

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS
ADA HEADQUARTERS BUILDING, CHICAGO
July 15-16, 2023**

Call to Order: The meeting of the Council on Communications (“the Council”) was called to order by Dr. Prabha Krishnan, chair, at 8:07 a.m., July 15, 2023, Central Time in the Executive Board Room of the American Dental Association (ADA) Headquarters in Chicago.

Roll Call: The following Council members and liaisons were present for all or part of the meeting: Dr. Prabha Krishnan (*chair*); Dr. Laura Schott (*vice chair*); Dr. Carol A. Baker; Dr. Amber D. Cziok; Dr. Ann Hammi Blue; Dr. Terry Fiddler (*Trustee liaison*); Dr. T. Stotts Isbell; Dr. Lindsey D. Jackson; Dr. Amir E. Kazim; Dr. Rachel L. Lewin; Dr. Mark A. Limosani; Dr. Tanya Sue Maestas (*New Dentist Member*); Ms. Shafa Nathani (*American Student Dental Association representative*); Dr. Angela P. Noguera; Dr. James J. Phillips (*via Zoom*); Dr. Rhett E. Raum; Dr. Riley A. Schaff; Dr. Jill Shelton Wagers; and Dr. Andrew Zucker.

Council Members Not Present: Dr. Lynse J. Briney

Following the roll call, the presence of a quorum was noted.

Dr. George Shepley, ADA President; Dr. Linda Edgar, ADA President-elect; and Dr. Karen Irani, 13th District Trustee were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

ADA Staff (in attendance for all or portions of the meeting): Dr. Raymond Cohlma, ADA executive director; Ms. Tracy Jensen, senior manager, Council on Communications; Ms. Julia Nissim, director, Communications; Ms. Ivy Woods, coordinator, Council on Communications; Ms. Leslee Williams, vice president, Public and Professional Communications; Ms. Stephanie Moritz, chief customer innovation officer; Ms. Samara Schwartz, senior associate general counsel; Mr. Robert Quashie, chief operating officer; Ms. Jenn Sutherland, senior director, Digital Marketing; Ms. Joan Podrazik, director, Professional Communications; Ms. Nicole Anderson, manager, Social Media and Influencer Strategy; Ms. Sandy Eitel, Senior Director, Research, Analytics and Member Growth (*via Zoom 7/15*); Ms. Kelly Ganski, ADA News Editor-in-Chief; and Mr. Tony Frankos, senior vice president, Publishing and Sales Enablement Business Group.

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

ADA Confidentiality Statement and Disclosure Policy: The Chair referenced the Confidentiality Statement and ADA Disclosure Policy included on the agenda. No disclosures were made.

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

Report of Mail Ballot Actions: It was reported that the Council took action pursuant to seven (7) electronic mail ballots since its last meeting: 1) the minutes of the February 17-18, 2023 meeting were approved via electronic ballot on April 7, 2023; and 2) six (6) actions were taken in connection with reviewing policies pursuant to Resolution 170H-2012, Regular Comprehensive Policy Review (*Trans.2012:370*). In accordance with the *Standing Rules for Councils and Commissions*, these seven (7) actions conducted via mail ballot are recorded in the Council’s minutes from this meeting. The Council adopted the following resolution:

CC-9-2023. Resolved, that actions approved through e-ballots since the Council’s February 2023 meeting be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

Mail Ballot Actions:

1 **CC-1-2023. Approval of the Council on Communications February 2023**
2 **Meeting Minutes.**

3
4 **CC-2-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of Clarification of Dental Professional**
5 **Credentials (*Trans.2003:354*).**

6
7 **CC-3-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of ADA Policy Mechanism for**
8 **Complaints and Referrals (*Trans.1972:669*).**

9
10 **CC-4-2023. Policy Vote: Modification of Standards for Dental Society**
11 **Publications (*Trans.1997:303, 660; 2010:602*).**

12
13 **CC-5-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Institutional Advertising**
14 **(*Trans.1979:598*).**

