

A NEW
ERA

2025 ADA
Conference Week



ADA American Dental Association®

Oral Health 2050: Vision, Mission, and Leadership

Richard Rosato, D.M.D.

ADA President-elect

July 13, 2025

Who I Am: Leadership Rooted in Purpose

- Specialty: Oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Volunteer posts/elective offices held in organized dentistry:
 - ADA Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs Chair
 - ADA Election Commission Chair
 - ADA 1st District Trustee
 - ADA Headquarters Sale Task Force Chair
 - New Hampshire Dental Society (NHDS) President
 - NHDS Council of Government Affairs Chair
 - NHDS Long-Term Delegate

My Presidential Pillars for 2025-2026 Term

- Unite in purpose to make people healthy
- Foster a culture of listening
- Protect clinical autonomy
- Prioritize wellness, especially mental health
- Be relentlessly creative in shaping the future
- Be visionary in reimagining what's possible

The best
way to
predict your
future is
to create it.

Abraham Lincoln

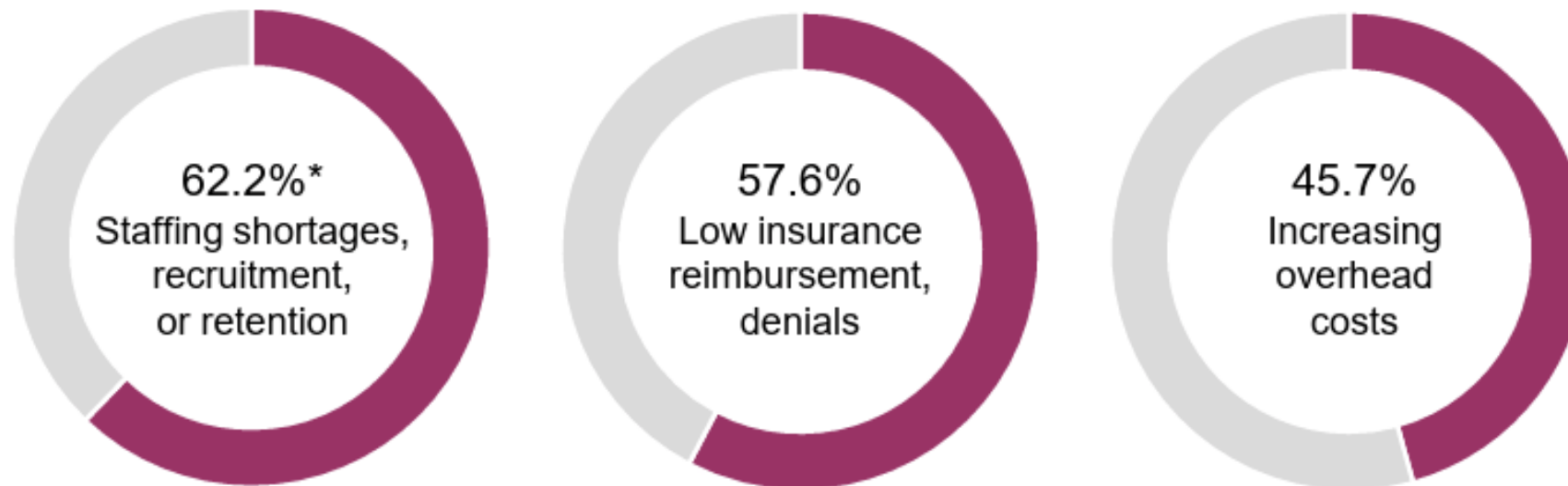


Imagine Oral Health in 2050



Top Challenges in 2025

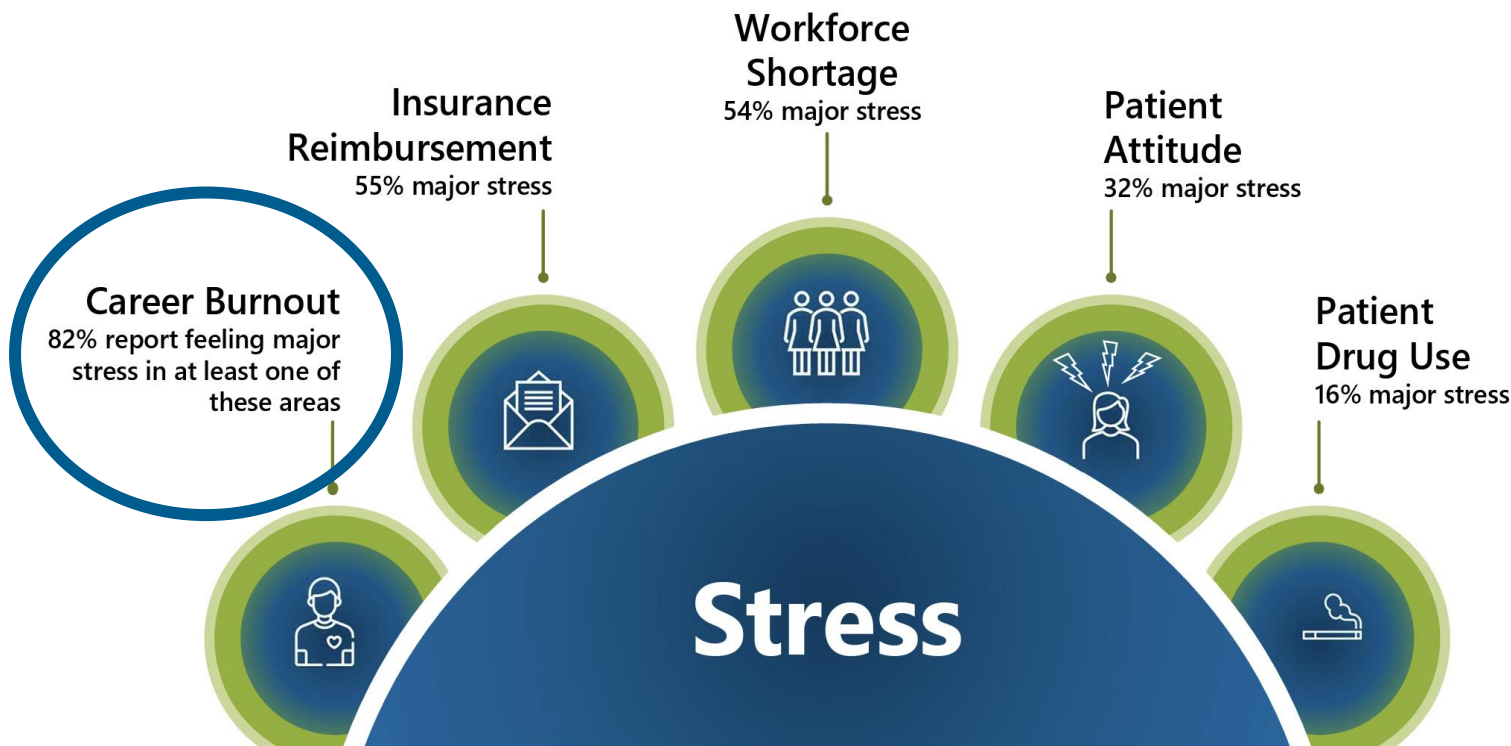
The biggest challenges for dentists in 2025 center around workforce shortages, insurance, and increasing overhead costs. About 3 in 5 are worried about recruiting and retaining staff (especially dental hygienists).



ADA Health Policy Institute: Insights from Data Q4 2024

Career Burnout: Dentists are Stressed

82% of dentists feel “**major**” stress in their career.



Insurance reimbursement and workforce shortage issues continue to cause the greatest pain points.

58% of dentists who reported ‘major’ career stress are considering changing careers or retiring early.

ADA 2024 Communications Trend Report

Staggering Student Debt

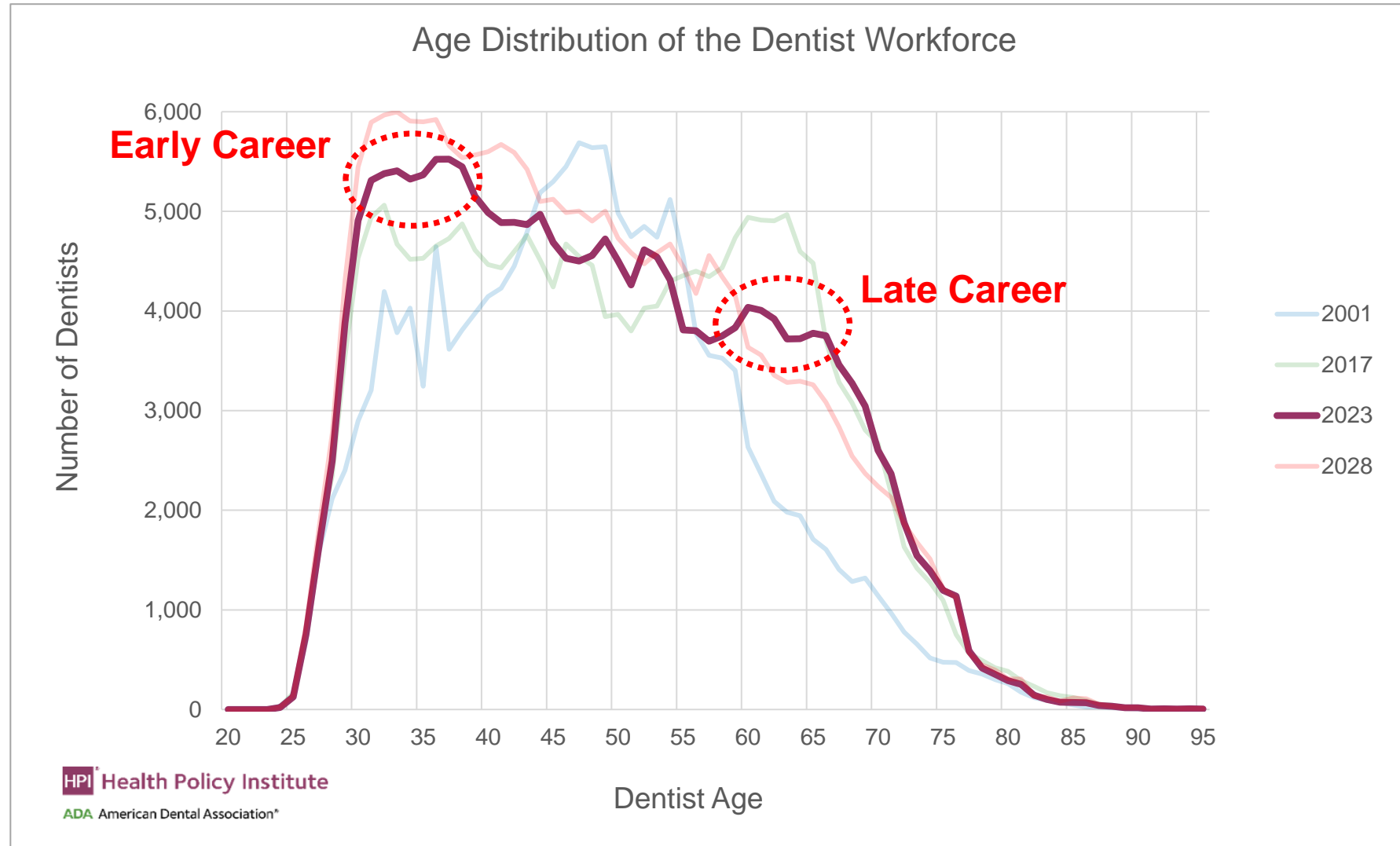
Today nearly two-thirds of dental school graduates are entering the workforce with nearly \$300,000 in student loan debt.

