New Continuing Education Opportunities on page 42!
INVEST IN YOURSELF | CREATE FAMILY MEMORIES | WIN PRIZES
Renew Your Membership  Throughout 2017, GDA advocated for your profession and patients, promoted the positive perception of dentists, increased awareness of dentistry, brought our members new business solutions, and provided guidance on new regulations affecting dentistry.

Renew your membership by January 31 at gadental.org/renew!

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Reminder—New Legislation Effective January 1

New Georgia Prescriber Requirements

Starting January 1, 2018, every provider licensed in Georgia with a DEA number was required to enroll with the electronic Prescription Drug Monitoring Program run by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Prescribers who obtain a DEA number after January 1, 2018 shall enroll within thirty (30) days of obtaining credentials. A prescriber who fails to register shall be held administratively accountable to the state regulatory board governing such prescriber for such violation(s).

To register, please go to https://georgia.pmpaware.net/login.

New Hygienist Supervision Law

Starting January 1, 2018, Georgia licensed dentists have the option of allowing the Georgia licensed dental hygienists they employ to perform specific hygiene duties under general supervision (i.e., without the supervising dentist being physically present in the building) in private dental offices and in certain safety net settings.

For more details about the changes please see the article entitled, “What Every Practice Needs to Know about the New Hygienist Supervision Law,” in the June 2017 edition of GDA Action or contact Scott Lofranco at scott@gadental.org.
Do you feel bloated, depressed, or irritable when dealing with your bank? If so, you may be suffering from **IBS (Irritable Bank Syndrome)**.

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www.USDentalTransitions.com
It’s been a year of progress at GDA. The tone for change was set some time ago, and its effects are now becoming visible: the association has moved to become financially and strategically sound, and GDA’s new leadership and constant engagement with membership is generating energy and active involvement.

Here are some of my personal GDA highlights from this last year:

» The GDA buyers’ group was conceptualized three years ago and it has now become reality in GDA Plus’ Supplies. More than 400 members have signed up, taking advantage of 20–30% discounts on products. I have personally saved enough to pay for both my member dues and GDA Convention & Expo expenses just by taking advantage of this program.

» GDA Plus’ Insurance/GDIS is operating more efficiently and offers a wide range of products—expanding its lines to include home, auto, and Medicare Supplements in addition to malpractice and business policies. Our health insurance is growing significantly, offering competitive and reliable plans. The company has shown tremendous growth.

» Legislatively, our team has built bridges and positive rapport with state legislators to protect our patients and profession from outside interests. The dental hygiene supervision bill (HB 154) passed with full support and provisions of the bill will help both underserved members of our community and private practitioners.

» We have re-energized our Contact Dentist Program to get members directly involved with their local legislators. I have personally witnessed the benefits of this new energy as NWDDS planned our annual legislative reception.

» GDA’s Convention and Expo welcomed more attendees, a new line-up of CE and family activities, and special guests including six state legislators, US Congressman Dr. Drew Ferguson and GDA President Dr. Joe Crowley. Our new committee is already engaged to make next year even more exciting—and my kids are looking forward to attending at the Ritz in Amelia Island next year.

» Now in its fifth year, the Leadership GDA program is growing. Recruits are informed in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, organizational structure, and spokesperson training.

» GDA has been able to develop good working relationships with other groups such as the Georgia Dental Society, Georgia Indian Dental Association, and Hinman Dental Society through members and officers. Our collaborative efforts were evident as we assembled volunteers to host the ADA’s annual meeting in Atlanta in October. This has been a thoughtful and productive effort promoting inclusivity.

» Finally, and even more personal to me, is our Action magazine and its new look. Our team has published some fantastic issues full of information to help practice productivity, inform about legislative efforts and member benefits, and share personal announcements. Additionally, the publication has treated all issues fairly as it dealt with controversy, helping members to make informed decisions by publishing all information available.

We grow as team, and we win as a team. Let’s work together for an even better year ahead.

I hope you enjoyed a merry Christmas and wish a happy new year to you all.

“
We grow as a team, and we win as a team. Let’s work together for an even better year ahead.”

DR. KUMAR PATEL
GDA Editor
Phone 770.429.1545
drkay71@gmail.com
Around Town

Western District Legislative Reception and Officer’s Visit
Representative Richard Smith (R-Columbus) and Senator Ed Harbison (D-Columbus) attended the Western District Legislative Reception and Officer’s visit held on November 1 at Green Island Country club in Columbus, Georgia.

Northern District Officer’s Visit
Representative Deborah Silcox, who currently serves as State Representative for House District 52, joined the GDA officers and NDDS members at Villa Christina on September 22, 2017. She spoke to members and answered their questions about healthcare policy in Georgia, giving an overview on bills from the 2017 session and proposed bills for 2018 related to surprise billing and opioid restrictions. In addition, Silcox touched on federal legislation, including block grants and Section 1115 waivers.

Southwestern District Legislative Reception in Albany
The first of two legislative receptions for the Southwestern District was held in Albany at the Doublegate Country Club on November 9. The reception was attended by Georgia State Senators Dean Burke and Freddie Powell-Sims and State Representatives Winfred Dukes, Darrel Ealum, Gerald Greene, Jay Powell, and Ed Rynders.
Lunch & Learn with Dr. Andy Allgood

Dr. Andy Allgood spoke about the importance of effective patient communication and how to connect with patients to keep them coming back on October 11.

Dr. Mark Shurett Speaks at GDA Lunch & Learn

On November 9, students joined in a discussion with Dr. Mark Shurett about overcoming the inevitable obstacles in their future careers. He shared his experiences and encouraged the students to keep their heads held high, work hard, and do what is right. He assured them that this is the key to success.

GDA President Discusses Professionalism and Ethics with Students

As part of a program provided by The Student Professionalism and Ethics Association, Dr. Robin Reich provided information on the GDA and held a Q&A session for the students at the Dental College of Georgia. Reich discussed how students can manage ethical and staffing issues and difficult situations throughout their careers.
GDA Participates in Diwali Celebration

GDA president Dr. Robin Reich was a guest of honor at the Georgia Indian Dental Association’s annual Diwali event. Both association presidents, Drs. Mayur Nayee and Robin Reich, are pictured together lighting a lamp to start the festivities.

GDA Member Installed as American Dental Association Trustee

Dr. John F. “Jay” Harrington, Jr. was installed as an ADA trustee at the ADA’s 158th Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA. He will serve on the ADA Board of Trustees as the trustee from the Fifth District, which encompasses Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. The ADA Board of Trustees formulates and reviews policies and programs and makes recommendations to the members of the ADA’s governing body, the House of Delegates. As a member of the ADA Board of Trustees, Dr. Harrington will play a major role in the organization’s objective to be America’s leading advocate for oral health.

ASDA Honored with Ethics and Professionalism Award

The American Student Dental Association was honored with the Ethics and Professionalism Award conferred by the American College of Dentists at the group’s award ceremony last Thursday, Oct. 19. The award recognizes exceptional contributions by individuals or organizations for effectively promoting ethics and professionalism in dentistry through leadership, education, training, journalism or research. It is the highest honor given by the College in the area of ethics. ASDA Executive Director Nancy Honeycutt, CAE, accepted the award at the ceremony in Atlanta on the organization’s behalf.
GDA Dentists Inducted into ICD
The International College of Dentists inducted six GDA members, including five alumni and one faculty member from The Dental College of Georgia, at their annual meeting on October 19 in Atlanta. Fellowship in the College is extended by invitation only. A nominated dentist must pass a rigorous, peer review process leading to the recognition of the individual’s “outstanding professional achievement, meritorious service and dedication to the continued progress of dentistry for the benefit of humankind.”

