: Remarks were made by the Council chair, Dr. Prabha Krishnan; Board of Trustees liaison, Dr. Terry Fiddler; chief operating officer, Mr. Robert Quashie; vice president, Public and Professional Communications, Ms. Leslee Williams; and Council director, Ms. Julia Nissim. Review of the ADA Professional Conduct Policy was conducted by Ms. Catherine Albrecht, as well as a review of the Conflict of Interest Policy, which was conducted by Ms. Wendy Wils.

COUNCIL WORKGROUP UPDATES

Each of the three Council Workgroup leaders provided updates on current efforts of their respective workgroups in support of the objectives in Common Ground 2025.

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

Communication Innovation Workgroup: Dr. Jill Wagers, chair; Dr. Carol Baker, vice chair; Dr. Lynse Briney; Dr. Amber Cziok; Dr. Mark Limosani; Dr. Andrew Zucker; Ms. Joan Podrazik (staff liaison); Ms. Nicole Anderson (staff liaison)

Dr. Baker, who presented the report of the Workgroup, shared remarks from Dr. Wagers and explained that the Workgroup's purpose is to examine existing member and stakeholder research to identify potential gaps and collect further research, resulting in strategic recommendations and potential innovations to existing communications channels. The Workgroup was tasked with developing a social media reputation defense toolkit to assist dentists when they receive false or defamatory online reviews. This work was undertaken in response to Resolution 304H—Social Media Reviews and Reputation Management, a resolution jointly assigned to the Council on Communications and the Council on Dental Practice. After reviewing existing ADA resources, the Workgroup developed a strategic approach to organizing the most relevant content that will help inform dentists about HIPAA considerations and provide sample responses to the most common negative reviews dentists may encounter. The Workgroup also made strategic recommendations around toolkit promotions to reach both new and established dentists. The resource is on-track to be live and promoted in April 2023, with analysis of efforts estimated for completion in May 2023.

The ADA has been active in collaborations on this issue. Leaders of the Council on Communications, Council on Dental Practice and Council on Government Affairs worked together on a letter to the FTC, which had put out a call for comments on deceptive or unfair uses of reviews and endorsements. In January 2023, the ADA submitted a letter with key tactics the Federal Trade Commission can act upon to help protect dental practices from deceptive or unfair uses of reviews and endorsements.

For Q2 through Q4 2023, the Workgroup will shift its focus to identifying strategic recommendations to help strengthen communications between the ADA and key stakeholder audiences, initially focusing on state and local leaders, assessing needs, and developing a strategic recommendation.

Culture of Change Workgroup: Dr. Angela Noguera, chair; Dr. T. Stotts Isbell, vice chair; Dr. Rachel Lewin; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas, Ms. Shafa Nathani; Ms. Julia Nissim (staff liaison)

Dr. Noguera, who presented the report of the Workgroup explained that the Workgroup provides strategic oversight and guidance to "Culture of Change" communications plans throughout the year, based on the input and insights from the CoC and ADA Diversity & Inclusion leaders, including the New Dentist Committee, and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and Council on Membership. In collaboration with the ADA Staff Team, and to meet communications goals of this plan, this Workgroup also advises on communications plan adjustments.

Phase 1 of the plan will focus on a leader-to-leader audience of national Council members, state and local Presidents and President-elects and state and local Executive Directors. The Workgroup fielded a survey to 1,100-member dentist leaders to understand the current mindset with regards to DE&I and resources needed to better educate and inform ADA leaders. With a 22% survey response rate, the survey indicated the top three most helpful resources for creating a more welcoming culture of acceptance would be to 1. define DE&I goals for dentistry and the ADA; 2. Offer a self-assessment tool to gauge your own DE&I strengths and improvement areas and 3. Training courses/modules.

It was reported that a launch event is planned for late March 2023, featuring Mauricio Velasquez, a nationally recognized speaker and founder of the Diversity Training Group. The Council and Culture of Change Workgroup strategically sought to engage a nationally-recognized, well-known speaker in the area of diversity and inclusion to address how leaders are vital to creating and maintaining a welcoming sense of inclusion for all dentists. In addition to the launch event, the Workgroup has identified other opportunities for Mr. Velasquez to potentially address ADA leadership. The

Workgroup and ADA Team are also planning year-round communications of ADA DE&I programs like the Institute for Diversity in Leadership, The Champions Network and Amplifying Voices, which could benefit from more targeted promotion to leaders for awareness and engagement.