The interest on these loans can reach as high as 9.5 or 10.5%, depending on the type of loan and market conditions.



The Changing Dental Workforce

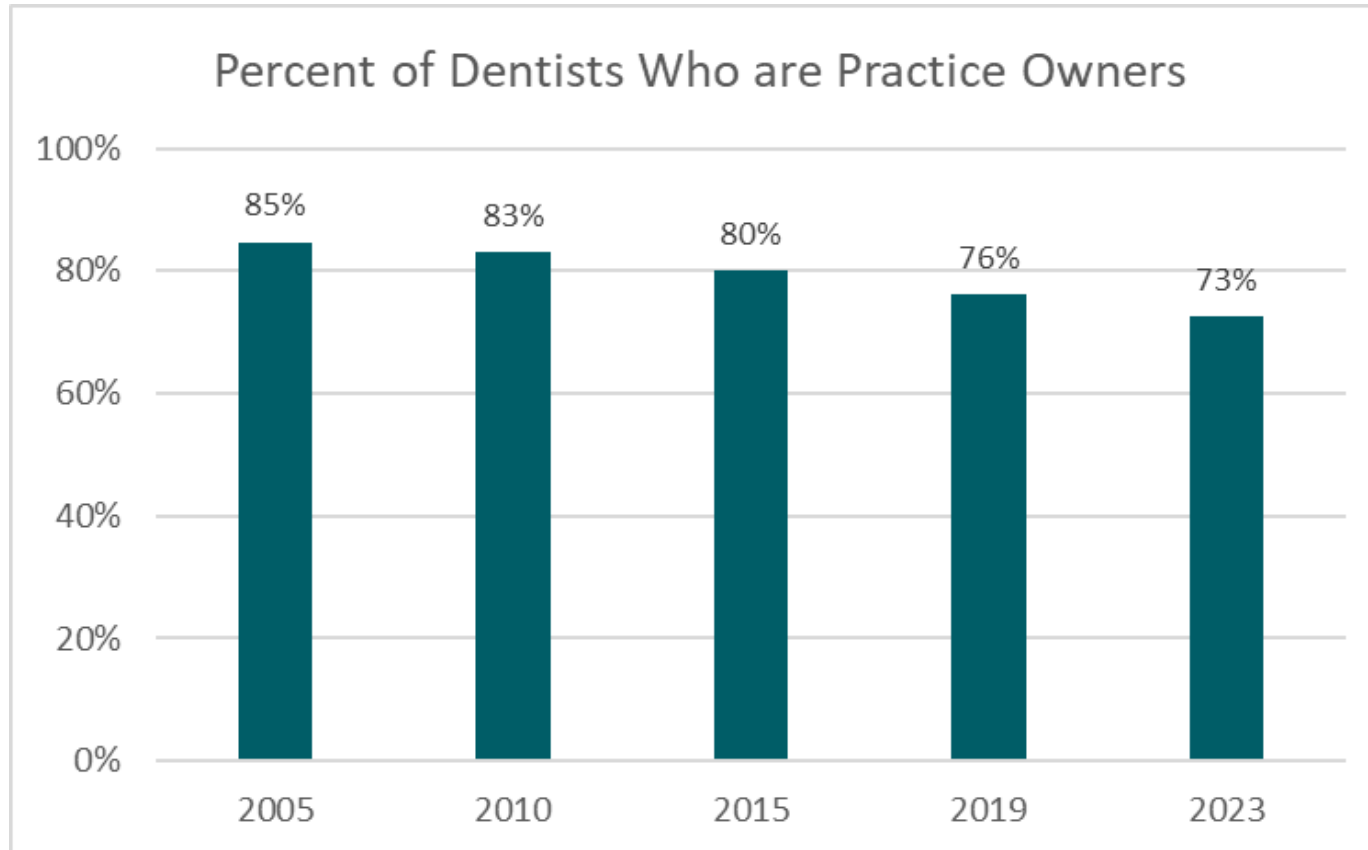
A Generational Transition



Today, a massive ‘tilt’ has occurred, with more early-career dentists and more nearing retirement.

The generational transition is in full swing.

Practice Ownership

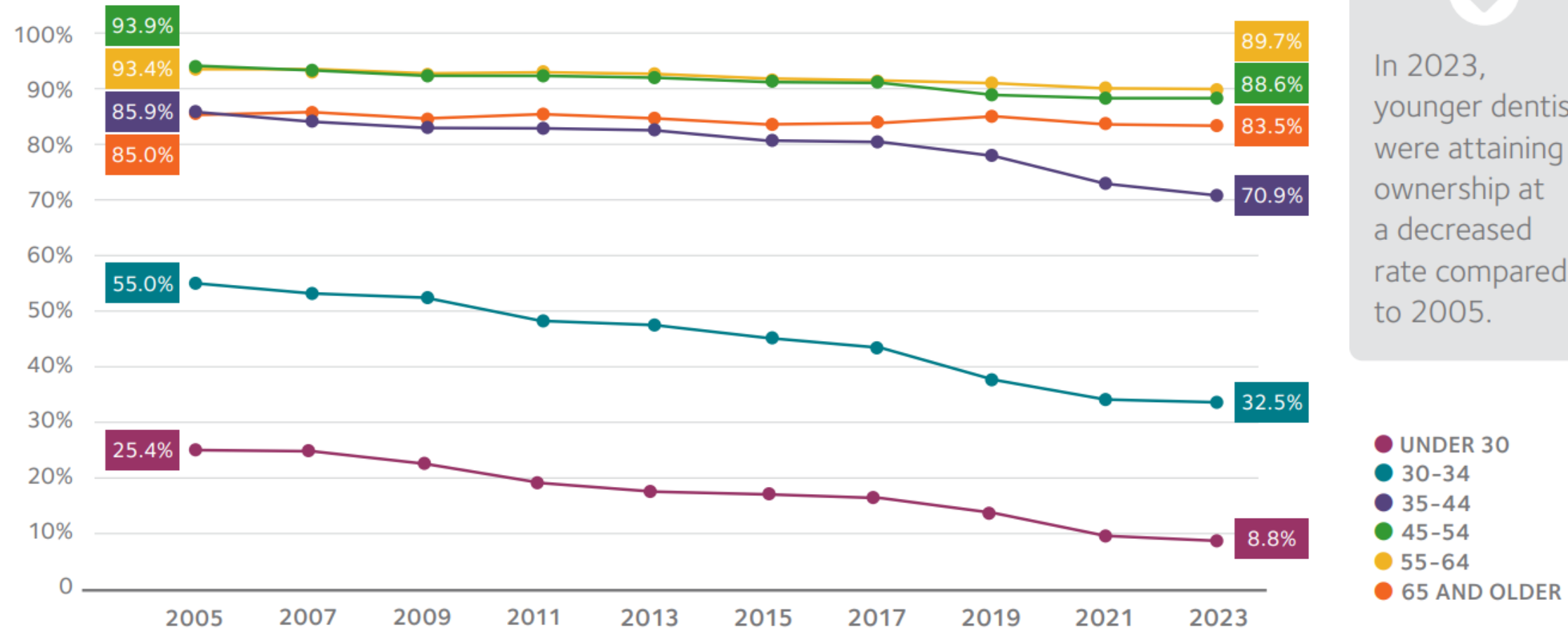


Practice ownership rates have been slowly declining among dentists.

The latest data show that 73% of dentists were practice owners.

Practice Ownership

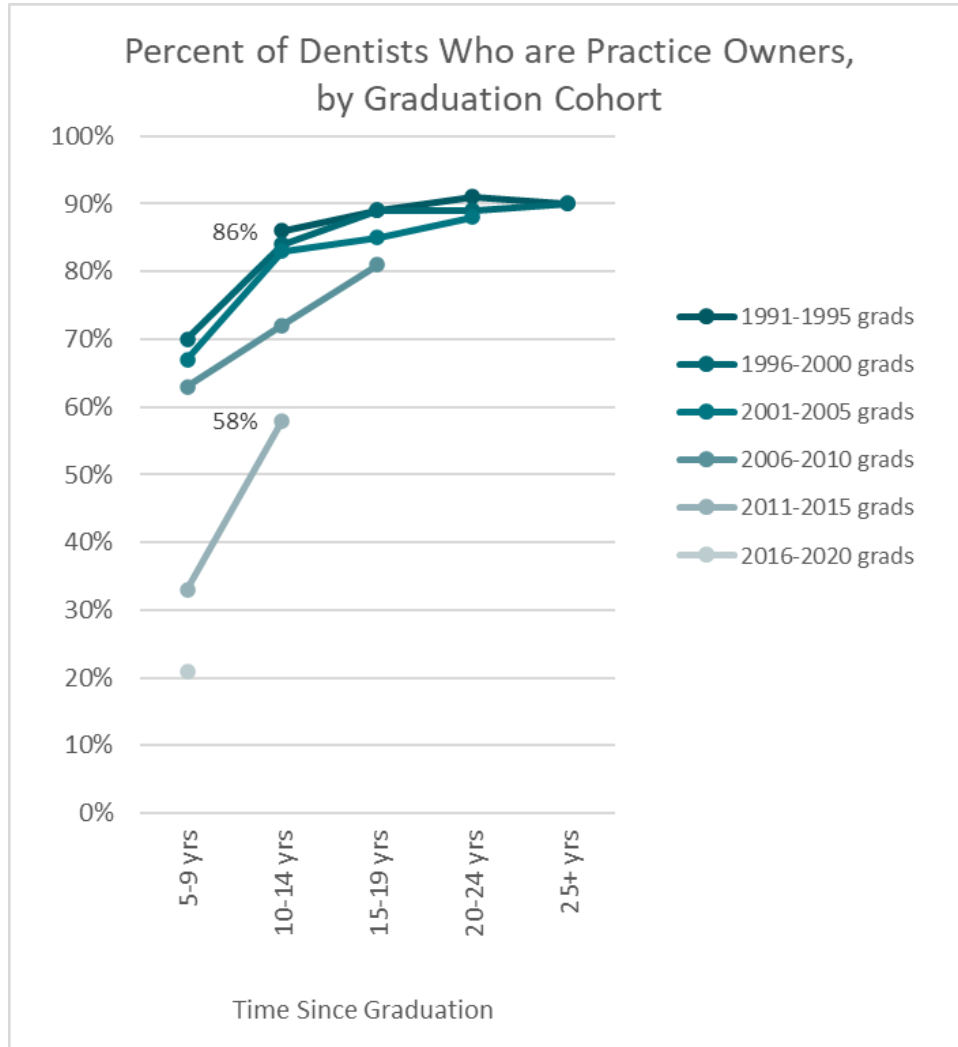
PERCENTAGE OF DENTISTS IN PRIVATE PRACTICES WHO ARE OWNERS, BY AGE GROUP



↓
In 2023,
younger dentists
were attaining
ownership at
a decreased
rate compared
to 2005.