15
16 **CC-6-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Guidelines for State**
17 **Boards of Dental Examiners on the Definition of Routine Dental Services for Purposes**
18 **of Dentists' Advertisements (*Trans.1977:616, 945*).**

19
20 **CC-7-2023: Policy Vote: Rescission of ADA Policy: Guidelines for an Advertising Code**
21 **(*Trans.1971:108, 563; 1997:659*).**

22
23 **Opening Remarks:** Remarks were made by the Council chair, Dr. Prabha Krishnan; Council vice chair,
24 Dr. Laura Schott; Board of Trustees liaison, Dr. Terry Fiddler; ADA President-elect, Dr. Linda Edgar; vice
25 president, Public and Professional Communications, Ms. Leslee Williams; Council sr. manager, Ms. Tracy
26 Jensen; and ADA President, Dr. George Shepley.

27 **RELEVANT ADA INITIATIVES**

28
29 **Member Value Discussions:** Dr. Edgar presented the Council with recently developed member value
30 collateral, focusing on the value of Tripartite membership. Three (3) pillars for successful engagement
31 with dentists were noted: connecting, collaborating, and communicating. The Council discussed Tripartite
32 matters as they relate to communication strategies in closed session and, in open session, shared
33 strategic input that will help iteratively update the communications messaging and tactics for volunteer
34 leaders and grassroots members regarding the value of the Tripartite and being stronger together. The
35 Strategic Communications Workgroup of the Council will engage in further discussion and share its
36 recommendations for updates. The Council adopted the following resolution:

37 **CC-8-2023. Resolved,** that the Council on Communications recommends that the ADA Board of
38 Trustees ("BOT") ensure that a document explaining ADA member benefits be distributed
39 expeditiously to as many U.S. dentists as possible, and be it further

40 **Resolved,** that the BOT consider communicating such document via email, the ADA App,
41 www.ada.org, and any social media channels.

42 Additionally, to provide the dentist perspective to member value communications strategies, the Council
43 further engaged in strategic discussion about member benefits, value at all levels of the Tripartite, and
44 successfully communicating these advantages.

45 **ADA Executive Director Presentation:** Dr. Cohlmia presented "Continuing the ADA's New Day:
46 Defining Our Future", which outlined how, as the profession of dentistry is experiencing a major
47 generational transition, ADA resources are being focused on bringing innovative member value offerings
48 to the table to sustain as well as attract members so that ADA may remain the unified, inclusive, future-
49 focused voice of the dental profession. He highlighted several trends in dentistry, which include changing
50 technology, dentist demographics, patient expectations, declining ownership, and continued practice
51 consolidation. The goal is for the ADA to be a disruptor; implementing agile governance, collegiality and

1 synergy, and improving digital experiences and membership opportunities. Dr. Cohlmia also updated the
2 Council on the status of the ADA's Strategic Forecasting efforts.

3 **ADA News Engagement Session:** ADA News Editor-in-Chief Kelly Ganski shared details on ADA News
4 readership and engaged the Council in a one (1)-hour interactive brainstorming session around the
5 various sections of ADA News (government and access to care, practice and group practice, education
6 and science, and other ADA topics), noting that there is a delicate balance regarding what topics are
7 included within publications. Council members shared insights about the ADA News publication from the
8 district, leader, and member dentist perspective. This session served as a forum for the Council to advise
9 on the ADA's allocation of communications resources consistent with the Council's duties.

10 **Influencer Strategy:** Ms. Joan Podrazik, director, Professional Communications, and Ms. Nicole
11 Anderson, manager, Social Media and Influencer Strategy, presented on the newly developed ADA
12 Social Media Influencer Strategy. While noting that influence can be achieved through multiple channels
13 (such as face to face, traditional media, or keynote addresses), the focus of the conversation was on
14 social media specifically as a channel of influence for the ADA. The new ADA Ambassador program
15 serves to educate all dentists about the value of the ADA through authentic interactions in closed dentist-
16 only social media groups. The ADA Ambassador program will be a collaborative effort between staff and
17 member dentists to focus on sharing proactive information, clarifying misinformation, and identifying new
18 ways the ADA can support all dentists in closed social media groups. The ADA is also working on social
19 media influencer campaigns outside of closed social groups around the ADA Member App and SmileCon.