Public Goal (The ADA will support the advancement of the health of the public AND the success of the profession.)

Strategic Communications Workgroup: Dr. Rhett Raum, chair; Dr. Ann Blue, vice chair; Dr. Lindsey Jackson; Dr. Amir Kazim; Dr. James Phillips; Dr. Riley Schaff; Ms. Leslee Williams (staff liaison); Ms. Sandy Eitel (staff liaison); Mr. Steve Horne (staff liaison)

Dr. Raum, who presented the report of the Workgroup, explained the Workgroup's purpose is to develop, interpret, present, and distribute the annual ADA Communications Trend Report, which helps surface trends and issues affecting the profession and public health and aids in longer-term strategic communications planning. This is the fourth year of the report. The 2023 Trend Report is largely based on two surveys: one for member dentists and one for consumers. Once fielded and completed, results are nationally representative of ADA membership and the U.S. population. The dentist survey has a margin of error of +/- 4% and the consumer survey has a margin of error of +/- 3%. For year-over-year analysis, select, relevant questions were maintained in the dentist survey and analyzed to demonstrate potential shifts in attitudes or beliefs for topics like workforce shortages and insurance or third-party payer issues. New questions were also added to probe more deeply on existing themes or to assess new issues to be explored. The newer questions focus on three main issues—inflation and its impact on dental practices, mental wellness, and pain management prescribing. The dentist survey has a few minor adjustments based on Council feedback and will be fielded in March. The Workgroup is now focused on refining the consumer survey.

Dr. Blue highlighted that a recent Wall Street Journal article addressed patient marijuana use and its impact on patients' surgeries. She noted that the 2022 Trend Report echoed this key finding for dentists. The Workgroup helped to promote the data regarding dental patient use of marijuana and impact on dental treatment, which garnered high profile media coverage in outlets like *The Hill* and *WebMD*. Reference to the article was the highest performing organic post on ADA's Instagram in 2022 and news stories on the topic reached an audience reach of 1 billion. The media coverage and social media interest demonstrate how oral health is connected to overall health and positions ADA as a leader in whole body health.

Similar to promotion of the 2022 Trend Report, a communications plan will be developed to share the 2023 Communications Trend Report with all levels of the Tripartite and key stakeholders like the media and public.

Public Goal (The ADA will support the advancement of the health of the public AND the success of the profession.)

State Public Affairs (SPA) Oversight Workgroup: Dr. Rhett Raum, Council on Communications representative; Mr. Chad Olson Director, Department of State Government Affairs); Ms. Katherine Merullo (Senior Manager, Public Affairs and Analysis)

Dr. Rhett Raum, along with Mr. Chad Olson, provided an update on the State Public Affairs (SPA) Program Oversight Workgroup. After sixteen years of operation, the ADA SPA program continues to provide strategic direction, support, and day-to-day oversight for public affairs activities undertaken by state dental societies approved for SPA grants. The program continues to support the following: Action for Dental Health; Native American initiatives, including increased involvement with the Society of American Indian Dentists and partnership with Native News Online; Third Party Payer issues with "FIIST", the Fight Insurance Interference Strategic Task Force; and workforce issues, including virtual credit cards and Medical Loss Ratio (MLR). Dr. Raum explained that the role of the Workgroup is to develop criteria for the selection of states in the program, develop metrics for the program, and assess effectiveness in each participating state. Q1-Q2 2023 grants were disbursed in January to thirty-nine states, territories and Native American initiatives. Q3-Q4 2023 grant recipients will be disbursed in July 2023.