- UNDER 30
- 30-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 AND OLDER

Practice Ownership



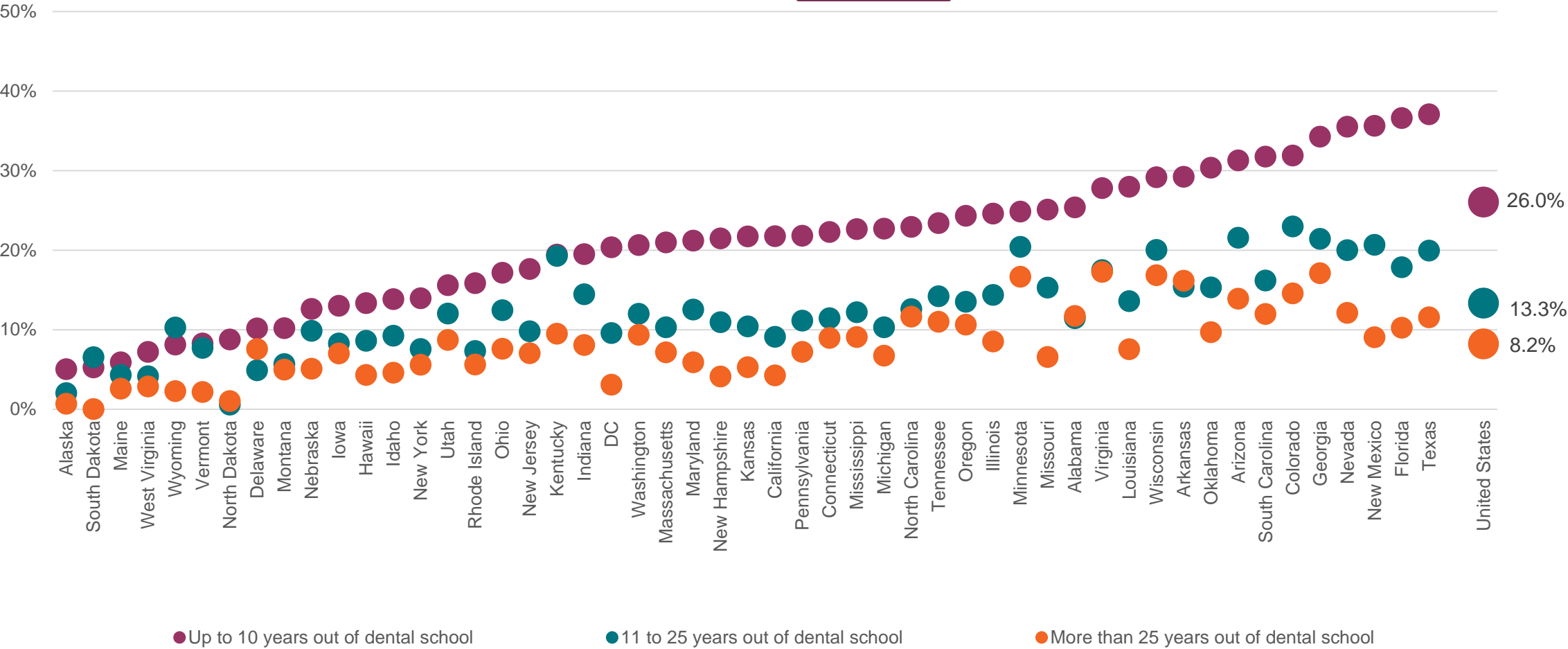
Practice ownership rates in the early career stage are much lower for recent dental school graduates compared to those who graduated from dental school back in the 1990s or 2000s.

However, in the late career stage, practice ownership rates seem to “catch up”. This suggests that all roads still seem to point to practice ownership as the career “end game” but it’s just taking much longer to get there for more recent graduates.

The biggest changes in “practice ownership trajectory” are for dentists who graduated since 2011. Something with this newer generation of dentists is very different. Practice ownership is significantly delayed.

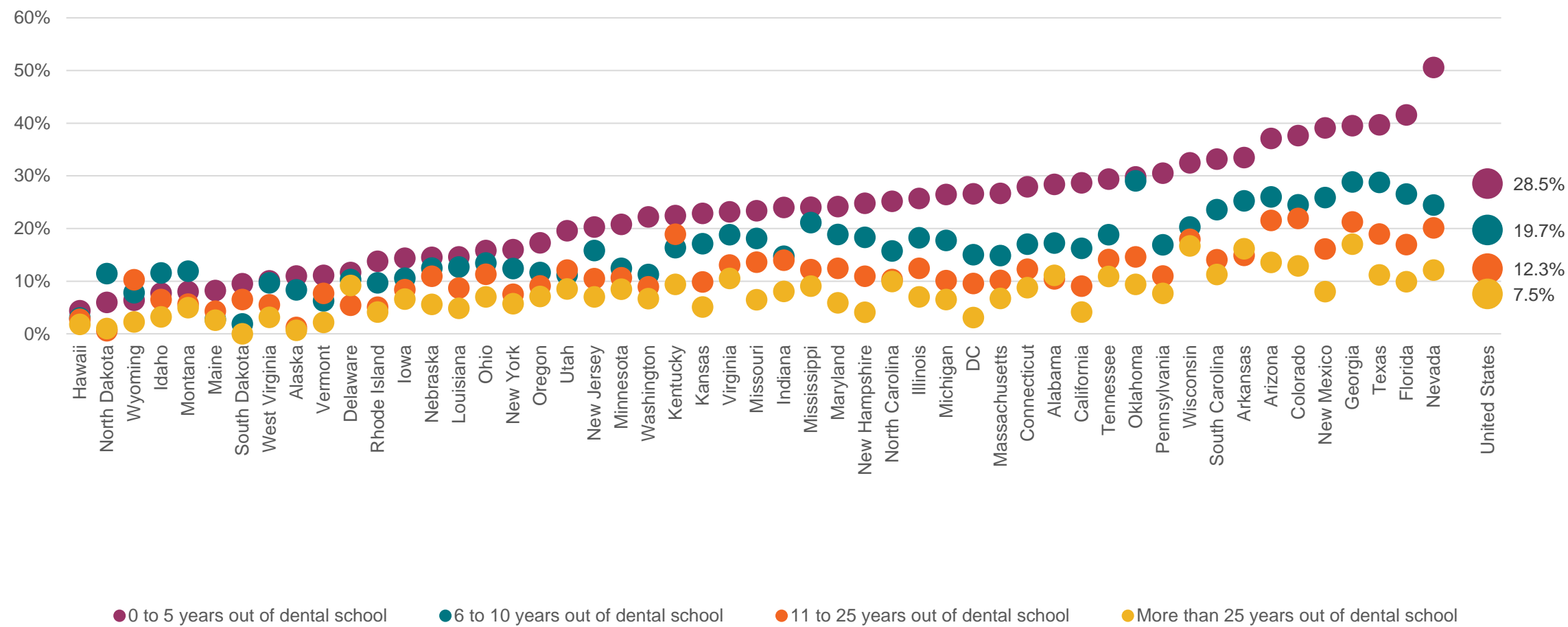
Dental Practice Size

Percent of Dentists in Practices with 10+ Locations, 2023

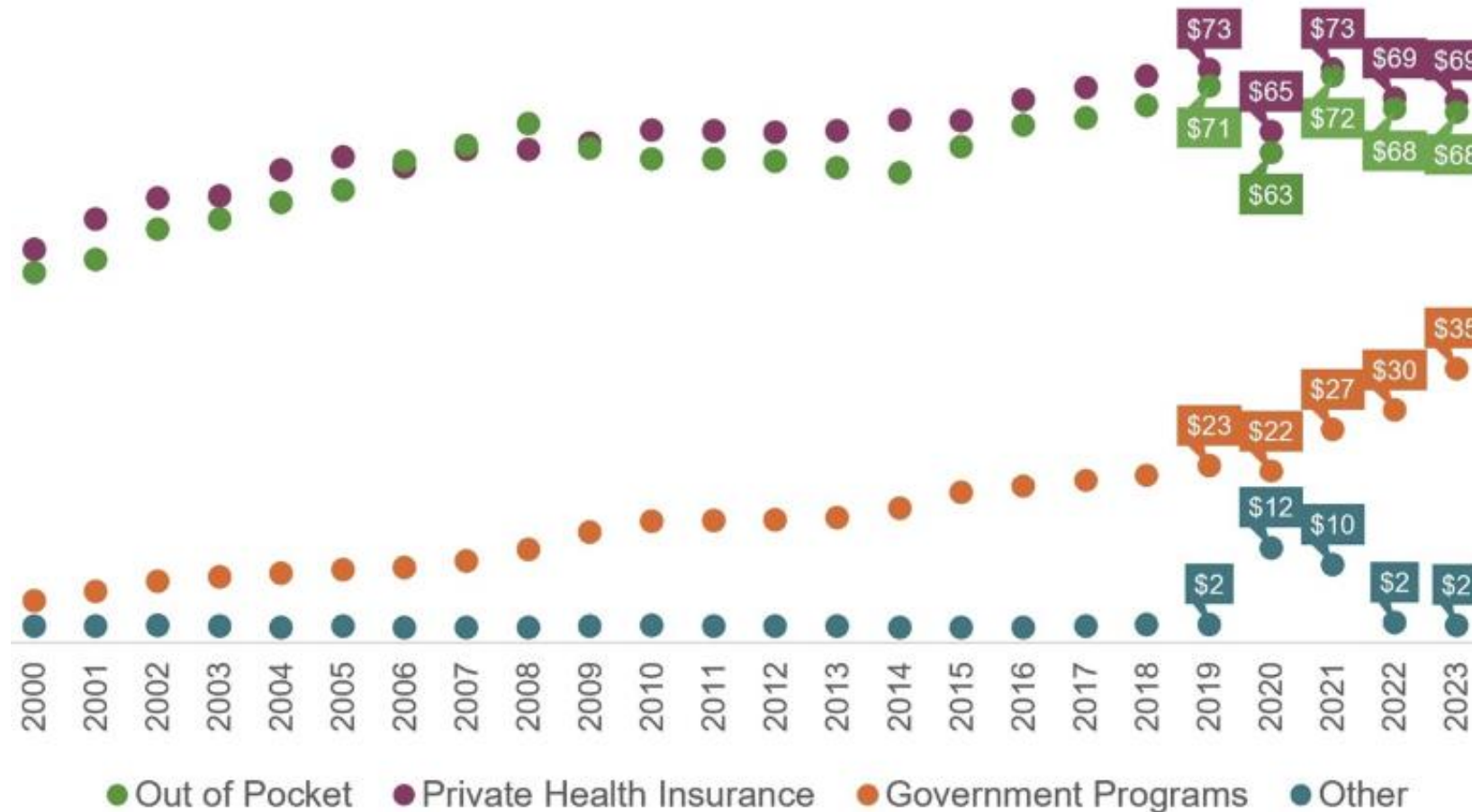


DSO Affiliation

Percent of Dentists Affiliated with a Dental Support Organization (DSO), 2023



Patient Mix is Changing



NATIONAL DENTAL EXPENDITURES BY SOURCE OF FINANCING, 2000-2023
(Constant 2023 Dollars, Billions)

Dental spending in the U.S. grew by \$4B in 2023, a 2.5% increase from 2022.