NDDS Members Learn About “Bugs & Drugs”
Glenn Maron, DDS presented “Bugs and Drugs” at a Northern District CE meeting on October 30.

Northern District members enjoyed a three-course meal while Dr. Maron presented the best practices for developing an efficient infection control and safety program that promotes patient and personnel protection.

Risk Management in Dentistry
Dr. Tom David presented a course on Risk Management in Dentistry on November 17 at the GDA office in Atlanta. Attendees learned how to minimize the possibility of a lawsuit using basic risk management steps within their practice. Dr. David also covered how to handle your patients’ emotional expectations and important management of record keeping and information systems in your practice.

GDA Member Elected to AAID
Dr. David G. Hochberg of Colony Square Dental Associates is the newly elected President of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID).
Spokesperson Training
GDA members attended a spokesperson training on November 3 where they learned interview techniques and practiced with experts from the international public relations firm Golin.

Dr. Robin Reich and Dr. Shannon Thorsteinson

Mark Dvorak, Executive Director of Golin

Around Town, cont.

ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day
April 8–10, 2018
Washington DC

In April, hundreds of dental students will join dentists from across the country in the nation’s capital to advocate for their patients, profession and their practice, beginning a new era in advocacy for the ADA. At the ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day, attendees will hear from political analysts, subject matter experts and politically involved dentists on issues that affect oral health in the United States. Think about joining your colleagues, future colleagues, the American Dental Association, and the American Student Dental Association in helping our current efforts on the Hill to ensure your voice is heard by lawmakers in years to come.

For more information, visit www.ada.org/LobbyDay
Georgia Dental Association/Dental College of Georgia Adjunct Faculty Program

The adjunct faculty program connects GDA dentists with students from The Dental College of Georgia through volunteer clinic hours in the clinic at DCG or any approved charitable clinic in Georgia. The goal of this program is to help bridge the gap between GDA member dentists and dental students. It will provide dental students with quality, evidence-based instruction and ethical guidelines and concepts of professionalism that will serve as the foundation for their careers. Additionally, volunteer hours in charitable clinics help to further Georgia’s Action for Dental Health Plan.

Please note: Volunteer dentists must commit to teaching/volunteering at least one day per month over a minimum of a one-year period and complete the DCG adjunct faculty appointment process.

Leadership GDA Applications Accepted

Leadership GDA is focused on helping members grow into more knowledgeable and confident leaders within the dental community as well as helping them cultivate other professional skills used in everyday life. This program provides participants with a better understanding of the GDA and opportunities to develop valuable contacts and interpersonal relationships. Participants will learn how to increase their involvement and what can be done to make a difference within organized dentistry. Applications are due February 1, 2018. Learn more and apply at gadental.org/leadershipgda.

Mentoring Program

The GDA is connecting with dental students to engage them in organized dentistry. One method is a dentist mentor program that matches a GDA member with a soon-to-be graduating dental student. The GDA is looking for more members willing to become a mentor to a dental student.

GDA Lunch & Learn Program

The GDA needs speakers for the 2018 Lunch & Learn Program at The Dental College of Georgia. During this program, member dentists speak on a variety of topics and share their personal experiences with students.

Sign Up for LAW Day in 2018

At LAW Days, members and students learn about legislative issues impacting dentistry and dental patients over breakfast and then speak to legislators about those issues, encouraging their support and thanking them for efforts on legislation. 2018 LAW Days begin in January—make sure to sign up to attend with your district!

Wednesday, January 10
Northern and Eastern, Alliance

Wednesday, January 24
Central

Wednesday, February 7
Northwestern

Thursday, February 22
Southeastern and Georgia Dental Society

Wednesday, March 7
Southwestern, Western, Northern- Hall County

Wednesday, March 14
Students, other specialty groups and anyone else who wishes to attend

RSVP at gadental.org/lawday

How to Get Started

If you have questions, would like more information or would like to participate in any of these programs, please let us know!
Contact Katherine Torbush at 404.636.7553 or katherine@gadental.org.
Family Dental Associates Treats Veterans for Veterans’ Smile Day

The dentists and staff of Family Dental Associates in Warner Robins participated in their third year of Veterans’ Smile Day. They provided over $38,000 in free dental services for more than 70 veterans from Dublin and Atlanta homeless shelters. GDA members Dr. J. Alex Bell Jr., Dr. Jack Alex Bell III and Dr. Ken Colson used their in-house dental lab to make dentures, partials, and flappers.

Lake Oconee Dentistry Hosts Stars, Stripes and Smiles—A Free Day of Dentistry for Servicemen and Woman

On November 10, 2017, Drs. David and Patti Bradley and Dr. David Miller of Lake Oconee Oral Surgery and Dental Implant Center provided over 90 veterans with their choice of a free extraction, filling or cleaning.

In an interview with the Athens Banner-Herald, Dr. David Bradley said, “Oftentimes those who have served our country are, unfortunately, among the most underserved when it comes to health care. Stars, Stripes, and Smiles is our way of honoring the military veterans who have given so much to ensure our freedom and make this country what it is today.”
Dr. William Bachand Awarded Certificate for International Volunteer Service

The ADA honored GDA member Dr. William Bachand with the 2017 Certificate for International Volunteer Service. The certificate recognizes ADA members who have volunteered in developing countries to improve the oral health and overall health of individuals.

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) and Children’s Dental Health Month

Give Kids a Smile Day is Friday, February 2, 2018. Doesn’t of events have been scheduled for February. Many of the dentists participating are seasoned veterans, and we’re excited to have a few new faces joining us this year.  

For a full list of events, visit gadental.org/cdham.

Colgate Donates Toothpaste for 2018 CDHM Events

GDA Provides Oral Health Kits for 130 Elementary Students

GDA is a proud contributor to the Healthy Hands and Smiles program, which promotes oral and hand hygiene.

Nurse Holly Willis provided education on the subject of to a group of 130 underserved elementary students who are participating in the Soccer in the Street through the Decatur-Dekalb YMCA’s After-School Clarkston Community Soccer program.
In October, Atlanta hosted the ADA Annual Meeting. Thank you to all GDA members that volunteered and attended!

GDA Delegates at ADA Annual Meeting.

5th District Caucus Meeting—Pictured: (top) Drs. Donna Thomas Moses (GA), Annette Rainge (GA), Evis Babo (GA), Stacey Gardner (AL); (bottom) Drs. Carol Wolff (GA), Leigh Kent (AL)

ADA Budget Authority town hall meeting—Pictured (left to right): Drs. Marshall Mann (GA), Rick Nadee (CA), Joe Crowley (ADA President-elect), Gary Roberts (ADA President)

Dr. Becky Weinman talks with volunteer Dr. Lou Ann Best.

Dr. Donnie Brown arrives at ADA 2017.

Dr. Jay Harrington, Dr. Tom Broderick, Jean Harrington, Linda Broderick, Dr. Karen Stockwell, and two visitors from Oklahoma enjoy the block party.

