

**AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS  
March 11-12, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Council on Communications was called to order by chair, Dr. Rebecca De La Rosa, Friday, March 11, 2022, at 8:30 AM CT.

**ROLL CALL**

**Council members present:** Dr. Rebecca De La Rosa, chair; Dr. Prabha Krishnan, vice chair; Dr. Carol A. Baker; Dr. Wade M. Banner; Dr. Ann Hammi Blue; Dr. Lynse J. Briney; Dr. Michael J. Frankman; Dr. T. Stotts Isbell; Dr. Lindsey Jackson; Dr. Amber P. Lawson (via Zoom on March 11, 2022); Dr. Rachel Lewin; Dr. Angela P. Noguera; Dr. Rhett E. Raum; Dr. Riley Schaff; Dr. Laura Schott; Dr. Jill Shelton Wagers; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas, New Dentist Committee member.

**Council members not present:** Dr. Mark A. Limosani (not present on March 11-12, 2022); Dr. Amber P. Lawson (not present on March 12, 2022).

In addition, Dr. Brett Kessler, liaison, ADA Board of Trustees, and Ms. Justina Anigbo, consultant, American Student Dental Association, were in attendance.

**Council and other staff:** Ms. Julia Nissim, director, Council on Communications; Ms. Ivy Woods, coordinator, Integrated Marketing and Communications; Ms. Yvonne Lewis, manager, Business and Administrative Services; Ms. Stephanie Moritz, chief marketing and communications officer; Ms. Cathryn Albrecht, ADA senior associate general counsel; Ms. Samara Schwartz, ADA associate general counsel; Ms. Jenn Sutherland, senior director, Digital Marketing; Ms. Pamela Von Lehmden, senior director, Integrated Marketing, Brand Strategy & Innovation; Ms. Leslee Williams, senior director, Communications.

Other ADA officers and staff in attendance for parts of the meeting included: Dr. Raymond A. Cohlma, ADA executive director; Dr. George Shepley, ADA President-elect; Ms. Dayna Bina, manager, Integrated Membership Marketing; Ms. Sandy Eitel, director, Council on Membership; Ms. Erika Hoeft, manager, Communications; Mr. Steve Horne, sr. manager, Marketing Research; Ms. April Kates-Ellison, vice president, Member and Client Services; Mr. Chad Olson, ADA director, State Government Affairs; Ms. Joan Podrazik, senior manager, Communications and Analysis; Mr. Matt Rosetto, legislative liaison, State Government Affairs; Ms. Nicole Stephani, manager, Social Strategy & Engagement.

**PRELIMINARY**

**Adoption of the Agenda:** The agenda was adopted with the stipulation that the chair may 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 13-14, 2021 meeting, which were approved via electronic ballot on September 27, 2021, 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. Rebecca De La Rosa; Dr. George Shepley, ADA president-elect; Board of Trustees liaison, Dr. Brett Kessler; chief marketing and communications officer, Ms. Stephanie Moritz; and Council director, Ms. Julia Nissim.

## COUNCIL WORKGROUP UPDATES

Each of the four Council Workgroup chairs 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.)

**Integrated Marketing Workgroup:** Dr. Angela Noguera, chair; Dr. Carol Baker, vice chair; Dr. T. Stotts Isbell; Ms. Justina Anigbo; Ms. Pamela Von Lehmden (staff liaison); Ms. Dayna Bina (staff liaison)

Dr. Noguera, who presented the report of the Workgroup, explained the Workgroup's purpose is to provide the ADA Team with strategic guidance to apply tactical implementation in future outreach for the ADA's integrated marketing campaigns. The current focus is on finding ways to increase awareness of ADA resources to provide better value for early career dentists, as there is a chronic issue of this segment dropping ADA membership by their third year post graduation.

The group thoroughly analyzed results from the Project Member Experience survey (Project MIX) to better understand the needs of early career dentists. The issues of priority were highlighted as: financial management assistance, career path support, mental/physical wellness support, community, and ongoing clinical training. The workgroup focused on finance and career value propositions and resources in early Q1 2022 to enhance tactical marketing efforts. Through the workgroup's help to assess and define more tangible value among this segment of early career dentists, the campaign "A New Day for Dentistry," has seen higher engagement in Q1 2022 vs. Q4 2021.