20 COUNCIL WORKGROUPS

21 **2022-23 Workgroup Retrospective:** Dr. Krishnan commended the Council for its efforts throughout the
22 year. She noted that the work of the Council has guided other efforts across the ADA and accelerated
23 strategic initiatives across districts. She emphasized the top 10 highlights from the year: finalization of the
24 2023 Communications Trend Report; Culture of Change initiatives that were shared at the June Power of
25 Three meeting; strategic direction for the Social Media Reputation Defense Toolkit; consulting on the new
26 dental insurance advocacy spokesperson; promotion of the Institute for Diversity in Leadership and
27 realizing a record number of applications in 2023; Champions Network Culture of Change kickoff event
28 with D&I speaker Mauricio Velasquez; consultation on applicants for the ADA Ambassadors Program;
29 interviews with state and local leaders to provide guidance to reduce gaps between the ADA and state
30 and local organizations; providing strategic direction for a Culture of Change leader-to-leader toolkit; and
31 efficient review of eleven (11) policies, providing the House of Delegates with recommendations for
32 maintaining, modification or rescission.

33 **Communications Innovation Workgroup Update:** Dr. Jill Wagers (*chair*); Dr. Carol Baker (*vice chair*);
34 Dr. Lynse Briney; Dr. Amber Cziok; Dr. Mark Limosani; Dr. Andrew Zucker; Ms. Joan Podrazik (*staff*
35 *liaison*); Ms. Nicole Anderson (*staff liaison*)

36 Dr. Wagers explained that the Workgroup's purpose is to examine existing member and stakeholder data
37 to identify potential gaps and collect further research, resulting in strategic recommendations and
38 potential innovations to existing communications channels. The Workgroup's 2022-23 goals included
39 developing a strategic direction and communication approach for the Social Media Reputation
40 Defense Toolkit, created in response to Res. 304H; exploring communications between the ADA and
41 state/locals to determine whether there are opportunities to innovate; supporting social media innovation;
42 and consulting on newly proposed expert spokesperson, Dr. Mark Vitale, on advocacy around medical
43 loss ratio and advance recommendation for the ADA Board of Trustees ("BOT") to confirm new nominee
44 and spokesperson roster at June 2023 BOT meeting.

45 Since its implementation, the Social Media Reputation Defense Toolkit has received more than 20,000
46 views. This strong performance validates the strategy developed by the Workgroup. A paid Facebook
47 campaign targeted towards dentists with this Toolkit became the second most clicked campaign since
48 COVID with 15 million impressions (the number of times the ad is served) and 86,000 engagements (link
49 clicks, likes, comments, shares). More than 90% of people who accessed the page were on mobile
50 devices.

1 A survey geared towards better understanding communication gaps between the ADA and state/local
2 societies is being finalized and will be fielded to state/local presidents and presidents-elect and national
3 volunteer leaders. Results are expected to be available in August 2023, and a recommendation will be
4 made based on the results of the data. Additionally, the new expert spokesperson candidate and current
5 spokesperson roster was approved by the BOT in June 2023, and the ADA Ambassador application
6 launched the week of June 19.

7 The Workgroup is looking to continue for the 2023-24 Council year, focusing on making a difference
8 through strategic recommendations and action, which could include resolutions or requests to the
9 Strategic Forecasting Committee. They will continue to consult on the ADA spokesperson and
10 Ambassador programs and strongly encourage Workgroup members (and perhaps the Council on
11 Communications at
12 large) to monitor closed social groups in support of the ADA Ambassador program.

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

15 Dr. Noguera highlighted the Workgroup's goal, which is to create a measurable communications plan
16 promoting all the efforts the ADA is undertaking to welcome culture change. The plan launched in March
17 2023. The purpose of the Workgroup is to provide strategic oversight and guidance to the "Culture of
18 Change" communications plan throughout the year, highlighting ADA change-based initiatives, programs,
19 and resources. The Council leadership and Workgroup also created a feedback loop for input and
20 insights from ADA Diversity & Inclusion stakeholders.