The House of Delegates in session.
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Managing Change and Growth

By Tammara Plankers, CHBC

A goal of many independent businesses is to grow their success. For dental practices, this typically means increasing the size and scope of the practice over time—more space, better case acceptance, an influx of new patients and more advanced technology. Such an accomplishment can be gratifying as you see your dreams become reality—but also challenging when faced with unexpected changes and circumstances.

The key to successfully managing the ongoing growth and change of your practice is to be proactive in responding to new developments. Planning for change can help ensure that you keep your practice on track while minimizing the impact on patients and staff.

The risks of growing too fast
Practice growth is generally a positive development, but growing too rapidly may lead to too many changes at once and ultimately strain the harmony in your office. For example:

- You might create stress for your staff by adding more patients than they can reasonably handle.
- Your patients may feel the loss of a personal connection to you with the addition of new associates and partners.
- You may feel pressure to be more productive to cover the added debt from your practice expansion.

Managing your rate of growth can help you avoid pitfalls such as these and build a strong foundation for ongoing success.

How change can benefit your business
At the same time, it's worthwhile to remember that embracing change can be good for you and your practice in a variety of ways. For example:

Increased profitability. Meaningful change can help improve your practice’s workflow and lead to a healthier bottom line. It's not just about making money. A profitable practice is a sign of a healthy practice.

Better patient care. Changes in your practice should ultimately lead to a better patient experience. This may be reflected in more appointment options because you've added treatment areas and expanded your provider team or modern techniques and equipment that lead to faster recovery times.

Your practice is better positioned to sell. A practice that has been kept up to date may be more attractive to potential buyers who are accustomed to current technology and systems. A practice that has been modernized has more significant appeal and should sell for a higher price.

Steps for managing growth and change
Guiding your team through the inevitable stress resulting from growth and change is a matter of leadership, and it is critical to the long-term integrity of your practice. Here are several steps you can take to help manage this process.

Have an up-to-date business plan. The value of a business plan to prepare you and your team members for responding to growth opportunities and unexpected change cannot be overstated. A key component of a full business plan is the definition of possible “threats and opportunities,” such as current competition and demands for new services. It can, therefore, serve as a valuable resource when you and your team members are faced with new circumstances, providing a guideline for decision-making based on your original objectives for building your practice.

Be sure staffing levels are in sync with your patient load. As your marketing efforts produce positive results through an increased patient roster, your staff will feel the strain of more phone calls to manage, records to maintain and foot traffic to supervise. Have a plan ready that allows you to modify staffing based on fluctuations in patient flow.

Maintain your personal connection with patients. Remember that your patients
Mailing list can be affected by any significant change in your practice—whether a new partner is now attending to their needs or they need to navigate a new office location. Maintaining your personal connection with patients by acknowledging them at each office visit and through emails, letters and other means of direct contact can go a long way when shepherding them through practice transitions.

**Hold daily staff meetings.** Regular, open communication with each team member is always important, but especially so during periods of growth and change. Hold a quick 15-minute team huddle each morning to go over the day’s schedule, identify new patients and share any information team members may need to know about upcoming changes in practice operations.

**Reward team members.** Your team is the glue that holds your practice operations together—particularly during challenging times such as a practice upgrade or the addition of a new partner. Take the time to openly acknowledge exceptional performance by team members. This not only will help minimize the level of stress generated by new circumstances, but it may also lead to increased loyalty to you and the practice.

The bottom line is to remember that growth and change are inevitable aspects of business ownership. By managing the "business of change" through proactive leadership, you can help ensure it works to the benefit of your patients, team members and practice.

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*Ms. Plankers, a Certified Healthcare Business Consultant (CHBC) and manager of the Practice Management Group at Wells Fargo Practice Finance, helps doctors establish and grow their new practices. As a certified executive coach and practice consultant for over 15 years, she assists practitioners in successfully transitioning to practice ownership through the use of proper due diligence. She can be reached at 1-888-499-8871 or tammara.plankers@wellsfargo.com.*

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Winter holidays—do they fill you with joy or with worries about gift-giving and family gatherings? Do summer vacations leave you relaxed or fretful over travel and money? If you’re feeling stressed out over supposedly fun things, it might be time to reassess. Take a few moments to learn how stress affects your health and what you can do about it.

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can give you a rush of energy when it’s needed most—for instance, competing in sports, working on an important project, or facing a dangerous situation. The hormones and other chemicals released when under stress prepare you for action. You breathe faster, your heartbeat quickens, blood sugar rises to give you energy, and your brain uses more oxygen as it shifts into high alert.

But if stress lasts a long time—a condition known as chronic stress—those “high-alert” changes become harmful rather than helpful. “Stress clearly promotes higher levels of inflammation, which is thought to contribute to many diseases of aging. Inflammation has been linked to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, arthritis, frailty, and functional decline,” says Dr. Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, a leading stress researcher at Ohio State University. She and other researchers have found that stress affects the body’s immune system, which then weakens your response to vaccines and impairs wound healing.

Research has linked chronic stress to digestive disorders, urinary problems, headaches, sleep difficulties, depression, and anxiety.

“Some studies have found the physical, emotional, and social effects of a disease like cancer to be stressful for patients, caregivers, and long-term cancer survivors,” says NIH’s Dr. Paige Green McDonald, an expert on stress and cancer biology. “However, there’s no definitive evidence that stress causes cancer or is associated with how long one survives after a cancer diagnosis.”

The top causes of stress in the U.S. are money and work-related pressures, according to a 2013 survey from the American Psychological Association. Stress can also arise from major life changes, such as the death of a loved one, divorce, illness, or losing a job. Traumatic stress is brought on by an extreme event such as a major accident, exposure to violence, or a natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood.

Caring for a person with severe illness—such as dementia or cancer—can also be a significant source of stress. More than a decade ago, studies by Kiecolt-Glaser and others showed that the stressful demands placed on caregivers can lead to poorer health, lower responses to vaccines, increased inflammation, and a more than 60% higher death rate compared to non-caregivers.

It’s not clear why some people can sidestep or recover more quickly from stress than others. These resilient people seem to “bounce back” more easily after stressful situations. Recent studies of animals suggest that resiliency may depend at least in part on our genes. But learning healthy ways to cope with stress can also boost your resilience.

“There are many different ways to cope with stress. We know from a lot of different studies that having close personal relationships—people with whom you can talk, with whom you can share your feelings—can be helpful,” says Kiecolt-Glaser. “So spending time with family and friends in order to maintain those relationships is perhaps one of the most crucial things you can do as a stress reducer.”

Unfortunately, Kiecolt-Glaser adds, “when we’re stressed, we tend to do the worst things that are not at all helpful to our health.”

For instance, stressed out people may tend to isolate themselves and not seek social support. “Exercise is a great stress reducer. But when people are stressed, exercise becomes less common and less appealing,” Kiecolt-Glaser says. “Instead of maintaining a healthy diet—also important to reducing stress—some people who are stressed tend to eat more donuts than vegetables.”

You may think that the agitation brought on by stress might help to burn calories. But evidence hints that the opposite is more likely. Kiecolt-Glaser and colleagues found that, compared to non-stressed people, those who were stressed burned fewer calories after high-fat meals and they produced more of the hormone insulin, which enhances fat storage. “So stress may contribute to weight gain and
obesity through these biological routes,” Kiecolt-Glaser adds.