All of this was accounted for by Medicare (\$3B) and Medicaid (\$1B).

Government programs now account for 1/5 of total dental spending.

Building a Stronger Future:

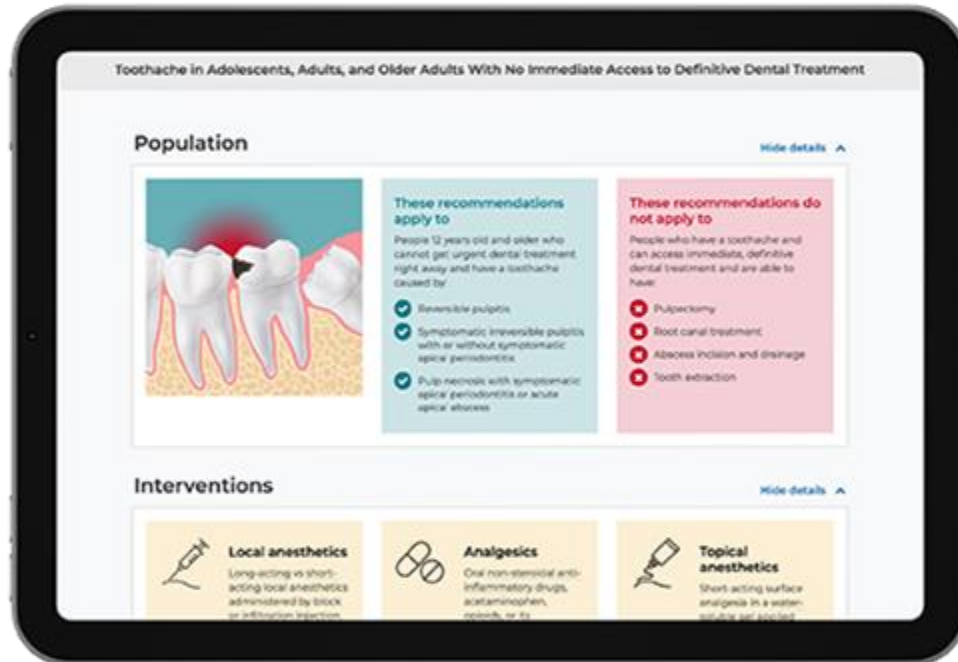
The ADA's Commitment to Advancing the Profession



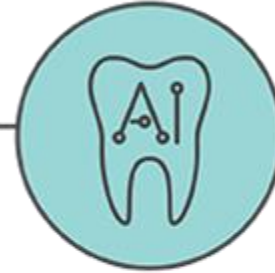
Supporting Our Members

- **New Association Management System**
Many possibilities with the AMS — but first, we're making things right.
- **ADA Forsyth Institute**
Leading breakthroughs in research and innovation.
- **Collaboration with Academy for Private Dental Practice (APDP)**
Supporting private practice members with relevant resources, training opportunities, and practice management tools.
- **Wellness Resources**
Wellbeing Index helps members check in on mental health and receive tailored resources; Talkspace Therapy (connecting users with licensed therapists) and Talkspace Go (a self-guided mental health app)

ADA Living Guideline Program



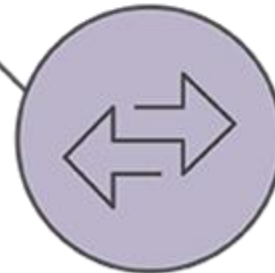
First and only living guideline program focusing on oral health



AI and other tech identify information so experts can analyze and update in real-time



Recommendations developed in months, not years

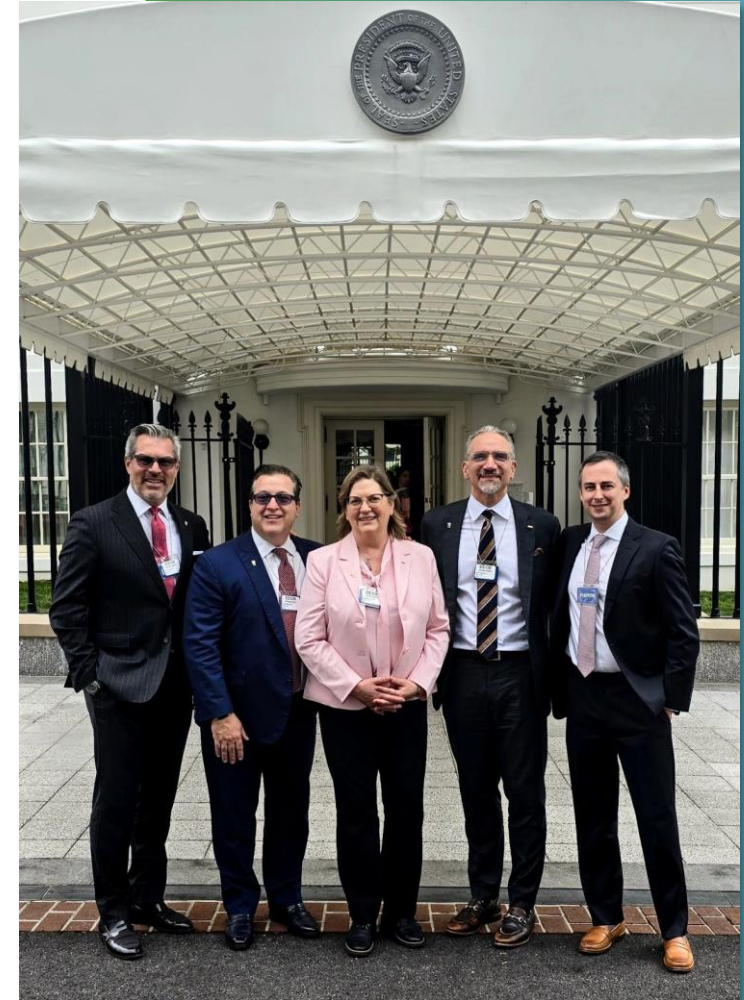


Designed for decision makers: dentists, researchers, medical clinicians, policymakers & patients

Making America Healthy Through Oral Health

The ADA is ensuring that oral health remains a priority in national health care landscape.

- On May 6, ADA Leaders were invited to the White House for a meeting with Dr. Heidi Overton, Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.
- ADA underscored importance of water fluoridation among other key health measures, including infection control guidance and ongoing collaboration to support public oral health infrastructure.
- Affirmed support for NIH oral health research and funding





Ongoing Advocacy

Dental Insurance Reform

State and federal efforts to create a benefits system that is beneficial for dentists and patients

Strengthening the Workforce

Licensure compact, wellness, and workforce development

Student Loan Reform

Advocating for legislation that would ease the burden of dental school debt

Upholding Core Values & Public Health Initiatives Like Fluoridation

The ADA will continue to advocate for community water fluoridation as an effective way to prevent tooth decay.

These efforts include:

- **Fluoridation Ambassador Program:** To help state dental leaders communicate effectively with lawmakers and the public.
- **Grassroots Support:** Our government affairs team is also providing legislative advocacy guidance and grassroots support to states facing fluoridation bans.



For reliable information about the safety, benefits, and effectiveness of fluoride in promoting oral health, visit [ADA.org/fluoride](https://ada.org/fluoride).

America's well-being depends on oral health

It affects every person in the country — and it's time to make it great

By Brett Kessler, D.D.S.
President, American Dental Association

As a new presidential administration takes office, I'm writing on behalf of the more than 159,000 members of the American Dental Association (ADA) to invite everyone in the American government to take this moment to consider one of the most important issues facing the country today: our oral health.

Oral health affects everyone's overall health and well-being. While policy discussions around health care often focus on medical conditions, it is crucial to recognize that oral health is the bedrock of overall health, with far-reaching implications for physical, mental and social wellness.

Research conducted by the ADA's Forsyth Institute and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research have established a clear connection between oral health and various systemic diseases, including heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes and hundreds of other associated ailments.

Imagine not being able to chew food, speak clearly or smile because of pain, infection or missing teeth. The impact on quality of life is undeniable.

Sadly, tens of millions of Americans are suffering right now. Some neglect oral health while others face significant barriers to accessing dental care, with many unable to afford necessary treatments or lacking insurance coverage that includes dental services.

It is time for a fundamental change in America's approach to dental care and dental insurance.

As the leading voice for oral health and dentistry, the American Dental Association is committed to improving America's oral health and working with you to bring about meaningful change.

Better access to affordable dental care is not just a matter of improving smiles — it is a matter of improving lives. Expanding dental coverage within public health programs like Medicaid, supporting dental education and incentivizing the inclusion of oral health services in medical insurance plans would provide vital relief to tens of millions of Americans.

Poor oral health is a critical barrier to education, employment and even military deployment.

The acuteness of tooth pain is all encompassing and distracts from one's ability to learn or participate in school. It also creates a social stigma because students with poor oral health smile less, fail to participate in class and miss school. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than



34 million school hours are missed annually because of poor oral health.¹

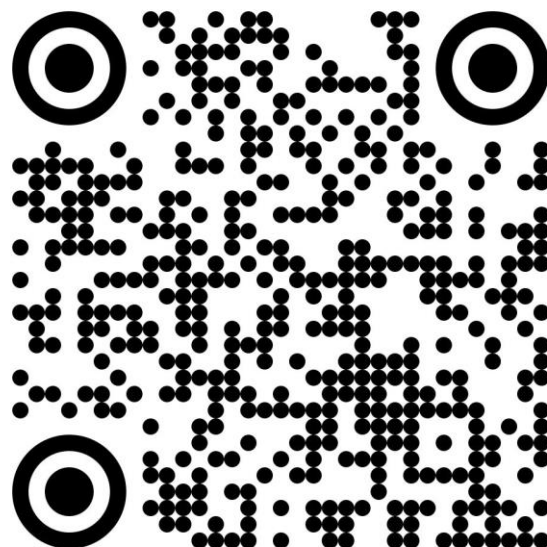
America's workers are also dramatically affected by poor oral health. In fact, more than 92 million hours of work are missed annually because of emergency dental care, according to the CDC.²

Dental fitness is considered one of the eight domains of the Department of Defense's Total Fitness Framework. It is one of the key reasons military personnel cannot deploy. A 2022 study found that 10.6 percent of National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers were unready for deployment due to their oral health.³

These realities underscore the urgency of addressing oral health as a national priority. We urge you to consider the broader impact of oral health when shaping future health care policies and to advocate for solutions that will increase access to dental care, particularly for those in underserved communities.