The workgroup's efforts for Q2 – Q4 2022 involve a more expansive financial focus, as well as taking a deeper dive into the additional needs of early career dentists (mental/physical wellness, community, and ongoing clinical training).

The Council discussed exploration and development of marketing ideas to support acceleration of early career dentists' market share.

**Communications Effectiveness Workgroup:** Dr. Lynse Briney, chair; Dr. Michael Frankman, vice chair; Dr. Rachel Lewin; Dr. Lindsey Jackson; Ms. Julia Nissim (staff liaison); Ms. Erika Hoeft (staff liaison)

Dr. Briney, who presented the report of the workgroup, explained the workgroup's purpose is to scan ADA publications (e.g., ADA News, Morning Huddle, and New Dentist News) and channels, sharing the dentist perspective. These efforts provide more real-time feedback that helps to improve ADA communications. The workgroup also determines needs for quick pulse survey data, which helps activate a more real-time response for identified gaps in coverage and topics. This allows for improvement of future coverage, new article ideas, and more feedback around specific topics.

The workgroup recently fielded a quick pulse survey to the ADA Advisory Circle research panel about awareness of dental insurance support and solutions from the ADA, as well as communication channels and preferences, per a request from the Council on Dental Benefit Programs. Current survey data indicates that ADA national and state emails are the most popular method of communication among members; however, the ADA ranks last regarding support or resources currently used when members have dental insurance issues. The workgroup determined that although the ADA has an abundance of resources available to members and the public, a more targeted approach to awareness of these resources is likely needed. The workgroup is also analyzing advocacy coverage and themes, per a request from the Council on Government Affairs, and acknowledged that more research is needed.

Additionally, the workgroup has provided story ideas or enhancements to be shared with ADA News staff who have or will soon publish stories about dental staffing, mental health, and 2021 ADA Communications Trend Report data. Throughout Q2-Q3 2022, the workgroup will continue to analyze and leverage outputs related to strategic communications priorities for the ADA, in coordination with the Strategic Communications workgroup on shared themes and research.

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

**Strategic Communications Workgroup:** Dr. Jill Wagers, chair; Dr. Ann Blue, vice chair; Dr. Rhett Raum; Dr. Wade Banner; Dr. Riley Schaff; Ms. Leslee Williams (staff liaison)

Dr. Wagers, who presented the report of the workgroup, explained the workgroup's purpose is to help develop, interpret, present and distribute the annual ADA Communications Trend Report ("Trend Report"), which helps surface trends and issues of priority to the profession and to public health and aids in longer-term strategic communications planning. This is the third year of the report, and it is largely based on two surveys—one to dentists via the ADA Advisory Circle research panel and one to consumers via an external consumer research firm.

The workgroup analyzed the 2021 Trend Report to help identify communication gaps between ADA efforts and member perceptions. The report included a "scorecard" measuring increases or decreases in member satisfaction regarding ADA resources on key issues. The 2022 surveys, which will be used to develop the 2022 Trend Report, include questions on staffing levels and newer questions on dental insurance and patient marijuana use.

As of the March Council meeting, the dentist survey has launched, and the consumer survey is being finalized for fielding. In Q2 2022, the workgroup will develop a communications plan to promote the report (once finalized) to all levels of the Tripartite. The report will be finalized in Q3 2022.

**Leadership Connections Workgroup:** Dr. Amber Lawson, chair; Dr. Laura Schott, vice chair; Dr. Mark Limosani; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas; Ms. Ivy Woods (staff liaison)

Dr. Lawson, who presented the report of the workgroup, shared that the workgroup is collaborating with ADA Information Technology to improve ADA Connect for leader engagement and information sharing across councils. The group is currently working on establishing a central place within ADA Connect where non-confidential information could be kept and shared between council members who report back to their districts about key priorities. Ms. Woods provided a live demonstration of the current Council on Communications community within ADA Connect to demonstrate how to navigate the platform. The workgroup will help develop the plan to socialize the use of the new shared space among all ADA councils later this year.