Getting enough sleep is also key to resilience and stress relief—although stress itself can interfere with sleep. To improve your sleep habits, go to bed the same time each night and get up the same time each morning, and limit the use of light-emitting electronics like computers and smartphones before bed. The light can reduce production of a natural sleep hormone called melatonin, which then makes it hard to fall asleep.

Beyond recommendations for exercise, healthy diet, social contacts, and getting enough sleep, Green McDonald says, “studies have also shown that mindfulness (focused attention on one’s own emotions) and other meditative practices can effectively relieve stress.”

“Mindfulness means staying aware and conscious of your experiences. No matter what we’re doing, we can always make time to bring our attention to our breath and body and stay there for a short period of time,” says NIH psychologist Dr. Rezvan Ameli, who specializes in mindfulness practice. “Recent studies show that even short periods of mindful attention can have a positive impact on health and well-being.”

Other NIH-funded studies have shown that mindfulness meditation can reduce stress, alter brain structure and function, and have a positive effect on the immune system.

“Mindfulness is a simple and effective tool that anybody can use to reduce stress,” Ameli says. Although the concept is simple, becoming more mindful requires commitment and practice. You can learn more about mindfulness meditation from local resources like yoga or meditation classes, mindfulness-based stress-reduction programs, or books.

If you feel overwhelmed by stress, talk with a health care provider or mental health professional. Medications or other therapies might help you cope. In the long run, reducing stress may help you to slow down and enjoy your time with the people and activities you really care about.

This article was reprinted from the December 2014 NIH News in Health newsletter.

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I am pleased to report that by all measures 2017 was a very good year for the Georgia Dental Association in advancing strategic plan goals. Over the past year membership grew, new products and services brought added value to membership, the GDA Convention saw increased dentist attendance, the association achieved several wins in the legislature and the public relations program continues to drive Georgians to GDA member dentists. In addition, the Constitution & Bylaws committee gathered feedback on the initial bylaws draft developed in May and the revised bylaws were approved by the HOD in December.

The GDA has worked diligently to bring you extra discounts and added benefits. One example is the introduction of Medicare Supplements and personal insurance lines in 2017 through Georgia Dental Insurance Services in response to member requests. More members are participating in the GDA Plus+ Supplies program launched last year and reporting savings of 20–50% on dental supplies. In addition, health insurance renewal rates were offered at a low 6.33% compared to reported increases up to 52.5% through the ACA exchange. At the time of publication, health plan participation is already up 52.5% at renewal! Members also continue to take advantage of special rates on personal and professional products, such as auto, financing and practice services, through GDA Plus+ Partners.

The strategic plan calls for increased non-dues revenue, increased cost containment measures, and setting aside of reserves to ensure financial sustainability. I am pleased to report that the association is on-track to accomplish those objectives as outlined in the strategic plan.

Even as we celebrate the great strides made in 2017, we know the key to progress is adding more members to increase our reach and influence in Georgia. To that end, the association is making an intentional and conscious effort to reach out and invite dentists of all types of practices, ethnicities, specialties, ages, and gender. Together as one voice, the profession is stronger, we have more purchasing power and collectively we can accomplish what one individual cannot do alone.

Our mission is to help GDA members succeed. As the profession continues to evolve, so must the GDA. We are proud of our accomplishments and the value-added member benefits put in place in 2017, and 2018 promises to build upon what has been accomplished.

With sincere thanks and appreciation,

Frank J. Capaldo
GDA Executive Director
Five-Year Strategic Plan (2016–2020)
Derived from the mission and vision statements, GDA’s strategic plan identifies strategic priorities which direct the focus the work of the association for the next five years. Under each objective are also key strategies for moving our priorities forward. These areas will turn GDA’s mission and vision into specific measurable targets that are important to the current and future health of the association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Government Relations/Political Action (PAC)</th>
<th>Health Policy</th>
<th>Financial Management/Organizational Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Work to increase member loyalty and investment</td>
<td>✓ Develop and implement ongoing legislative strategy and agenda</td>
<td>✓ Be the premier, leading resource for data, information, and expertise on oral health for the state of Georgia</td>
<td>✓ Ensure each organization (GDA, GDIS and IDBG) is capable of financially sustaining itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Increase full active members by 4% by 2020</td>
<td>✓ Ensure strategic campaign involvement</td>
<td>✓ Develop and implement GDA Action for Oral Health objectives and Strategies (see plan at gadental.org/dentalhealth)</td>
<td>✓ Develop and maintain cost containment programs and strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Decrease attrition of full active memberships by 3% by 2020</td>
<td>✓ Develop and maintain grassroots contacts and issues management for immediate response at district level</td>
<td>✓ Ensure inclusion of oral health in statewide public/community health planning and provision initiatives</td>
<td>✓ Ensure the amount of dues as a percentage of total revenue does will not exceed 44% by developing non-dues revenue sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provide members-only return on investment through cost saving products and services that reward member usage and loyalty</td>
<td>✓ Develop and maintain relationships with other health industry coalitions on shared issues</td>
<td>✓ Monitor changes to Medicaid policy manuals and billing</td>
<td>✓ Set aside reserves not less than 30% of annual operating expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Determine elasticity of dues and implement increases to ensure financial stability</td>
<td>✓ Expand/improve PAC fundraising (events and funding level)</td>
<td>✓ Keep GDA leadership and membership informed on health policy-related activities</td>
<td>✓ Establish internal reviews, security measures and policies/procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22 • January 2018
### Mission Statement
GDA’s mission is to help GDA member dentists succeed.

### Vision Statement
Our vision is for Georgia to become a state with optimal oral health.

#### PR/Marketing/Communications
- Keep members up to date on GDA initiatives and happenings
- Be the PR/media relations arm for the GDA & oral health community in Georgia
- Develop new ways to demonstrate the value of GDA membership
- Increase product/service usage and penetration
- Be the complete marketing arm for the GDA and subsidiaries

#### Education & Training
- Establish Education and Training related Task Force/Advisory council
- Develop Education and Training plan with a focus on business practice and compliance programs
- Develop governance training programs
- Identify new Education and Training opportunities
- Improve & grow convention CE at the GDA Convention & Expo
- Develop technology-based delivery systems for CE

#### Governance
- Align the governance structure for the future for broader, diverse demographic representation and greater member participation
- Increase unique member participation by 10% by 2020
- Ensure programs, services, staff resources and committees are aligned with the strategic plan
- Increase knowledge of members’ wants, needs, and issues
- Enhance services offered to districts
- Assist GDA Foundation in determining future direction
- Assess and recommend changes to governance and organizational documents

#### Member Products and Services
- Provide superior member service through high quality products and services that meet member needs and achieve a high level of member satisfaction
- Develop, implement and offer relationship-based products and services to appropriate member segments that are priced at profitable levels
- Develop and implement group purchasing models
Our strength comes from individual dentists in Georgia who understand the value of a united profession. Over the past year, recruitment and retention efforts focused on making dentists feel engaged and welcome. We are on track to achieve a 4% net growth in membership by 2020 per the strategic plan.

**Membership**

GDA continues to reach out to other dental groups including specialist organizations, minority associations, and DSOs/large group practices to discover common ground and areas for possible collaboration.

**Expanding Reach**

GDA began non-member outreach initiatives in 2017 that included a survey, targeted social media posts, three mailings and a lunch at the GDA office. In addition, half-price and quarter dues incentive programs in July and October resulted in 76 first-time active or reinstated members.