Now is the time for a paradigm shift in how our nation approaches oral health, starting with three areas of focus:

1. Dental insurance reform: Oral health is not a luxury; it's essential. Fundamental reform of the dysfunctional commercial market and the inclusion of a comprehensive dental benefit in America's public insurance programs is critical to improving health.



Guest Editorial

Make America Healthy Again

What it could mean for oral health

Brett H. Kessler, DDS; Richard J. Rosato, DMD

[Check for updates](#)

The US health care system is in a period of significant reform that is likely to reverberate decades into the future. As Make America Healthy Again (MAHA),¹ the Trump Administration health care platform, starts taking shape, it is important to reflect on the opportunities and challenges it brings to the dental care sector, with the caveat that at the time of writing (mid-February 2025) there are still many unknowns. We also want to highlight how the American Dental Association (ADA) is working to manage the challenges and seize the opportunities for the advancement of the dental profession and the oral health of the American public.

MAKE AMERICA HEALTHY AGAIN

Under MAHA, US health policy will shift to focus on reducing chronic disease, prioritizing preventive health, increasing transparency in medical research, and restructuring federal programs.² The early actions of the administration suggest there are important opportunities and challenges for oral health.

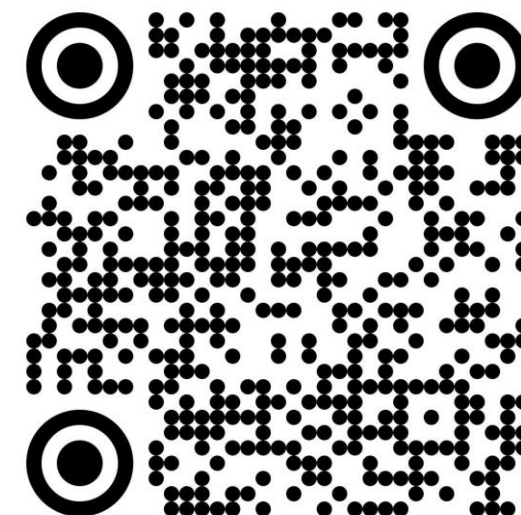
The strong emphasis of MAHA on chronic disease prevention, childhood health, lifestyle, diet, and nutrition is a major opportunity to integrate oral health care more directly into national health policy discussions. Oral diseases are a leading cause of school absences and cost the US economy \$46 billion each year in economic loss.^{3,4} The ADA is advocating for oral health care to be core to these discussions.

The administration has signaled that there will be major Medicaid restructuring potentially through funding reforms and eligibility restrictions.^{5,6} Designed to reduce federal spending, these reforms, if implemented, pose risks to dental benefits coverage for low-income Americans. The ADA has long advocated for the inclusion of dentists for both children and adults, with strong evidence supporting overall well-being, health care costs, and employment prospects.⁷

The administration has also signaled an intent to significantly restructure Advantage (MA), the privately administered side of Medicare, which covers US population 65 years and older.⁸ Most MA plans offer some form of Medicare as a fast-growing segment of the dental care market.⁹ At the same time, there are challenges for MA beneficiaries when it comes to their dental coverage, particularly to advocate for better coverage standards, increased transparency, and fairer policies affecting provider payments.^{10,11} The ADA is tracking developments in the MA arena.

Community water fluoridation has received increased attention as efficacy has intensified. The ADA will continue to provide the available data and research relevant for decision making.¹² The profession speak up, communicate the science, and educate policy makers and the public on water fluoridation and other oral health issues.¹³ The ADA is also health-related scientific research remains vibrant in the face of political funding by the administration.

As a nation, we have an opportunity to put the mouth back into the body and bring better



Closing Message...

The Fork in the Road

1. Do we want to get millions of more Americans into a dental home?
2. Do we think dentistry is truly 'essential' health care or is it a discretionary, self-pay, elective type of service?
3. Do we want to walk the walk on mouth-is-connected-to-body and truly integrate oral care into mainstream healthcare?



Leaders are called to stand
In that lonely place
Between the no longer and the not yet
And intentionally make decisions
That will bind, forge, move,
And create history.

We are not called to be popular,
We are not called to be safe,
We are not called to follow.

We are the ones called to take risks,
We are the ones called to change attitudes,
To risk displeasure,

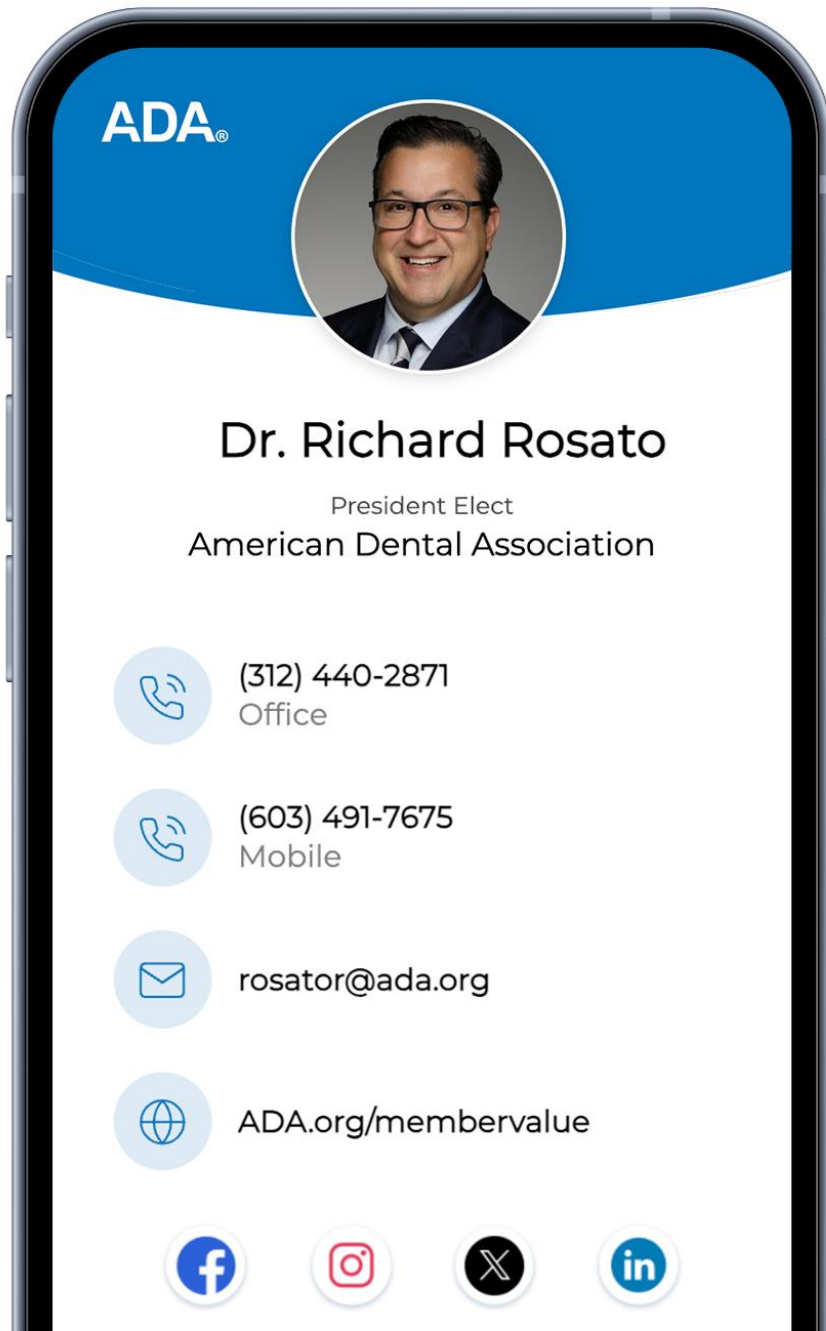
We are the ones called to gamble our lives
For a better world.



Mary Lou Anderson, 1970

Lift others up
and hear
every voice.





ADA®

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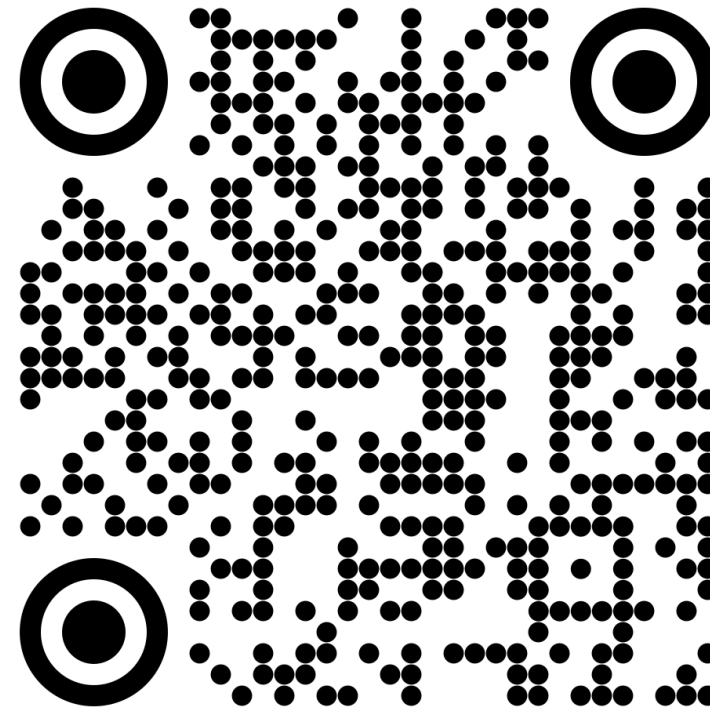
ADA.org/membervalue



Questions/Comments?