21 To build a "Culture of Change", the Workgroup convened leaders from the New Dentist Committee
22 (NDC), Council on Membership (CoM), and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the BOT for dialogue
23 and feedback on the draft communications plan (key messaging, prospective target audiences,
24 launch event) in December 2022. A survey was fielded to 1,100 ADA leaders – the intended
25 communications plan target audience – to determine resonance of key messages, types of resources
26 leaders seek for cultural, diversity and inclusion-based topics, and their point of view on inclusion
27 of diverse practice modalities at all levels of the Tripartite. Two hundred and forty (240) completed
28 surveys were received (22 percent response rate) to inform the communications plan. The survey
29 confirmed more-defined diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) goals for dentistry and the ADA, as well as
30 self-assessment tools, training courses, and speakers are preferred resources for leaders.

31 To kick off the "Culture of Change", the Workgroup hosted a launch event in March 2023, "[Culture of
32 Change: Building a Coalition for ADA's Future](#)," with one hundred and 60 plus (160+) registrants and one
33 hundred and twenty-nine (129) ADA leaders in attendance. The session was presented and promoted at
34 the June 2023 Power of Three meeting for leaders, and featured a nationally recognized DE&I speaker,
35 Mauricio Velasquez, to help foster conversations about how leaders can be catalysts for change.

36 Additionally, the Workgroup developed promotional materials for the [ADA Institute for Diversity in
37 Leadership](#) program to help drive awareness and applications for the 2023 class; 72 total applications
38 were received; the highest amount to date for the program. The Workgroup and ADA Team are planning
39 ongoing May-Nov. 2023 communications of ADA DE&I initiatives to national leaders, including
40 [Champions Network](#), [Amplifying Voices](#) and the [Spectra Diversity & Inclusion Assessment tool](#), so that
41 these critical programs receive more targeted promotion to drive ADA leader awareness and
42 engagement. Metrics from these efforts will be available in December 2023.

43 The Workgroup will continue its efforts, developing a "Culture of Change" Toolkit for leaders and
44 contributing ideas for an event at SmileCon, in conjunction with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee of the
45 BOT and Committee on Annual Meetings. They will also focus on understanding whether the leader
46 audience has been impacted enough for the Group to transition this "Culture" to other audiences.

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

1 Dr. Raum shared that the Workgroup's goal and primary focus was to develop, interpret, present, and
2 distribute the 2023 Communications Trend Report (Report), which is a significant asset for short and
3 long-term communications planning at every level of the ADA to inform the delivery of member value. This
4 is the fourth year of the Report. Additional details about the Report appear below.

5
6 **2023-24 Workgroup Development:** Dr. Schott shared an overview of workgroup planning for 2023-24,
7 which will seek to maintain the Communication Innovation and Strategic Communications Workgroups.
8 An additional workgroup will be added to focus on better communicating the ADA's benefits to members,
9 as well as to address any new projects assigned to the Council. As the 2023 Communications Trend
10 Report highlighted why and where ADA communications need to be improved, the Council brainstormed
11 on specific communications for the new workgroup to focus on. Ideas such as tailored ADA Member App
12 notifications specific to the user, a reimagined welcome package for members, data-driven
13 communication, etc. were discussed.

14 15 **2023 COMMUNICATIONS TREND REPORT**

16 Dr. Raum presented the draft 2023 Communications Trend Report and noted that the Report is largely
17 based on two surveys: one for member dentists and one for consumers. Once fielded and completed,
18 results are nationally representative of ADA membership and the U.S. population. Key themes of the
19 2023 surveys being compiled for the Report include: public/consumer beliefs about public health topics
20 such as pain medication, vaping, marijuana use, and dental visits from age one; and new and emerging
21 issue topics from the dentist's perspective, including inflation and its impact on dental practices, mental
22 wellness, and pain management prescribing. For year-over-year analysis, relevant questions were
23 maintained in the dentist survey and analyzed to demonstrate potential shifts in attitudes or beliefs for
24 topics like workforce shortages and third-party payer issues.