**New Members Increasing**

District welcome teams have been implemented as a part of the 2017–18 Recruitment and Retention Committee. Welcome Team members ensure new members, new dentists and dentists moving to GA from other states feel included in engaged in their districts and in GDA.

**GDA Market Share Increasing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GDA Presence at DCG Events**

- Transition Day
- Alliance/ASDA social
- ASDA golf tournament
- DCG vendor fair
- DCG Senior Business Class presentation
- Senior Awards
- Hooding and Graduation

In addition, GDA hosted seven Lunch and Learn events at DCG in 2017. These events featured member dentists who spoke about their path from dental student to dentist and things they learned along the way. The Lunch and Learn program has been well received by students and will be further expanded in 2018.

**Mentorship Program**

In October 2017, GDA launched a new mentorship program. The overall goal of the program is to help new dentists adjust to professional life outside of dental school and to enhance the value of GDA membership to new dentists. Recent graduates and senior dental students (“mentees”) are paired with a seasoned dentist (“mentor”). GDA hopes to increase the retention rate and level of involvement with this group of new dentists by integrating them into the dental community immediately. There are currently 182 total program participants, comprised of 91 mentor/mentee pairs.

**Adjunct Faculty Program**

In November 2017, GDA began promoting an Adjunct Faculty Program in partnership with Dental College of Georgia. The program connects GDA member dentists with dental students through volunteer work at the dental school clinic or a charitable outreach clinic. The goal of this program is to not only help bridge the gap between GDA member dentists and dental students, but also to reinforce the high quality, evidence-based instruction and ethical guidelines and concepts of professionalism provided by DCG faculty. This will serve as a strong foundation for their careers in dentistry. Additionally, volunteer hours in charitable clinics help to further Georgia’s Action for Dental Health Plan.
GDA at Work for You  2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

Government Relations/PAC

GDA achieved several wins on behalf of Georgia dentists during the 2017 legislative session. Through our contact dentist program, we maintain influence at the Capitol. Lawmakers find time to meet with us—and often seek us out. They value our input and expertise as the state’s oral health leader. The following chart highlights some of GDA’s 2017 work and results on your behalf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>LOBBYING RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental Medicaid Fee</td>
<td>Secured a 10% Medicaid fee increase that will be a guaranteed pass through for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement</td>
<td>dental Medicaid providers (effective July 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Student Loan</td>
<td>Obtained a $300,000 appropriation in FY2018 to support the Rural Dentist Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment</td>
<td>Loan Repayment Program. The additional $100,000 secured in 2017, provides $25K/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year for up to four years for four additional dentists for a total of 12 dentists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygienist Supervision</td>
<td>Obtained increased patient safety measures in the dental hygiene supervision bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(HB 154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Fluoridation</td>
<td>Successfully thwarted attempt to introduce local legislation that would have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>changed water fluoridation requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid CMOs</td>
<td>Continued to work with CMOs on solutions to reduce the administrative burdens on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medicaid providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PAC Fundraising

Raised $99,365.52 in member donations to GADPAC (a 13.7% increase in member donations over 2016).

Health Policy

In light of the national and statewide focus on the opioid abuse epidemic, GDA worked with the Board of Dentistry to possibly incorporate an opioid prescriber training and educational component to obtaining or renewing a dental license.

On January 1, a dentist assumed the role of state dental director at the Department of Public Health.

GDA successfully lobbied for a dentist to serve as state dental director at the Department of Public Health as outlined in GDA’s long-range plan, Georgia’s Action for Dental Health. Effective January 1, 2018, a dentist has assumed the role as state dental director.

GDA also collaborated with the Dental College of Georgia and the Department of Public Health to establish a statewide adjunct professor program.

At the December 2017 House of Delegates meeting, the GDA approved a dues discount for dentists working in public health clinics in Georgia with the goal of bringing more public health dentists into the GDA.
Financial Management & Organizational Sustainbility

GDA is estimated to finish 2017 significantly above budgeted net income and will set aside capital and operating reserves as indicated in the strategic plan. Reserve contributions are also budgeted for 2018. Another goal of the strategic plan is that dues as a percentage of GDA’s total revenue will not exceed 44%. As such, in 2017 the association has been increasing GDA non-dues revenues in the areas of advertising, endorsed partner royalties, continuing education, PR licensing fees, district management and the annual Convention & Expo.

- The GDA Convention & Expo was profitable for the first time in 2017, exceeding budgeted net income. Attendance by dentists, dental staff and students grew by 17%, and there were 42 first time attendees.

- The net income for Action Journal has increased 43% since 2014 due to decreases in expenses and increased revenue.

- GDA Plus® Supplies program contributed additional nondues revenue.

- GDIS finished 2017 with strong financial performance, exceeding budgeted net income by 28% (estimated). GDIS will also be funding reserves in 2017.

Convention attendance by dentists, dental staff, and students grew by 17%, and there were 42 first time attendees.
Public Relations
The public relations program increased activities to advance dentistry and promote its value to policy makers, the media, and the public.

GDA’s Because I Saw My Dentist PR campaign (www.becauseisawmydentist.com) continued to drive more Georgians to seek a dental home through digital outdoor billboards and retail cart ads that ran throughout the state during the legislative session. Over eight weeks, the campaign totaled five million impressions. Three new video testimonials were produced for the website, along with five written ones, bringing the total number of testimonials to fifteen.

In 2017, GDA received partial funding through an ADA state public affairs grant in support of the PR campaign.

Media Relations
Press releases on Children’s Dental Health Month/Give Kids a Smile, new hire announcements, new board members, the new GDA president, and tooth-friendly Halloween candy put GDA in the news. Stories ran on 493 news sites, reaching an estimated audience of 103 million. GDA also responded to issues in the news, promoting GDA position on legislative issues, drug studies and public health, resulting in news coverage on WABE-TV, GPB Radio, Gwinnett Daily News, Georgia Health News and WSB-TV.

Action Journal
GDA Action Journal’s content and look was refreshed in 2017. Upgrades include a refreshed design, more robust, integrated content, expanded district news, increased page count, growth in ad revenue and introduction of an Action journal app.

Web/Social
GDA’s online presence continued to grow in 2017. Visits to gadental.org reached 135,000 sessions. Consistent posts and increased member news contributed to a 30% increase in Facebook followers this year.