The Workgroup continues to support the advocacy efforts of state dental societies who are facing workforce challenges. In 2022, nine states had seventeen separate dental therapy bills introduced;

Oregon and Colorado saw bills introduced to legislation become law. All nine states require accreditation from a CODA-approved program, but currently, there remain only two CODA-accredited dental therapy schools in the United States. While ADA advocacy efforts continue related to dental therapists, the Department of State Government Affairs is refocusing its efforts toward existing dental team members by assisting states with securing additional funding for new educational programs, changes in scope and duties for existing auxiliaries, and expanding opportunities for Expanded Function Dental Assistants or similar auxiliaries to further bolster the dental team.

The 2022 legislative season closed with six states enacting thirteen new dental insurance reform ("DIR") laws. Adding in states that did not use SPA resources specifically for DIR but still pursued reform, there were a total of nine states passing 17 new laws. Improvements in assignment of benefits, virtual credit cards, leasing and medical loss ratio were among the significant topical wins.

Per the written report submitted by Dr. Raum and Mr. Olson, SPA will continue a working relationship with the Consumer Choice Center as an independent third-party think-tank dedicated to analyzing and advocating for consumer-friendly policy. The Consumer Choice Center (CCC) has published commentary on the value of medical loss ratio laws and the positive impacts of assignment of benefit policies. CCC is currently in the planning stages of the engagement with ADA, deliverables. will likely include state-specific support on op-eds, legislative testimonials where appropriate and issue-focused primers on Dental Insurance Reform (DIR) issues.

Dr. Raum also noted that as part of the SPA program, the DSGA continues to work with the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) that adopted the [Transparency in Dental Benefits Contracting Model Act](#) in 2020. The model act provided advocacy support and momentum in several states over the last two years. The 2023 campaign with NCOIL is in development but is likely to focus primarily on adoption of an MLR model act.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Board of Trustees Diversity and Inclusion Committee: Dr. Rachel Lewin, Council on Communications Consultant

The Committee on Diversity and Inclusion monitors and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees on diversity and inclusion initiatives throughout the Association that are in support of the Association's strategic plan. In the light of the Culture of Change work, this Committee invited a Council on Communications member to join them as a non-voting consultant for the 2023 Committee meetings through August.

Dr. Lewin shared observations from the initial Committee meeting, which was held on February 4, 2023, and the committee's enthusiasm to move forward with improving and innovating current DE&I strategies for the ADA, being mindful to consider the needs of various stakeholders. The Committee is considering ways to foster collaboration and make the needed changes within the Association.

DE&I PROGRAMS & TOOLS DISCUSSION

Director of Client Services, Ms. Christine Chico and sr. manager, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) Program Innovation & Engagement, Ms. Susana Galvan, provided an overview of the ADA's DE&I programs and tools, which have been created out of a need to advance inclusion, while also growing diversity across the tripartite. Important programs for 2023 will focus on developing national leaders to actively encourage diversity, equity, and a culture of inclusion by creating a welcoming environment and a sense of belonging for everyone. In addition, these programs will focus on growing diversity within leadership across the tripartite and fostering inclusive national leaders through education, training and other resources. The goal is ultimately for the tripartite to lead from a diverse and welcoming perspective. The Culture of Change communications plan intends to promote many of these strategic offerings to leaders in the phase I communications plan for 2023.

In 2021, the Board of Trustees (BOT) agreed to be sponsors of advancing diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the organization, supporting all D&I initiatives moving forward. The umbrella initiative driving DE&I efforts, the Champions Network, was developed in 2021. With a goal of 200 participants, the Network currently has 250 participants and is looking to reach 400 by Q4 2023.

According to the Spectra Diversity Inclusion Assessment, the ADA currently falls in the middle of the DE&I continuum (intentional inclusion). To move the organization along the continuum, the DE&I Committee of the BOT supports working with an external vendor to survey leaders via the Spectra Diversity Inclusion Assessment. The assessment will be shared with all national leaders of Councils in the second quarter of 2023 to better understand individuals' DE&I awareness, readiness, beliefs and interpersonal skills. In the end of Q1 2023, the Council on Communications, in collaboration with The Champions Network, is hosting a leader-to-leader event which will include mention of the Spectra assessment coming soon to national ADA leaders.