25 The dentist survey was completed by four hundred and ninety-nine (499) participants in April 2023 with a
26 margin of error of +/- 4%. Key highlights included: dentists needing additional support in areas of mental
27 health and staffing; ADA needing to better promote its dental insurance reform advocacy efforts; and that
28 ADA has done an excellent job building awareness around resources for opioids, oral cancer, and
29 discounts. The consumer survey was completed by one thousand and fifty (1,050) respondents in April
30 2023 with a margin of error of +/- 3%. Key highlights that can be built upon included: consumers
31 recognizing that there is a connection between oral health and overall health; fifteen percent (15%) of
32 respondents have considered a career in dentistry; there is a growing number who go to their dentist, for
33 both routine care and dental emergencies, because they are "in network"; and there is a reluctance for
34 consumers to share health history information about vaping, which is a point of education.

35 A communications plan is being developed to share the 2023 Report with national, state, and local
36 leadership later in 2023, as a strategic planning asset for the Tripartite to support 2024 communications
37 planning.

38 **AMERICAN STUDENT DENTAL ASSOCIATION (ASDA) REPORT**

39 Ms. Nathani, ASDA president and representative to the Council, updated the Council on the activities of
40 ASDA, which include membership statistics, national initiatives, national meetings, and its strategic plan.
41 For the 2021-22 membership year, ASDA had 22,405 members. Final 2022-23 membership numbers will
42 be distributed in August 2023. In November 2022, ASDA welcomed a new chapter: Lincoln Memorial
43 University College of Dental Medicine. This new addition increased ASDA's chapters to sixty-nine (69).
44 Current national initiatives include: *Contour*, ASDA's national publication whose [May 2023](#) theme was
45 "Economics in Dentistry"; National leadership: ASDA's new 2023-24 Executive Committee and Board of
46 Trustees was elected at Annual Session, February 17-19; and the "*Life in Loupes*" Podcast. In April 2023,
47 ASDA released season 1 of "*Life in Loupes*." The inaugural season was created to help students think
48 about the vast career options available to them through interviews and stories from ASDA alumni. Host
49 Dr. Gabriel Holdwick interviewed five ASDA alumni about their interesting, and not always traditional,
50 career paths. Guests provided relatable insights about the decisions, life experiences, and mentors that
51 helped shape their journeys. Discussion topics ranged from why they chose dentistry, to career
52 transitions and pursuing passions outside of the dental office.

1 ASDA is highly engaged on social media and has recently launched an Instagram account that promotes
2 connecting with current, as well as potential members, by highlighting what is happening in the
3 community and sharing important news. The platform currently has 26,330 followers and is growing.
4 ASDA is also currently exploring TikTok and video sharing (reels), as these are some of the primary
5 methods of connecting and communicating with younger dentists. Within ASDA IG reels, there is the “Day
6 in the Life” series, which features a new student each month. This series gives members the opportunity
7 to share their story. ASDA also shares out three (3) separate newsletters monthly to communicate with
8 members: Word of Mouth, Advocacy Brief, and New Leader.

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

11 The Council engaged in discussion, sharing insights from the district and member dentist perspective,
12 regarding why they are ADA members, what the ADA is doing for them, and why this is important at the
13 state and local level. Members expressed thoughts such as feeling represented at all levels, as there is
14 heavy reliance on state and local dental societies for services; advocacy; funding; mentorship; and more.

15 **COUNCIL ELECTIONS**
16

17 The Council elected Dr. Laura Schott, Fifteenth district, to serve as the Council Chair, and Dr. T. Stotts
18 Isbell, Twelfth district to serve as the Council Vice Chair, for the 2023-2024 term.

19 **Adjournment:** There being no further business, the Council meeting was adjourned at 11:32 CT on
20 Sunday, July 16, 2023.