Integrated Marketing
Integrated marketing tactics increased product and service usage. GDA leveraged the Action journal, direct mail, email, fax, digital ads, social media, blog posts, website homepage sliders, on-hold recordings, event appearances, webinars and updated print collateral to promote GDIS products, GDA Plus’ Supplies, CE events, member benefits and more.
Education & Training

GDA has been developing our education and training offerings to meet the needs of member dentists with relevant, high quality and timely programs and topics. An Education and Training Advisory Council formed in May 2017 to advise GDA staff on programs that are needed and of value for the membership. Look forward to a full Education and Training calendar for 2018, including a six-course practice management series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 CE OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>CE HOURS</th>
<th>HIGHLIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention &amp; Expo</td>
<td>19.5 CE hours offered</td>
<td>29.75 CE hours offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marketed courses relevant to office personnel to increase dental team member attendance at convention. 36 dental staff attended in 2017, compared to 14 in 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Duties</td>
<td>6 courses offered 7 CE hours each</td>
<td>6 courses offered 7 CE hours each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>178 attendees for the 6 Expanded Duties Courses offered, compared to 161 in 2016. An Expanded Duties course in South Georgia will be added in Spring 2018 to ensure all regions have access to the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap (Law, Ethics and Professionalism)</td>
<td>Offered 1 course for 7 CE hours each</td>
<td>Offered 2 courses for 7 CE hours each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doubled course offerings from one course in 2016 to two in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes to Hygienist Supervision and Opioid Prescriber Law Risk Management</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>5 courses offered 2 CE hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Courses were held in conjunction with Braves game on June 16, 2017 with 39 attendees and at district presentations in Griffin, Dublin, Savannah and Brunswick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE Risk Management Course</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 course offered 4 CE hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Course exceeded capacity with 35 attendees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District/Study Club CE Certificates</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>Revisions to the 2012 Study Club CE Policy allowed GDA to issue CE certificates to GDA non-members for a fee of $25. Prior policy only permitted GDA to issue CE certificates to GDA members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Governance

GDA continues to work to align the governance structure for the future to ensure broader diverse demographic representation and greater member participation. 2017 efforts on this objective included:
- Intentional inclusion efforts to embrace all Georgia dentists
- Enhancement of the Leadership GDA Program including growing participation
- In 2017, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee completed necessary bylaw revisions to incorporate the GDA structure recommended by the Governance Task Force and approved by the House of Delegates/Board of Trustees in December 2016; the bylaws were approved by the HOD in December 2017
- Increased calls for GDA volunteer efforts
- Adding at-large members to committees based on skill and interest
- Outreach to other dental organizations to encourage collaboration

534 GDA members completed a comprehensive member survey in April 2017. The survey revealed that the top three issues facing the profession for respondents are third-party involvement in fees and dental treatment, corporate dentistry growth and influence and mid-level dental practitioners. The survey also measured GDA member loyalty, satisfaction with GDA products and services, elasticity of dues and beliefs of members about the association and its value.
The introduction of new products and services brought added value to GDA membership, while strengthening the financial health of the association.

GDIS is growing rapidly in all areas. Business insurance and medical malpractice participation continues to grow, and our health insurance program saw a 38% increase in participation at 2017 renewal. The association is on track for another great health renewal for 2018 with a 52.5% increase in the number of GDA member participants as of 12/18/2017. Our program’s premium increase is minimal at 6.33% compared to an increase of 57.5% through the exchange. Personal lines and Medicare supplements were added in 2017 for dentists along with dental team members and family. Hygienist medical malpractice was also added for indirect supervision coverage.

Three GDA endorsed partners were added in 2017
1. Total Medical Compliance—OSHA, HIPAA and infection control compliance, consultation and education for healthcare practices
2. Capital Preservation Services—Significantly lowers income taxes via tax planning, proper corporate structuring, and implementing key tax strategies
3. CyraCom—Translation services in compliance with Section 1557 regulations (in partnership with ADABEI)

More than $2.1 million in orders have been placed via the GDA Plus’ Supplies website since its launch in December 2016. The program continues to improve with the continual addition of new products and manufacturers. Average savings reported by program participants are 30%+. The April 2017 member survey revealed that 83% of members feel GDA offers products and services that help them succeed professionally. GDA will continue to refine our current program to meet member needs.  

Your benefits
It’s more than just investing.

Last year, UBS and GDA celebrated 15 years together. As a wealth management provider for the GDA, we have helped many members with leadership and advice beyond investing.

GDA member benefits include
– Complimentary financial planning (a $5k–10k value)
– 401(k) retirement savings plan designed exclusively for GDA members at a group discount rate
– Advisory and investment program offered at group discount rate
– Retirement planning guidance, including a retirement income replacement system
– Lending capabilities with competitive interest rates
– Free access to UBS global investment research

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GDA Plus+ Partners Discuss Dental Trends

2017 has already brought some big changes to the dental industry. Here’s what industry experts have to say about it, as well as what they see happening in the new year. Our partners discuss the latest dental industry trends—the effect of DSOs, marketing changes, e-commerce, social media, and more.

What was one significant change you’ve seen in the dental industry in 2017?

**Harris Gignilliat**: This year, we have observed the continued impact of DSO purchasing practices.

**Robert McDermott**: Practices are moving from server-based software to cloud-based systems. Providers are motivated to move to the cloud because there is a real return in increased productivity and savings.

**Karen Gregory**: As a result of two outbreaks of infections related to improperly treated dental unit waterlines, there seems to be increased interest in appropriate treatment of the water in dental unit waterlines. At TMC we have included information in the training provided for our clients.

**Jeff Dorsey**: Lack of payment from insurance companies and because of less benefits and the max benefits being reduced. And getting verification from Insurance Companies.

**Todd Mardis**: Over the last 10 years we have seen significant changes to the dental industry. Large group practices have become the norm. One large group practice currently has over 600 offices, and others have in excess of 100 offices each. The large group practices have promoted “discounted dental procedures” such as dentures for $399.00. The larger organizations have also put a large emphasis on promoting their services through social media, as well as, promoting financing arrangements with their patients. Obviously, there is nothing wrong with different models of practice, but it has created changes in the dental industry. These large group practices offer more flexible hours, promote and advertise their location extensively, and many times offer procedures at lower cost. The individual practice is no longer competing with his “buddy” down the street for patients, graduating dentists, or traditional dental practices. Other dental practices have gone to offering a “higher end” experience for their patients. This is also a trend that is growing in popularity.

What opportunities have you seen unfold in the dental marketplace so far this year, and how have you taken advantage of them?

**Harris Gignilliat**: We see an opportunity for the ability of dental professionals to consolidate advisors to provide a comprehensive solution where their entire picture is in focus, both for their practice and their family. Dental professionals can greatly benefit from working with an advisor that can meet all their needs and who understands their unique situation fully.

**Robert McDermott**: We continue to receive requests for a private encrypted communication network that allows practices to communicate and share data for collaboration with other association members. In response to those requests, we have developed a National Health Information Exchange.

**Karen Gregory**: The Dental Effluent Guidelines. The Dental Office Category regulation which is codified at 40 CFR Part 441 establishes pretreatment standards to reduce the introduction of mercury from dental offices to publicly owned treatment works. The regulation became effective June 2017 and will ultimately require most dental practices to utilize dental amalgam separators and implement best practices. TMC has provided multiple webinars to inform impacted dental practices on the requirements and implementation timeline of the regulation.

**Jeff Dorsey**: Technology continues to play a big role in the marketplace. At Transworld Systems, we integrate with 95% of all Practice Management Systems. This advantage allows us to assist practices in addressing back office processes. We can help practices eliminate the need to re-bill patients and run aging reports. This reduces costs and streamlines cash flow and has allowed us to engage with hundreds of dentists across the state.
Todd Mardis: Digital footprints, marketing, and tax planning are opportunities we’ve seen practices take advantage of in 2017. Today’s patients are much better educated. They are doing much more research on procedures and pricing than in the past. In most cases, “Google” can be an asset, but it can also be a liability. Professional reviews are also very important and can drive business away if they are not managed. Practices must have a laser like focus on continually managing your social footprint, and “review marketing” is no longer optional.

A dentist’s level of success begins with exceptional clinical skill; however, with the recent changes to the industry, that is just the beginning. Dentists must have a well-educated staff, efficient clinical practices, and a dedicated branding and marketing plan with specific dollars dedicated to each plan.

