

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

It's hard to believe a year has flown by since I first took the stage as your 160th President—and the fifth woman to do so in our 165-year history.

I'm playing this Elvis song again today because I still believe, as I did then, action—not just conversation—is what will drive our profession forward.

Although there is still work to do, we've come quite a long way in the last 12 months.

Thomas Jefferson once said... **"If you want something you've never had, you have to DO something you've never done."**

2024 has been a year of **transformation**—a time when we dared to step out of our comfort zones and redefine what's possible for our profession.

By doing what we've never done before, we've met challenges head-on and found new ways to grow.

I like to think of how a butterfly transforms to achieve its beauty... the more the caterpillar struggles to get out of the chrysalis, the stronger and more beautiful the butterfly becomes.

In the same way... each challenge we faced as a profession this year was an opportunity to adapt, evolve, become **stronger**, and reach new heights.

While change is never easy, it's necessary. And through my "Three Cs"—**Connection, Collaboration, and Communication**—we emerged stronger and more vibrant than ever before.

From the start, my mission was simple: to improve how we communicate with our members. I wanted us to show the power of our tripartite and the value our local, state, and national societies bring to everyone we serve.

We made communication our priority. **We rolled out a series of one-pagers to clearly explain what the ADA does for members**—things like advocacy, licensure, career services, mental health resources, and more.

But our commitment to communication wasn't just talk—we lived it.

I logged over 400,000 miles in the last 2 years, connecting with states and locals, international partners, specialty groups, dental schools, legislators, and more —**LISTENING** to your needs.

Dr. Kessler and I also connected with members through virtual events, recorded videos, and social media.

I shared my contact information and encouraged open dialogue—nearly 500 members now have my digital business card saved on their phones.

Every mile, every event, and every conversation reminded me of one thing: **We are stronger together.**

This year, we took bold action, and the results speak for themselves...

We broke new ground in dental science and research with the launch of the ADA Forsyth Institute, a powerhouse of dental innovation.

We not only unlocked new revenue opportunities but also expanded our research capacity. So far this year, we have received close to \$30 million in NIH grant funding. The best is yet to come!

Dr. Ray Cohlma, Dr. Dave Preble, our dedicated legal and professional teams, and our ADA Board all worked tirelessly to make this amazing opportunity a reality.

We had our largest Lobby Day ever with over 1,200 students and dentists advocating on Capitol Hill.

We were joined by 700 students from 55 schools, and nearly ALL dental specialty organizations were represented. We also had the largest turnout of new dentists in Lobby Day history.

We partnered with The Children's Oral Health Institute to fight childhood tooth decay by sponsoring 20,000 lunch boxes as part of the Lessons in a Lunchbox program—bringing oral health literacy and toothbrushing to life for 2nd and 3rd graders nationwide.

Dr. Winifred Booker, who received CGA's 2023 Excellence in Action for Dental Health Award, spearheads this amazing initiative. Over 71,000 children have benefited—thank you, Dr. Booker, for your visionary leadership and partnership.

To learn how to get involved and sponsor a school, please visit The Children's Oral Health Institute's website displayed on this slide.

And many thanks to all of our donors!

We supercharged state-level legislation with over \$4.25 million in grants to state dental societies from our State Public Affairs program. These grants help us shift the balance of power from insurers back in the hands of dentists and patients across the country, aid in workforce development, and support improvements in Medicaid.

This funding allowed us to move the needle like never before in insurance reform. We pushed for more transparency in premiums through dental loss ratio legislation and lobbied for ERISA reforms to stop insurers from ignoring state patient protection laws.

We boosted the dental workforce and improved access to care by providing over \$700,000 in grants and expanded the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact to 10 states—and counting—making it easier for dental professionals to serve where they're needed most.

1 **We invested in cutting-edge technology like artificial intelligence and salivary**
2 **diagnostics.**

3
4 **We launched our first-ever symposium on oral-systemic health**, bringing together dentistry
5 and medicine's brightest minds to explore how dentists can play a more vital role in complete
6 health.

7
8 **We also tackled student debt** by advocating for legislative relief, and we started a task force to
9 **explore reducing dental school tuition.**

10
11 These initiatives are just the beginning. They show that when we dare to step out... we can
12 create impactful change.

13
14 We're also making big changes to improve the way we connect and engage with our members...

15
16 By upgrading to **Salesforce/Fonteva**, we're providing more personalized member experiences,
17 and with the **revamped ADA Member App**, we're bringing more features and support directly to
18 our members—putting everything they need right at their fingertips.

19
20 We're also **expanding our services by creating a new Credit Union** to support dentists'
21 financial needs.

22
23 And let's not forget the new **member engagement model pilot** launching in select states this
24 January. This will offer our members lower costs, monthly payments, and the flexibility to choose
25 benefits tailored to their individual needs.