Contact Me!

rosator@ada.org



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Leading with Purpose

Brett H. Kessler, D.D.S.
ADA President

Rich Rosato, D.M.D.
ADA President-elect

July 13, 2025

What We'll Cover Today

Laying the Foundation

- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Starting with Why
- Defining Leadership

Knowing the Environment

- Forces Affecting the Landscape
- Disruptors and Challenges
- Trust and Collaboration

Executing with Excellence

- Skills, Practices, and Highly Effective Habits

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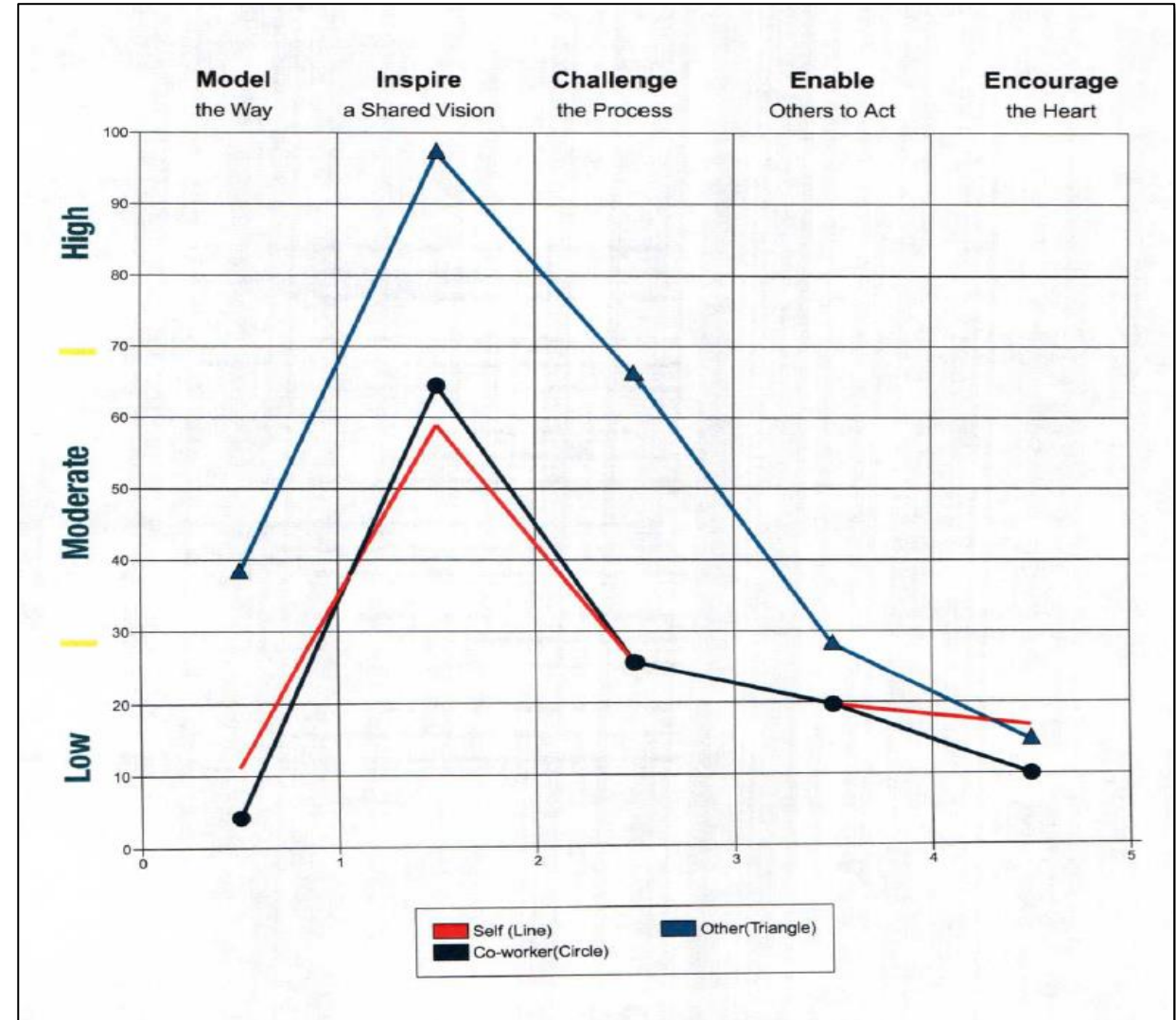
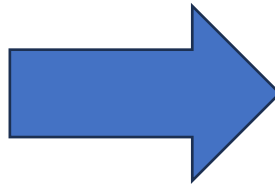
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From Accolades to Reality: A Leadership Reflection



Leadership
success depends on
where you
focus.

You have one year.
Make it count.





What is Leadership?

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

In Buddhism, it is acknowledged that life is inherently difficult. This truth extends to our practice of dentistry and our roles as leaders.



What is mission-driven leadership?

The practice of leading with a clear purpose that aligns every decision, action, and relationship with a shared mission.

Why this matters...

ADA Vision

Empowering the dental profession to achieve optimal health for all.

Mission

Help dentists succeed and support the advancement of the health of the public.



What is the
mission &
vision of your
dental society?



Start with the "Why" to Inspire Action

The ADA Board asked:

"**WHY** do we serve the public and our profession?"

Beyond what we do and how we do it, what is our true calling?"

We make people healthy.

This is our unified purpose – It drives everything we do. This is why we exist and why anyone should care.

GOLDEN CIRCLE

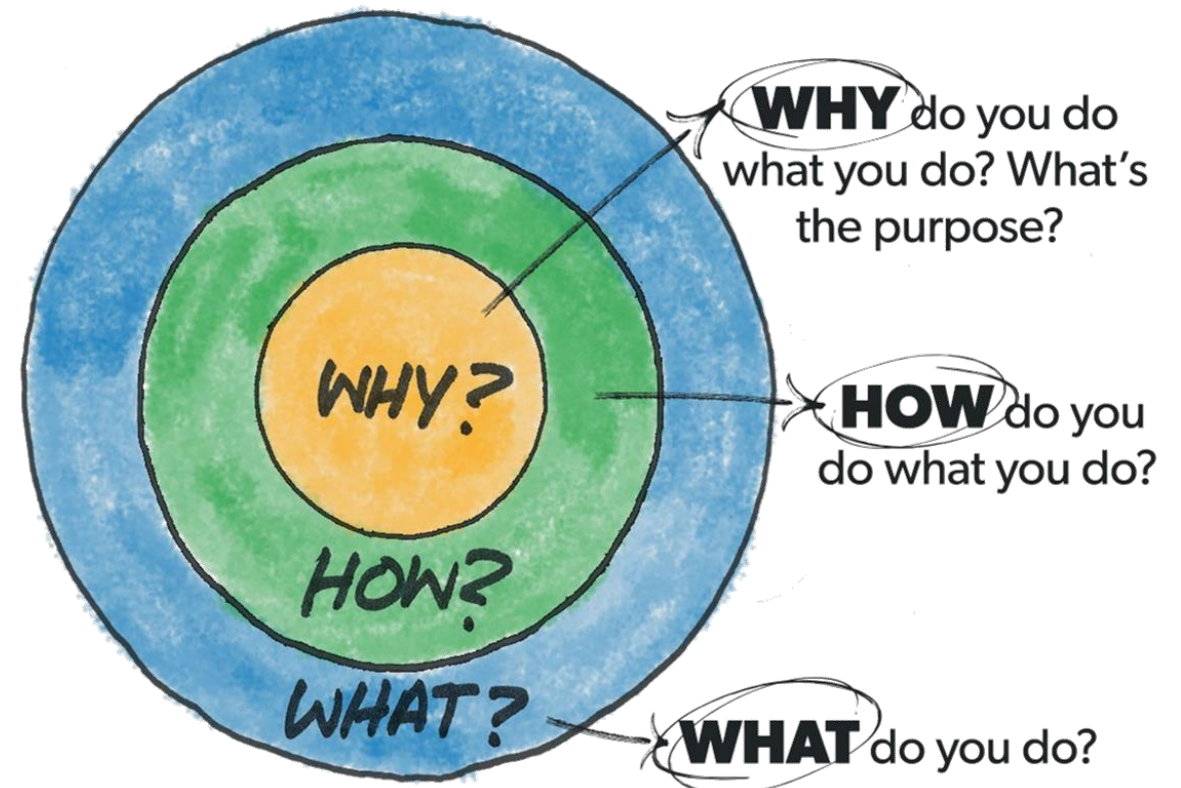


Image Source: Facebook.com/EntreLeadership

What is the
"why" of your
dental society?



A hand holding a black compass with a white face and green markings. The compass is open, and the hand is holding it from the side. The background is a blurred landscape with water and mountains under a blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

If you stand for nothing,
you will fall for anything.

Use your core values to guide your path forward.

Our Core Values

Dr. Rosato:

- Honesty
- Work Ethic
- Family
- Kindness
- Unity
- Respect
- Listening
- Resilience

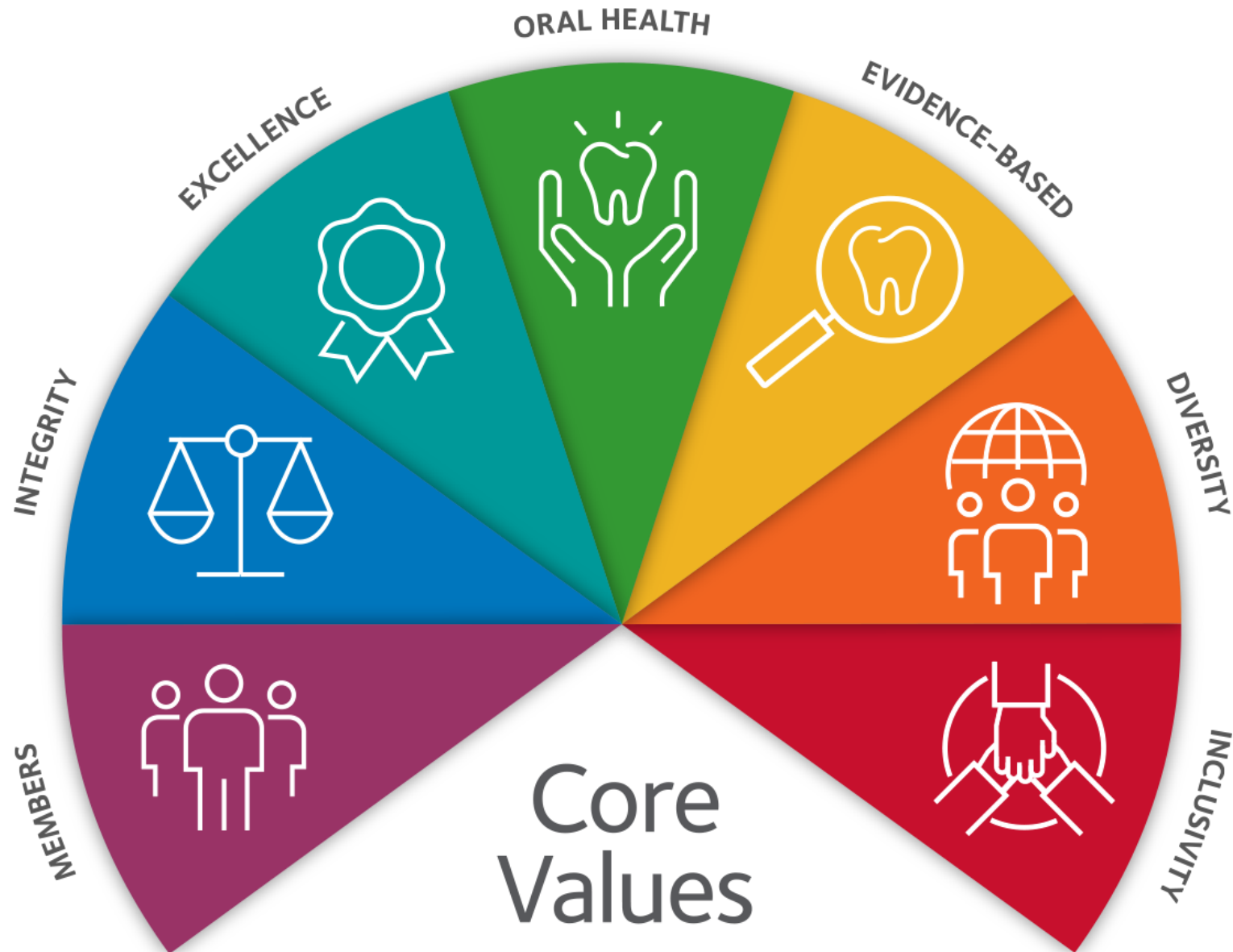
Dr. Kessler:

- Courage
- Integrity
- Family
- Humility
- Humanity





Coach K's Winning
Playbook:
Core Values and
Leadership



Core Values

ADA American Dental Association®

What are
your **core
values** as a
leader?