The old saying, “work on your business not just in your business” has never been truer. Accumulating wealth begins with proper tax planning and efficient corporate structuring. By building a team of professionals, you can protect your assets and accumulate wealth.

What is one prediction you have for the dental industry in 2018?

Harris Gignilliat: The DOL fiduciary rule’s impact will force dental practice qualified plans to move from financial generalists to retirement plan specialists.

Robert McDermott: We see better medical coding software being introduced. Practices will have the ability to accurately file claims and recoup costs.

Karen Gregory: Greater HIPAA focus and enforcement should be expected in the dental industry in 2018, especially as it pertains to information security.

Jeff Dorsey: I see more dentists moving to DSOs as these organizations are becoming more prevalent in the dental market and allowing dentists to be dentists, taking the heavy lifting of running a practice off their plates.

Todd Mardis: There is no evidence that the growth trend in dental service organizations will decrease in the predictable future, and we anticipate it to continue in 2018.

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- Former Assistant Attorney General for the State of Georgia and Counsel for professional licensing boards including the Georgia Board of Dentistry.
- Former Administrative Law Judge for the Office of State Administrative Hearings.

**DO YOUR PATIENTS SUFFER FROM ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS?**

**EAR**
- Ear pain • Ringing in ears
- Dizziness • Vertigo

**JAW**
- Clicking, popping jaw joints
- Pain in cheek • Limited opening

**NECK**
- Lack of mobility/stiffness
- Neck Pain • Tired/sore muscles
- Arm/finger numbness

**HEAD PAIN**
- Forehead • Temples
- Migraine-type • Sinus-type

**EYES**
- Pain behind eye • Blood-shot eyes • Sensitive to light

**TEETH**
- Clenching/grinding at night
- Looseness & soreness of back teeth

If your patients have any of these symptoms and are not responding to treatments, they may be suffering from a TMJ disorder. Problems within the jaw can produce a myriad of symptoms that, at first glance, might appear to be totally unrelated to the temporomandibular complex. Our dedicated team of professionals have years of training and are happy to assist you in the diagnosis and treatment of possible craniomandibular/temporomandibular disorders.

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Recent Developments at the Georgia General Assembly
By Scott Lofranco, Director of Government Affairs

Results of the November 2017 Special Elections
The November 2017 special elections resulted in the Democratic Party taking back several seats in the state House and Senate. Although the Republican Party still retains the majority in both chambers of the Georgia General Assembly, it appears that Georgia voters may be reacting to political developments at the national level, as evidenced most recently in Georgia with the special election for Dr. Tom Price’s U.S. Congressional seat, in which Karen Handel won by a close margin. In the December run-off for State Senate District 6 formerly held by Hunter Hill, who is running for Governor of Georgia, trial attorney Jen Jordan defeated Dr. Jaha Howard, a pediatric dentist practicing in the Vinings area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>CANDIDATES &amp; BACKGROUND</th>
<th>SENATE or HOUSE</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>REPLACED</th>
<th>KEY GDA COMMITTEES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 (Dalton)</td>
<td>Kasey Carpenter (restaurant owner)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Bruce Broadrick (R)</td>
<td>Yes; Broadrick served on House H&amp;HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 (Cumming)</td>
<td>Marc Morris (Navy vet &amp; IT Firm Owner)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Geoff Duncan (R)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 (Smyrna)</td>
<td>Teri Anulewicz (fmr Councilwoman &amp; Govt Relations)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Stacey Evans (D)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 (Atlanta)</td>
<td>Kim Schofield (healthcare advocate)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Keisha Waites (D)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 (Atlanta)</td>
<td>Bee Nguyen (Non-profit advocate)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Stacey Abrams (D)</td>
<td>Yes; Abrams served on Rules and was leader of the House Minority Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117 (Athens)</td>
<td>Deborah Gonzalez (Attorney)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Regina Quick (R)</td>
<td>Yes; Quick served on House Health Appropriations Subcommittee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119 (Watkinsville)</td>
<td>Jonathan Wallace (Software Developer)</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Chuck Williams (R)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (Smyrna)</td>
<td>Jen Jordan (trial attorney) vs. Linda Pritchett (Paralegal)</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Hunter Hill (R)</td>
<td>Yes; Hill served on Senate Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 (Atlanta)</td>
<td>Nikema Williams (VP Public Policy for Planned Parenthood) vs. Linda Pritchett (Paralegal)</td>
<td>Senate</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Vincent Fort (D)</td>
<td>Yes; Fort served on Senate Appropriations and was Senate Minority Whip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2018 Race for Governor
With Governor Deal in the last year of his final term, the race for his open seat has also heated up as candidates from both parties look to raise money before they head into the 2018 Legislative Session. At this time, the current list of candidates is to the right.

CANDIDATE PARTY PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND
Stacey Abrams D Fmr House Minority Leader / Attorney
Casey Cagle R Lt. Governor / Business Owner
Doug Craig L Metal Worker / Military Veteran
Stacey Evans D Fmr House Member / Attorney
Hunter Hill R Fmr Chair of Sen Veterans Affairs Comm / Business Owner; Military Veteran
Brian Kemp R Sec of State / Business Owner
Clay Tippins R IT Executive / Military Veteran
Michael Williams R State Sen / Business Owner

2018 Race for Lt. Governor
As the second in command of the state and the #1 position in the State Senate, the race to fill Casey Cagle’s spot as Lt. Governor is following suit with the gubernatorial race. Several Senate and House members have declared early and are already deep into their fundraising campaigns. The current candidates are to the right.

CANDIDATE PARTY PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND
Sarah Riggs Amico D Auto Executive
Geoff Duncan R Fmr House Member / Businessman
Rick Jeffares R Chair of Sen Regulated Industries / Utility Contractor
David Shafer R Sen President Pro-Tem / Businessman

If you have any questions or concerns about the election results, please feel free to contact the GDA’s General Counsel and Director of Government Affairs, Scott Lofranco, at scott@gadental.org.

Attend a LAW Day

All LAW Day events are from 8 am–noon

January 10, 2018
Northern and Eastern
January 24, 2018
Central
February 7, 2018
Northwestern
February 22, 2018
Southeastern, and Georgia Dental Society
March 7, 2018
Southwestern, Western, and Northern (Hall County Branch)
March 14, 2018
Students, other specialty groups and all others who wish to attend

Register at gadental.org/lawday

Back the PAC

GADPAC Giving Levels
The Georgia Dental Association Political Action Committee is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. GDA member dentists are invited to voluntarily contribute funds to GADPAC. These funds are sent to candidates running for local and state offices, regardless of party affiliation. GDA members can make donations to GADPAC via their dues statements, or by contacting Scott Lofranco at scott@gadental.org. Contribute to GADPAC and help take a stand on issues that impact organized dentistry in the state of Georgia.

*All GADPAC contributions are voluntary and are not limited to the above amounts. No one will be favored or disadvantaged based upon the amount of, or failure to make a contribution. Contributions are NOT deductible for federal income tax purposes. State law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of $100 in a calendar year.