The workgroup also advises on strategies regarding private, dentist-only social media groups to help correct misinformation and promote the value of ADA membership among member and non-member dentists through a proposed new collaboration with "social media all-star" member dentists. Council members were asked to share the names of individuals from their respective districts who are already actively engaged on social media and might be interested in assisting with these efforts. The workgroup will collaborate with the ADA team on developing this initiative in the coming months.

### COUNCIL JOINT ACTION TEAM ("JAT") UPDATES

Each of the four Council representatives of the Joint Action Teams, as well as the State Public Affairs Oversight Workgroup representative provided updates on current efforts.

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

**Member Innovation Pipeline JAT:** Drs. Rebecca De La Rosa and Angela Noguera, Council on Communications Representatives

This JAT provides oversight and advice on new member value opportunities that address the needs of membership segments the ADA needs to grow. Segments include early career, women, and diverse dentists, as well as those practicing in large groups. The team oversees a member value innovation pipeline that evaluates, refines and develops ADA member value assets that support recruitment and retention.

The team has evaluated decision tree criteria for vetting new ideas and has prioritized two areas of focus for 4<sup>th</sup> year students and early career dentists, which are preparedness modules and a national

**Diversity & Inclusion JAT:** Drs. Prabha Krishnan and Ann Hammi Blue, Council on Communications Representatives

This JAT identifies strategies that ladder up to the ADA's new Diversity & Inclusion policy to ensure accountability across the entire organization, including national, state and local initiatives. The team provides an advisory role in overseeing the research, development and implementation of programs, initiatives and additional policies. Additionally, the team communicates and advocates for support of new initiatives and/or policies with JAT members' councils and committees.

The team has reviewed and discussed the ADA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lens, a tool that provides a framework to proactively examine and implement inclusivity efforts across a wide variety of initiatives. Relating to Resolution 44H-2021 Sustaining the Pipeline of Volunteer Leadership, the JAT reviewed the demographic composition of ADA councils, committees and the House of Delegates.

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 (staff liaison); Ms. Katherine Merullo (staff liaison)

Dr. Rhett Raum, along with Mr. Chad Olson, provided an update on the State Public Affairs (SPA) Program Oversight Workgroup. After fifteen 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 state dental societies dealing with: Action for Dental Health (SPA has developed into one of the primary vehicles for coordination and support of this program); Native American initiatives (includes the development of the first 10-year oral health program for the Navajo nation); Third Party Payer issues with "FIIST" Fight Insurance Interference Strategic Task Force; and workforce scope of practice issues. 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 2022 grants have been disbursed to thirty-seven states, territories and Native American initiatives. Q3-Q4 2022 grant recipients will be determined in July 2022.

The workgroup continues to support the advocacy efforts of state dental societies who are facing workforce challenges. In 2021, eight states had thirteen separate dental therapy bills introduced; only Oregon saw introduced legislation become law. Currently, thirteen states have laws authorizing dental therapy, but there is no uniform approach. All thirteen states, however, require accreditation from a CODA-approved program, but at this time, there remains only one CODA-accredited dental therapy school 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 2021 legislative season closed with eighteen states enacting twenty-eight new dental insurance reform ("DIR") laws. Fourteen of those states employed SPA resources to bolster their campaigns. For the 2022 January-through-June SPA funding period, twenty-eight of the thirty-three dental society applications included a request for funding in support of DIR campaigns. SPA also supported ADA's relationship with the Consumer Choice Center and the Progressive Policy Institute, which provided support for DIR campaigns.

Dr. Raum also noted that the National Conference of Insurance Legislators adopted a Transparency in Dental Benefits Contracting Model Act in December 2020 that includes provisions on provider network leasing, prior authorizations, and virtual credit cards; all are important issues for most member dentists struggling with dental insurance issues. Several state legislatures have used provisions from the model as a guide when passing DIR laws.

The Council engaged in discussion regarding improving ADA engagement with members in real time. Each member shared feedback on preferred channels of communication, how frequently and with which platforms they engage, and how the ADA can improve the way important messages reach ADA members. Dr. De La Rosa encouraged Council members to look for future opportunities to improve efficiencies.

### **VALUES SURVEY RESULTS DISCUSSION**

Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ms. Stephanie Moritz and Vice President, Member and Client Services, Ms. April Kates-Ellison provided findings of national research on generational behaviors among dentists ranging from current students to Baby Boomers, providing insights to help guide the ADA to meet current and future member needs, as well as shape future membership recruitment and retention strategies. The research explored the intersection between tangible benefits of ADA membership (value) and intangible factors (dentists' personal values), and how dentists' decisions to join or remain ADA members are influenced.