26
27 All these efforts are made possible by the ADA's strong reserves, bolstered by the sale of the
28 ADA's Chicago headquarters building. Our offices will move to a **modern, state-of-the-art**
29 location next year to fuel innovation and growth.

30
31 **We're not just building for today—we're shaping our tomorrow.**

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33 As we move forward, we want to ensure that everyone who contributes to advancing our
34 profession—regardless of their background, practice modality, or career stage—has a voice and
35 a stake in dentistry's future.

36
37 We're proud to have over 200 people actively contributing to our **Strategic Forecasting**
38 **Committee**, bringing diverse perspectives and insights to the table.

39
40 But our efforts don't stop there...

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42 We're committed to equipping our state and local leaders with the skills they need to guide our
43 profession forward.

44
45 Starting November 1, we're offering sixteen free, online Dale Carnegie 'How to Win Friends and
46 Influence People' courses focused on leadership, public speaking, and more. There's more
47 information to come about how to sign up.

Beyond these initiatives, **what stands out the most are the personal connections I've made with so many of you this year.**

Brene Brown says, "We are hard wired to connect."

What will always matter MOST are the relationships we build and the love and support we offer one another.

Life and dentistry can be tough. **We need to be there for each other.**

These **caring connections** are the heartbeat of our profession. They remind me that we're more than just colleagues—we're a family.

I've always wanted the ADA to be a big organization that feels like a family—where everyone feels cared about, respected, and heard.

The devastation after the recent hurricanes in the Southeast have given us a chance to embrace our affected colleagues, their teams, families, and communities.

Now, more than ever, our ADA family has the opportunity to come together and show the compassion and care that define us.

You can scan the QR code on the screen to make a donation that will directly support state dental societies and their foundations, ensuring that those affected by these storms get the help they need to rebuild their lives and practices.

Your generosity will make a difference.

We can also make a difference for dental students and all colleagues who may be hurting. That's why I made it my mission to share my phone number everywhere I spoke, including dental schools.

This year, that decision proved vital when I received a phone call from a third-year dental student who was being expelled. She was devastated and sounded like she might take her own life.

Right after her call, we connected her with one of our Wellness Ambassadors, and I made it a point to talk to her every day for two weeks—just to listen and to show her that I cared.

During those conversations, I shared my own struggles—how, in my first year of dental school at age 37, I faced challenges with something as simple as a wax-up, while also juggling the pressures of having an 11-year-old son, a long commute, and being one of only 11 women in my class, which often made me feel like I didn't belong.

I did not know if I could make it, but my husband Bryan and the Dean of my dental school said to me... *"If you don't finish, many patients will miss out on YOU caring for them."*

What I've learned is that we **ALL** have those moments—moments when we feel out of place, when everything feels overwhelming, and when we question whether we're on the right path.

1 **However, tragedies can lead to triumphs if you rise each time you fall.**

2
3 I received an e-mail from that same student a few weeks ago... she is reapplying to her dental
4 school... and is much more positive about her future.

5
6 As I approach the end of this Presidency and the later part of my life, I've come to realize...
7 Trophies and accomplishments are nice, but what REALLY matters is making a difference and
8 helping someone when they need you the most.

9
10 This is why every one of us DOES what we do. This is why our work matters.

11
12 **We are all broken in some way. That is how the light gets in.**

13
14 **What are my hopes for the future?** I hope for more of these one-on-one connections at every
15 level—from our local and state societies to our national leadership.

16
17 These connections brought in many new members through our membership recruitment contest.
18 Thank you to everyone who participated!

19
20 I want to take a moment to recognize Dr. **Leigh Kent**, Chair of the Council on Government
21 Affairs... Leigh has recruited over 20 new members by personally presenting many town halls
22 and showing non-members how much the ADA does for them. We can send her methods out to
23 you.

24
25 Thank you to Leigh and everyone who has made a difference in this way.

26
27 Imagine how we can grow our membership if each of you hosted just one meeting...

28
29 Let me ask you this: **How many of you have paid ADA dues for 30 years or more?** Please
30 stand.

31
32 Now, remain standing if you have been a member for 45 years or more.

33
34 All of you have made our profession strong. Thank you. You may be seated.

35 **And now, how many of you are here because someone personally invited you?** Please
36 raise your hand.

37
38 Look at the difference we can make if we simply reach out to a colleague, welcome a new
39 member, or mentor a young dentist finding their way.

40
41 **Our new dentists need to understand that the ADA protects their investments and**
42 **FREEDOMS to treat their patients as they want them to be treated.**

43
44 Let's continue to invite more dentists into our family. And as we grow, let's stay committed to
45 fostering a supportive environment for everyone.

46
47 It is vital to create a safe space where those struggling can reach out for help. As my friend and
48 ADA Past-President, Dr. Cesar Sabates, reminded us, **it's okay to not be okay.**

1 As leaders, let's carry this message forward. We must be humble, step out of the limelight, and lift
2 others up.

3
4 Legendary actor Robin Williams once said, "**Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know
5 nothing about. Be kind, always.**"

6
7 Small acts of kindness—like listening to a colleague or reaching out to a struggling student—can
8 change lives.