ADA COUNCIL GUEST CHAIR REMARKS

Guest chairs from other ADA councils presented and discussed updates on their respective councils' purpose-driven priorities for 2023. The following councils were represented:

- Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, Dr. James Mancini, chair
- Council on Dental Practice, Dr. Manish Chopra, chair
- Council on Government Affairs, Dr. Daniel J. Gesek, Jr., chair
- Council on Membership, Dr. Nipa R. Thakkar, chair

ADA UPDATE

Dr. Cohlmiia presented "Continuing Our New Day at the ADA: Defining Our Future", which outlined how the ADA is shifting from divisional-based operations to a customer-based model, focusing on five customer groups: public/professional, direct-to-dentist, tripartite, business, and enterprise. The ADA is redefining its process and working in an agile manner to achieve three main goals: customer-focused governance, collegiality and synergy, and digital transformation. Efforts across the Association are shifting to focus more on how to serve both the dental industry and the public in a better way. The Council on Communications has embraced change to help the organization clearly communicate that all dentists are welcome at the ADA.

Dr. Cohlmiia also discussed the strategic forecasting implementation timeline and will share more updates with all stakeholders in the coming months as to how the Association and its councils' volunteer leaders can take an active role in leading these unified, inclusive efforts.

ALL-COUNCIL DEBRIEF ON ADA UPDATE

The Council engaged in discussion regarding the ADA update that Dr. Cohlmiia shared, identifying current and future change efforts with opportunities for more collaborative Council work, as well as potential challenges as change is implemented.

ALL-COUNCIL DISCUSSION – LIGHTNING ROUND: KEY TOPICS IN DISTRICTS

The Council engaged in discussion regarding opportunities and challenges within their districts. Topics such as insurance issues, membership, medical loss ratio, licensure, and virtual credit cards were highlighted. The Council also highlighted the importance of creating and fostering personal connections, understanding pain points and addressing them in the most productive manner or communications channel.

ALL-COUNCIL INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

The Council participated in an interactive workshop, with the goal of preparing and delivering a clear and compelling presentation to state and local leadership about the "Culture of Change" movement to foster more leader awareness and engagement with ADA Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) initiatives that create a culture of welcome and acceptance for all dentists. Each member was asked to consider what their personal connection or motivation is related to the "Culture of Change" assignment from Dr. Cohlmiia. Members engaged in workshop practice led by Ms. Tiffany Olson to begin to sketch out their compelling connection or reason to believe in the Culture of Change as leaders of the ADA. Dr. Isbell volunteered to run through his draft presentation as a training exercise. The Council group provided valuable feedback and discussion about how to approach this topic, considering the various audiences they will encounter. All members received a peer

evaluation form to consider as they structure their presentations at the state, local and district level, and all PowerPoint presentations from this training are available to the Council within ADA Connect.

NEW DENTIST COMMITTEE (NDC)

Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas, Council on Communications liaison to the NDC, provided an update on NDC current activities. She advised that current key priorities are focused on sustaining the pipeline of new dentists involved in volunteer leadership. The NDC continues to reach out to dental students to support their transition into practice, as well as to engage with American Student Dental Association (ASDA) leadership. The NDC has participated in ASDA Annual Sessions, ASDA district meetings, and the Dentist and Student Lobby Day, as well as hosted ASDA leadership for social events.

NDC has been guiding wellness programming in partnership with other Councils for the past two years. The wellness programming which NDC assisted in creating, has been largely funded by a grant from Crest + Oral-B. It supports financial, physical and mental health, and overall well-being themes and resources. The May 2023 issue of New Dentist News also focused on wellness and included interviews with other NDC leaders and representatives.

The "ADA 10 Under 10" Awards are spearheaded by the NDC. The Awards honor dentistry's rising stars: dentists who are making an impact on the profession less than 10 years after graduating from dental school. Dr. Maestas reported that there were 165 nominations, and the 2023 award recipients will be announced in March 2023.

AMERICAN STUDENT DENTAL ASSOCIATION (ASDA)

In the absence of Ms. Nathani, ASDA representative to the Council on Communications, Dr. Schott referenced the written ASDA report included within the meeting agenda book.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was proposed for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council on Communications adjourned its meeting at Noon CDT on February 18.