The ADA is currently at 59% market share. Continued reductions in market share, specifically with new dentists entering the profession, impact the ADA's ability to be the leader in organized dentistry.

Recruitment strategies will incorporate the findings of this national research and consider how to better attract and retain dentists from emerging demographic segments and dentists in dental support organizations (DSOs), the fastest growing practice modality.

The Council engaged in discussion surrounding this topic and, together with ADA staff, will engage in further exploration regarding the Council's strategic communications support of change initiatives intended to improve ADA market share.

### **ADA COUNCIL GUEST CHAIR REMARKS**

Guest chairs from other ADA councils presented and discussed updates on their respective councils' main purpose-driven priorities for 2022. The following councils were represented:

- Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, Dr. Shailee Gupta, chair
- Council on Dental Benefit Programs, Dr. Kevin Dens, chair
- Council on Dental Practice, Dr. James Hoddick, chair
- Council on Government Affairs, Dr. Mark Vitale, chair

### **ADA UPDATE**

Dr. Cohlmia presented "A New Day for Dentistry at the ADA: Creating Our Future", which includes innovative member value propositions and potential technology solutions that position the ADA to become the professional association that dentists of the future want to join.

As the ADA begins to move from a membership model to a membership engagement platform, Dr. Cohlmia 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.

Dr. De La Rosa thanked Dr. Cohlmia for seeking the Council's assistance and noted that she and Dr. Krishnan will connect with him following the Council meeting, to gain a clearer understanding of what will be needed to create the plan, including any additional resources that may be needed for its successful creation and execution.

Dr. Cohlmia 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.

### **NEW DENTIST COMMITTEE ("NDC")**

Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas, NDC member, provided an update on NDC current activities. She advised that current key priorities are peer-to-peer engagement among new dentists and young students; the NDC has discussed opportunities to connect with new dentists and supports the ADA increasing its social media presence and leveraging peers to make an impact. Dr. Maestas also highlighted the

NDC's participation on the Member Value Innovation JAT, which is a cross-council collaboration led by the Council on Membership. The NDC provided feedback on new resources that would appeal to new dentists.

The NDC played an active role in developing the new dentist experience at SmileCon 2021 and was onsite to engage members. The NDC will continue to collaborate with the Committee on Annual Meetings on the new dentist experience at SmileCon 2022.

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 2022 award recipients would be announced on March 15, 2022. The 2021 winners were recognized in the opening session and during a reception in the Member Center at SmileCon. The NDC would like to see this recognition continue at SmileCon 2022 and consider additional opportunities to integrate the recipients into the programming.

### **AMERICAN STUDENT DENTAL ASSOCIATION ("ASDA")**

Ms. Justina Anigbo, consultant, ASDA, shared an update on ASDA membership and current national initiatives. ASDA focuses its efforts on involving students in organized dentistry while they are still in dental school, and showing them firsthand how they have the power to guide the profession.

Ms. Anigbo reported that, for the 2020-21 term, there were 22,429 members and 67 chapters, with 48 chapters auto-billed. ASDA welcomed a new chapter in Texas in November 2021. Current national initiatives include *Contour*, ASDA's national publication, whose February 2022 theme was "Better Together: Interdisciplinary Dentistry Collaborating for Oral Care". Additionally, ASDA recently launched a digital platform to provide members the opportunity to share resources and ideas, and to meet fellow dental students from across the country at any time from any location. ASDA pre-doctoral members can now access the platform through The ASDA Community app.

ASDA's 50th anniversary celebration meeting, "Fifty and Forward", took place February 18-20, 2022 in Louisville, KY. New this year, ASDA implemented educational sessions focused on chapter leader training including evaluating the return on investment of chapter programs, creating a strategic plan, and communicating the value of membership.

The Council discussed the benefits of providing an ASDA/ADA district map that connects dental students to their ADA Board of Trustees members. The map will be produced and shared with the Council for reference.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business was proposed for consideration.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Council on Communications adjourned its meeting at Noon CDT on March 12.