9
10 Our incoming President, Dr. Brett Kessler, is also living proof of this. His journey shows what we
11 can achieve when we stand by each other. I have no doubt that his leadership will continue to
12 inspire and strengthen our community.

13
14 And it's not just about our colleagues... Let's make sure our patients feel that same level of care.
15 I received this card from a woman who was scared as a new patient and heard I was running for
16 ADA president. We built trust through kindness and compassion.

17
18 If you want to be successful in life and with your patients, **Care for them** and **Call them** after a
19 procedure.

20
21 That's why we're all here. We care about our patients, we care about each other, and we care
22 about the future of dentistry.

23
24 I want to thank everyone for the honor of serving as your President and for making this year
25 possible.

26
27 I owe so much to my family—**my husband Bryan, our son David, his wife Judy, and my
28 grandchildren, Tatum and Analise**—who have supported me throughout this journey.

29
30 Bryan and I have been married for 51 years, and I wouldn't be standing here today—as a dentist,
31 a mother to our amazing son David, a Trustee, or your President—without his love and support.
32 Thank you, Bryan.

33 And to all of you—**our volunteer leaders, Board members, and entire professional team**—it's
34 been an amazing journey, and I'm so grateful to have all of you by my side.

35
36 I also want to thank **Dr. Ray Cohlmi**, whose leadership has inspired all of us to try new things
37 and push the boundaries of what's possible.

38
39 Dr. Cohlmi and President-elect **Dr. Brett Kessler** have been more than colleagues—they've
40 been friends and confidantes, always having my back this year. Thank you, both.

41
42 To my other wingmen, **Dr. Cesar Sabates and Dr. George Shepley**, thank you for your ongoing
43 encouragement and wise counsel.

44
45 A special thanks to my home base, **District 11**, for your love and support.

46
47 **Bracken Kilpack**, our WSDA Executive Director, I could not have done this without you. You are
48 one of the most amazing people I know. Thank you for your wisdom and guidance.

1 Thank you, **Mike Graham**, for your many years of service at the ADA.

2
3 **Dr. Ted Sherwin**, for your amazing 6 years as ADA Treasurer and over 20 years of friendship.

4
5 And **Dr. Mark Donald**—you have stood by me through both AGD and ADA presidencies. Thank
6 you for your support over the last 20 years.

7
8 To the late **Dr. Mike Bromberg**, who encouraged me to lead and run for office several times. We
9 miss you every day, and your legacy continues to inspire us all.

10
11 To **Dr. Bruce Burton**, former CEBJA chair and leadership coach, who has mentored and
12 encouraged so many of us in this room. I wouldn't be here without you—thank you for your
13 guidance and support.

14
15 **Nancy Honeycutt**—your devotion and leadership for our future dentists as ASDA Executive
16 Director have been incredible. Thank you for all you do.

17
18 And finally, I want to thank my dear friend, **Dr. Ralph Cooley**, who has lifted up hundreds of
19 people, myself included. Without his encouragement, I would not have pursued leadership roles
20 in organized dentistry or run for ADA office.

21
22 As I reflect on this journey, I'd like to leave you with some wisdom that has guided me throughout
23 this year. It comes from a poem that Dr. Cooley shared with me 10 years ago.

24
25 It's called the "Anyway Poem." To summarize...

26
27 When faced with unkindness...**forgive anyway**.

28 When the world seems critical or unjust...**be kind anyway**.

29 When success brings scrutiny or doubt...**succeed anyway**.

30 When honesty is met with skepticism...**be honest anyway**.

31 When your hard work goes unnoticed...**create anyway**.

32 When others envy your happiness...**be happy anyway**.

33 When the good you do today is forgotten tomorrow...**do good anyway**.

34 And when giving your all doesn't seem like it's enough...**give your best anyway**.

35
36 These words remind us to **keep climbing that mountain** and stay true to who we are—no matter
37 what.

38
39 We're not just dentists... we're one united family dedicated to each other, our patients, and the
40 future of dentistry.

41
42 Let's **lift as we climb**—with kindness, integrity, and courage—and let's inspire one another to **do**
43 **good and give our best—anyway**.

44
45 **So, when people ask, "What are you going to do now?"**

46
47 I look forward to spending some time at Daytona Beach with Bryan, David, Judy, and my
48 grandkids and my Golden Retriever, Kona.

1 BUT... I will always be here for you, our profession, our patients, and everyone who follows in
2 our footsteps. I'm just a phone call away.
3
4 As I leave you, I **HOPE** you'll ALL stand up and get your "Lion On!"
5
6 Speak up, ROAR, and protect OUR ADA and our patients.
7
8 **WE ARE stronger together!**
9
10 Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. It has been an honor to serve you.