Do you know
the **core values**
of your dental
society?



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Forces Affecting the Landscape

We are at a pivotal moment for dentistry.
(Dentistry is under attack!)

- Dentistry is evolving: emerging technology, patient expectations, workforce demographics.
- Purpose keeps us grounded and guides our decisions through change.



Disruptors in Healthcare



Technology



Insurance



Regulation



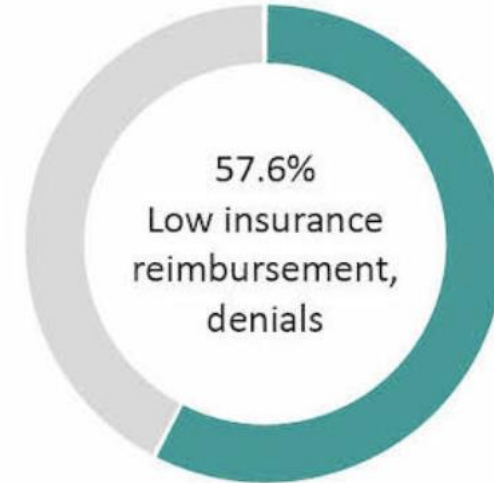
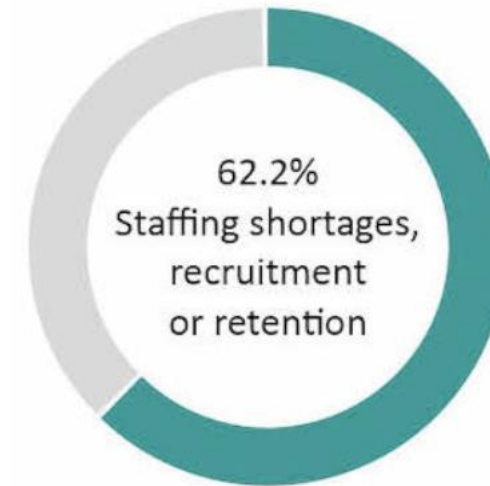
Evolving
Practice Models

Challenges Remain

Dentistry is facing some major headwinds.

- ADA core values are being tested.
- Misinformation threatening public health (e.g., fluoride)
- Rising operational costs + workforce shortages
- Educational debt and insurance barriers

What are the top 3 challenges facing your practice?



Trust is Our Foundation


To lead with purpose, we must lead with **trust**.

And trust is built through **collaboration** — across local, state, and national levels.

Within the Tripartite, Trust Means:

- Listening before leading
- Showing up with transparency
- Respecting different perspectives
- Sharing responsibility and success
- **Consistent positive action over time**





How do we move
forward?

We unite in purpose, and we lead.

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Know Your Members

Ask yourself...

- What do they value?
- What keeps them up at night?
- How can your association be helpful?



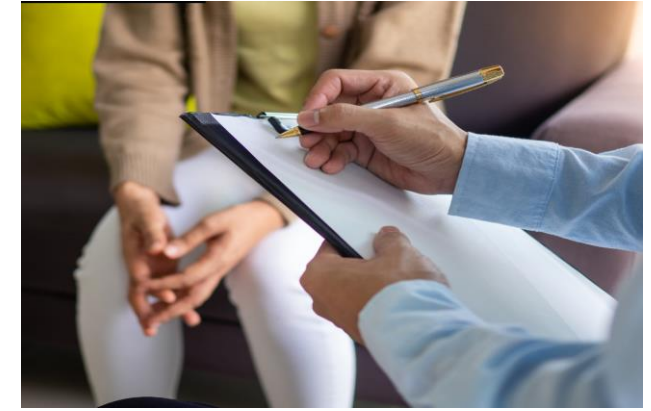
Dentistry is hard! Dentists must have the...



Eye of a sculptor



Hands of a surgeon



Insight of a therapist



Knowledge of a scientist



Acumen of a businessman

Key Leadership Skills for a President-Elect

- Visionary Thinking & Strategic Decision-making
- Effective Communication & Public Speaking
- Collaboration & Team Building
- Conflict Resolution & Problem-solving
- Change Management
- Resilience & Adaptability
- Integrity & Ethics
- Mentorship & Development
- Delegation & Empowerment
- Time & Project Management
- Emotional Intelligence



**Don't
Panic!**



You're Not Alone – Lean On Others

True leadership is knowing when to lean on your team.

- Even the strongest leaders don't have all the answers — and that's okay.
- After 9/11, city leaders leaned on teams of trusted advisors to make swift, purposeful decisions.

“The first thing to ask yourself is, 'What are my weaknesses, and how can I balance those weaknesses with the strengths of other people?’”



There is no one-size-fits-all approach that anyone can offer you.

The hot water that softens a carrot will harden an egg.

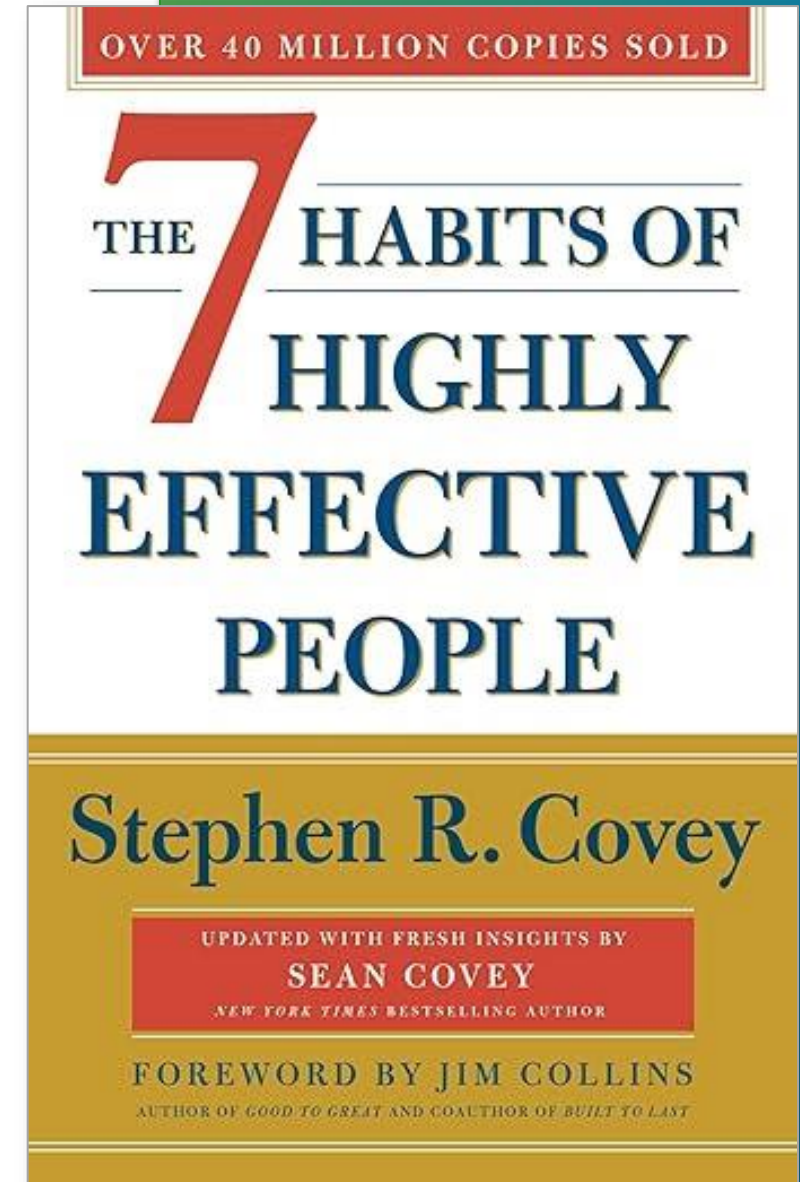
- Clayton M. Christensen,
How Will You Measure Your Life



Challenges are Opportunities



As presidents-elect, these habits can help you lead with effectiveness and purpose.



Habit #1

Be Proactive

Highly effective people change their lives by focusing on what they can control.



Lead with
intention



Be Proactive: Responding to Stimuli



STIMULI



PAUSE &
REFLECT



RESPOND &
REACT

Habit #2

Begin with the end in mind.

Visualize your goals and set a clear direction for your organization with a principle-centered mission statement.



My Mission Statement

– Dr. Kessler

I lead within the scope of my core values, so I am most effective at creating synergy and achievement.

I match my actions with my intentions, so my integrity is apparent to all who cross my path in life. By living with intention, I inspire others to live their lives to their fullest potential.

Through persistence and discipline to my mission, I live peacefully and within my means.



My Mission Statement

— Dr. Rosato

I meet every challenge with relentless creativity.

I believe in reimagining what's possible, especially when the path forward isn't clear. That's where creativity becomes a force for progress — turning uncertainty into opportunity and vision into action.



What is your
mission
statement as
a leader?



Habit #3

First things first.

Organize and execute around your most important priorities. Live by the principles you value most, not by the agendas and forces surrounding you.



Quadrant 2 – The Key to Personal Progress

Q2 activities are not urgent, but important.

Important	
Urgent, Q1	Not Urgent, Q2
Crises	Prevention activities
Pressing problems	Relationship building
Deadline-driven projects	Recognizing new opportunities
	Planning, recreation
Not Important	
Urgent, Q3	Not Urgent, Q4
Interruptions, some calls	Trivia, busy work
Some mail, some reports, some meetings	Some mail, some calls
Proximate pressing matters	Time wasters

Habit #4

Think win-win.

Promote mutual benefit in interactions by seeking solutions that benefit all involved. If Win-Win isn't possible, consider 'no deal' as an alternative.



Habit #5

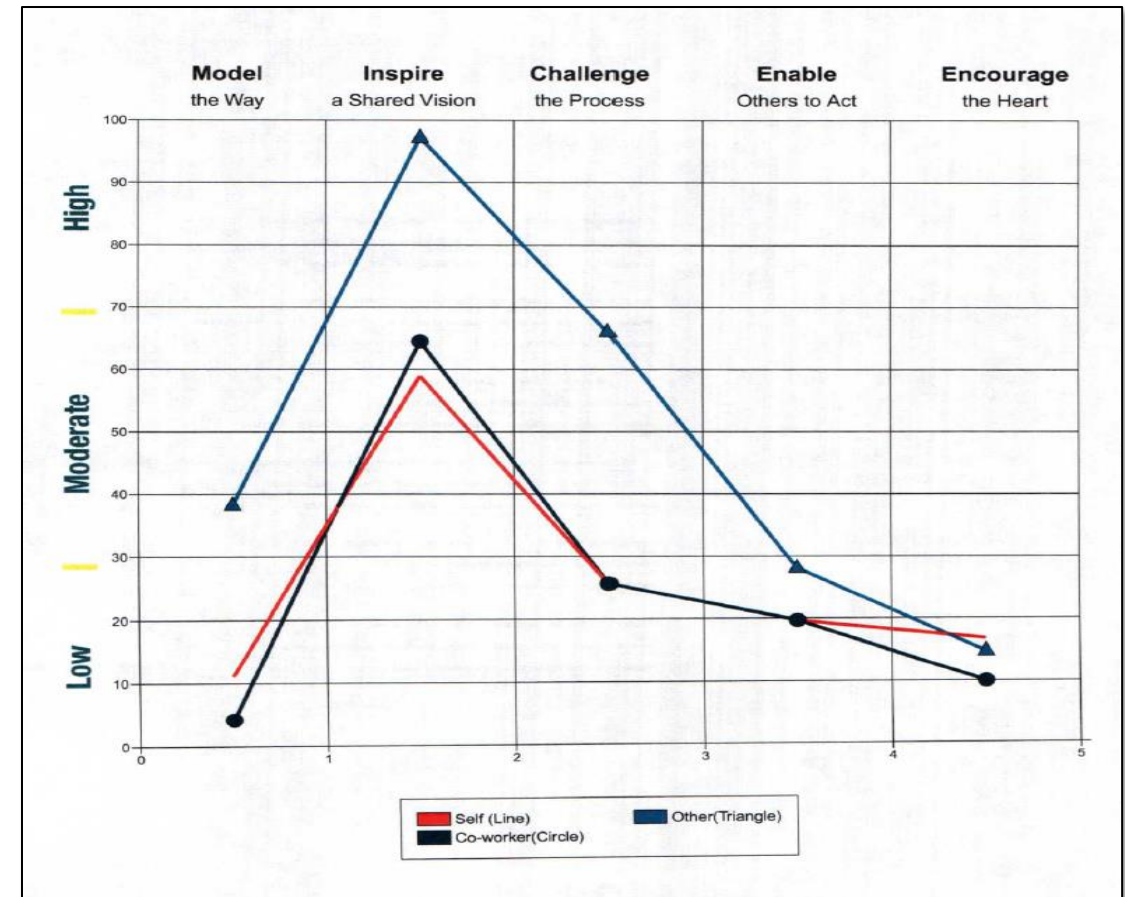
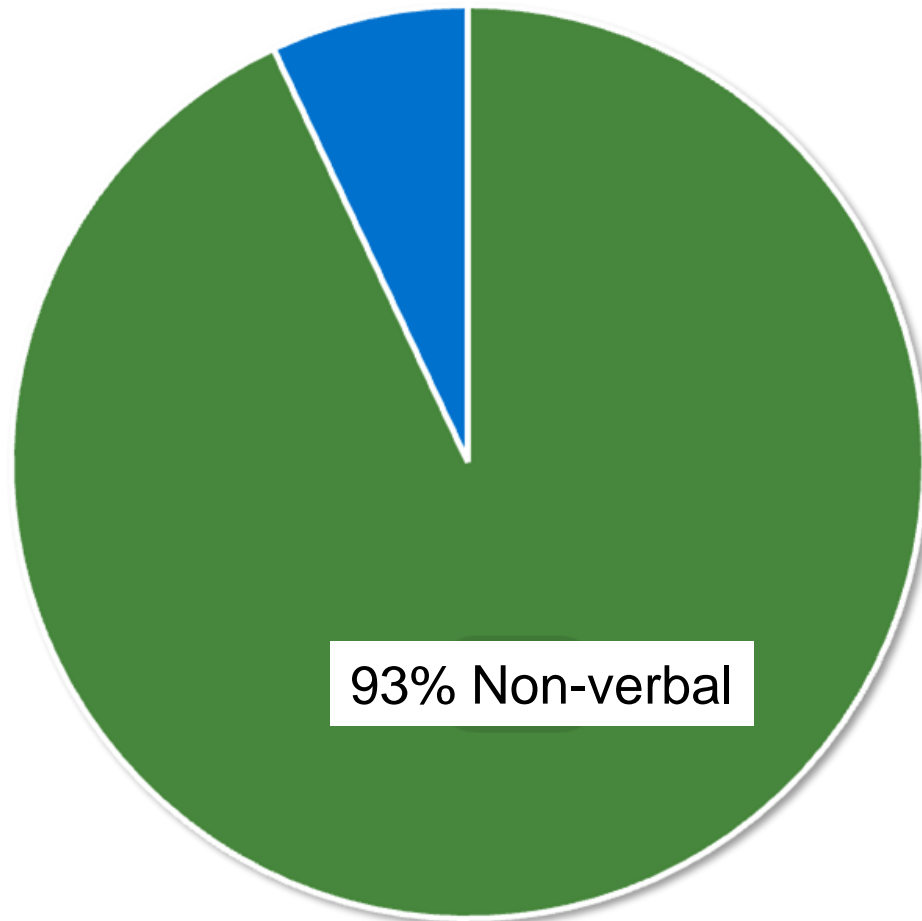
Seek first to
understand,
then to be
understood.

Put yourself in the other
person's perspective and
listen empathetically for
both feeling and meaning.



Communication Breakdown

Verbal vs. Non-Verbal



The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

- George Bernard Shaw

Habit #6

Synergize.

Use trustful communication to leverage individual differences to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.



Habit #7

Sharpen the saw.

Take time out of your “busy-ness” to take care of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.



Internal



1. Be proactive



2. Begin with the end



3. First things first

External



4. Think win-win



5. Seek first to understand



6. Synergize

Both

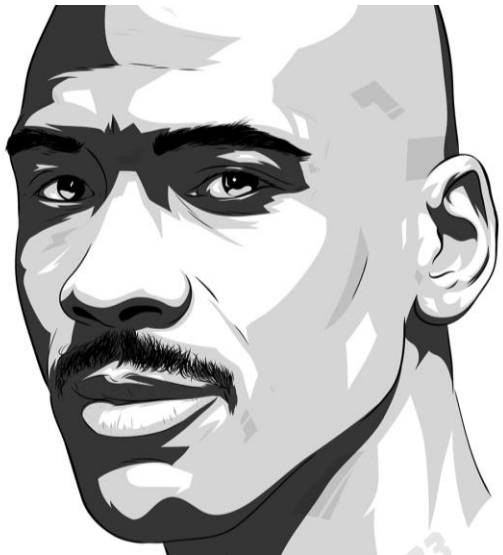


7. Sharpen the saw

**Re-evaluate and
revisit constantly**

Who and
what **inspires**
you, and
why?





The Human Behind the Hero

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation...

Your character is what you really are, while your reputation is what other people think you are.

- Coach John Wooden

October 21, 1998

Recovery gave me a second chance. It's a fragile gift that I treasure and the foundation of everything I do.

I am committed to living my best life and sharing my story with others.



Five Key Practices

It's the simple actions — like inspiring others or leading with heart — that matter.



Model the way



Inspire a shared vision



Challenge the process



Enable others to act



Encourage the heart

Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength relies.

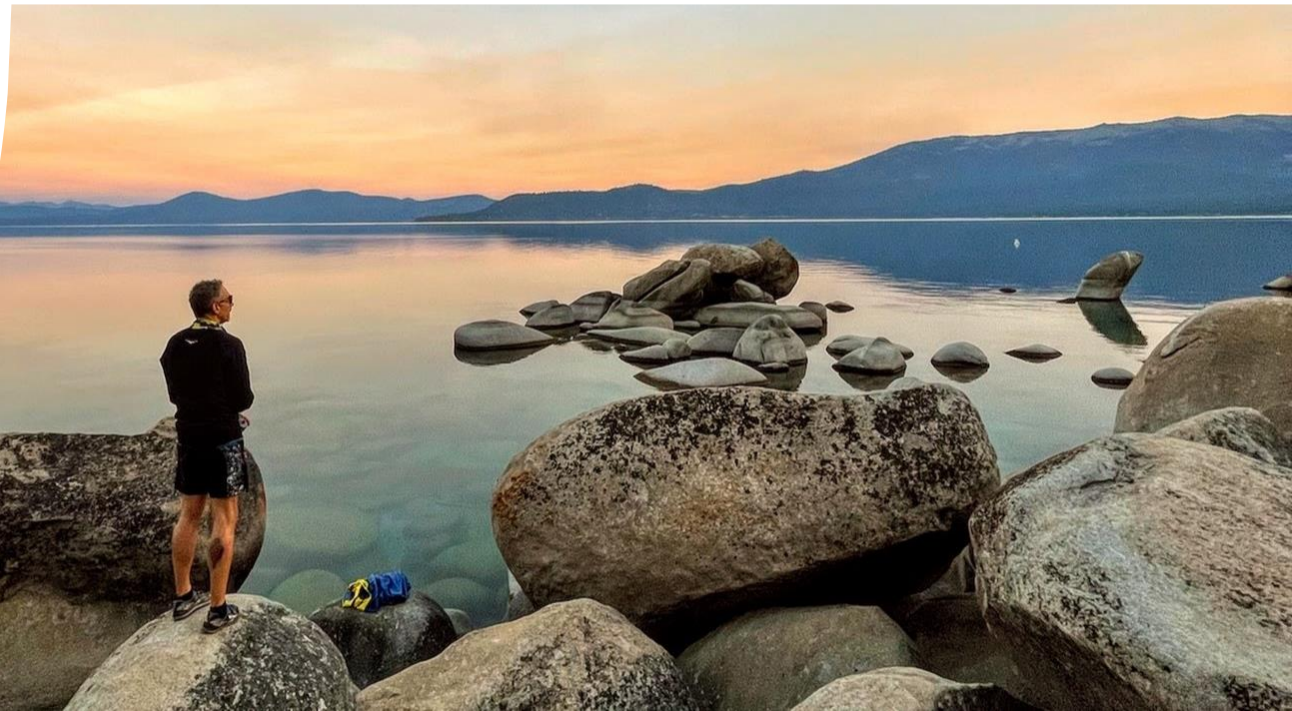
- Mother Teresa



Embrace the challenge, stay focused,
and **keep pushing forward.**

"When you dance on the edge of infinity, there's always enough... Because you aren't taking opportunity from anyone else, you're creating it."

Seth Godin,
The Song of Significance



What will
you create
this year?



Questions / Comments?



Bibliography

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People – Stephen Covey

Start with Why – Simon Sinek

The Infinite Game - Simon Sinek

Atomic Habits – James Clear

Good to Great - Jim Collins

The Song of Significance – Seth Godin

The Leadership Challenge - Kouzes and Posner

Leadership – Rudy Giuliani

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Sunday Wrap-Up:







Welcome Reception

5:00 PM – 5:30 PM
Presidents-Elect Reception
35th Floor

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
Welcome Reception for all
conference attendees
34th – 35th Floor



Attendee Lanyards

-  State Presidents-Elect
-  Affiliate & Specialty Staff & Leaders
-  State Executive Directors
-  State Society Staff & Leaders
-  Local Society Staff & Leaders



Monday Program

The InterContinental Hotel
Grand Ballroom (7th Floor)

Breakfast

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Bring Name Badge

Assigned Tables for Breakfast
& Morning Session