You can join GADPAC at the level that suits your needs*:

Gold Dome Society Member
$1,000

Gallery Society Member
$500

Franklin Club Member
$210

GADPAC Member
$110

Do you have a friend or patient who is a state legislator? If so, please consider participating in the GDA’s Contact Dentist Program. Our Contact Dentists serve a vital role in the GDA’s government affairs program and serve as the primary point of contact for legislators who have questions about policies or laws affecting the practice of dentistry and patient safety. For more information about how to join in the program, please email Scott Lofranco at scott@gadental.org.
Dr. Lee Hawkins began his career as a dentist in Gainesville, Georgia. After decades of practice, he began to also focus on the Georgia state legislature.

“I chose to be with my family first, my patients second, and politics third,” says Hawkins when asked about his transition into the political arena. Although Hawkins has always been considering public service for public service, growing up in a political family, he has clearly modeled his career on his three priorities.

Hawkins credits his family dentists, Drs. Ben Hampton and Robert Jennings, as his greatest influence towards dentistry. “I had always thought of medicine until I found out that our neighbor, who was our family physician—and my idol—had less time with his family compared to our dentist,” Hawkins recalls.

Organized Dentistry

After graduating from Emory University Dental School in 1978, Hawkins rented office space in Gainesville from Dr. Ed Burnett. Burnett was a classmate of Dr. Don Johnson, who was greatly involved with organized dentistry and later served as president of both the GDA and the International College of Dentists. An active member himself, Burnett introduced Hawkins to the Georgia Dental Association in a Hall County district meeting. “I have been a member ever since,” says Hawkins.

In fact, Hawkins has served in a number of leadership roles that demonstrated his interest in legislative affairs. In the late 80s and early 90s, Hawkins served on an emerging ADA PAC Committee, a board still small enough its entire membership could meet for drinks in a hotel room. Hawkins also served as GDA’s Legislative Chairman from 1990–1992, and later served as GDA’s Secretary/Treasurer for five years, and finally as President in 2003–04. Hawkins was also Chairman of the ADA Delegation until his State Senate campaign in 2006.

“Patients & Politics

I was given the opportunity by my colleagues to serve in various leadership positions. I have always been very proud of their support,” Hawkins says.

Politics

To some extent, Hawkins’ political aspirations are perhaps inherited. His father was Chairman of the Veterans Board under four governors, where he served 24 years in addition to other political positions, and Hawkins frequently met senators, congressmen, and governors. In addition, Hawkins received important advice from his father: “My father always told me that if I wanted to make an impact on the decisions involving our profession or medical health care, it could be best accomplished as a legislator.”
However, Hawkins also noted that his father’s work is a significant reason he waited to get involved in politics. He shares, “The time I lost from my father not being at home was not something I wanted to lose with my children.” Dr. Charlie Norwood, an Augusta dentist who served as Representative of Georgia’s 10th District in the U.S. House of Representatives, had asked Hawkins to run for office for some time, calling every few years. “I told him I wouldn't run until my youngest child went to college,” Hawkins says, further emphasizing his commitment to his family.

In 2006, Hawkins was elected to the Georgia State Senate for two terms. He was out for two years after the congressional race in 2010, and is now finishing his third term in the Georgia State House of Representatives. In both chambers, Hawkins has been active: in the senate, he chaired state and local government operations (2009–2010), and in the House he served as Vice Chairman of Health and Human Services, Vice Chairman of Banks and Banking, and also serves on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health.

Even now that his children have grown, Hawkins acknowledges the demanding nature of life as a legislator. He is currently selling his practice to Ben, his son, and still plans to see patients on a limited basis, but now wants to dedicate more time to his public service. “It’s very hard to serve at high levels in the legislative branch and still have a full practice. I feel like with this transition, I can be much more effective.”

Dentistry Influence
Hawkins values his experience as a dentist and the contributions it has made to his political perspective. “Practicing dentistry has given me an understanding of how legislation affects healthcare treatment,” he explains. “Often, it becomes an obstacle, rather than providing the intended result. Adding more legislation doesn’t always equate to more or better healthcare delivery or outcomes.”

Additionally, Hawkins feels strongly about encouraging dentists and physicians to seek political office. “We need more voices who have actually provided healthcare through patient care,” he says. “Working in the insurance and medical device industries are parts of healthcare, but nothing equals the amount of knowledge gained by patient contact.”

Even if dentists aren't interested in running, they can help educate legislators on the importance of oral health. Hawkins advises, “Get to know your legislators personally. Talk to them out of session. Become a known entity to them and create a friendship—that friendship, knowledge and trust is irreplaceable, especially when issues come very quickly and are so vitally important to providing healthcare.”

Healthcare Policy
In what may seem to non-practitioners as a contradiction, Hawkins considers some of his greatest accomplishments as the legislation that did not pass. “Much of my work has been in preventing bad legislation that would inhibit free access of patients to the providers of their choice,” he says. He also is proud of the legislation that moved...
Georgia’s Board of Dentistry under the Department of Community Health, which he feels has enabled them to better fulfill their charge of protecting the public.

According to Hawkins, one of the biggest challenges facing healthcare for our state and nation is cost. “Healthcare financing is an immediate problem Americans must face,” Hawkins says. “We need to look back about ten years ago, when healthcare was more affordable and accessible, and re-establish those delivery and financing methods. The present system of more government and third-party involvement is obviously not the solution.”

Personal Life
Hawkins lives in Gainesville, GA with his wife Sharon. Together, they have seven children, Ben, Jim, Charlie, Elizabeth, Nora, Michelle and Meredith. They are also the proud grandparents of eight grandchildren.

Although Hawkins’ keeps himself incredibly busy with out-of-session meetings, researching important issues, and learning about upcoming legislation—as well as practicing dentistry, he enjoys trout fishing and golf. However, spending time with his wife, children and grandchildren remain his favorite pastime.

Looking Ahead
For now, Hawkins plans to continue his political career, largely because he considers healthcare a major unsolved issue for all Americans. “Persistence has been the key to my longevity in the political world,” he says. And in 2018, Hawkins plans to continue to move his legislation addressing high speed internet, which he feels is a promising future for access in rural communities. He also continues to advocate for patients by looking at upcoming legislation that enables greater access to the healthcare market.

In addition, Hawkins has worked closely with GDA Executive Director Frank J. Capaldo and Scott Lofranco, GDA’s Director of Government Affairs and has been instrumental in helping the GDA accomplish its legislative initiatives.

He values his relationship with the GDA, and spoke directly to members: “I truly appreciate the continued support of the dentists of Georgia. Your support has greatly benefited my position in the legislature, and I am most proud of being a part of a profession and the wonderful colleagues that I share it with.”

“I do not give up or compromise on issues that involve serving my family, my patients, or my constituents,” Hawkins says. For over a decade, Georgia dentists have been fortunate to have a colleague advocating for their patients and profession in the state legislature. In years to come, they can expect Hawkins to aspire to these words, shared as some he strives to live by: “Always do the right thing. Building on that principle gives a solid foundation for whatever we do in life.”

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6 Things You Need to Know When Your Malpractice Coverage Changes

Many GDA members are learning that their dental malpractice coverage with CNA is changing to Aspen American. Here are a few things you should know.

1. You have options. GDA members can take advantage of a huge member benefit—our experienced team of agents at GDA Plus’ Insurance/GDIS. Even if you’re not looking for a quote, we can review your new coverage with you and suggest options that are right for you.

2. You don’t have to (and shouldn’t) be complacent. When something like your mortgage changes to another servicer, it’s not really a big deal. Your malpractice coverage, however, is a vital part of how you protect your reputation, and your choice of carriers matters.

3. You won’t jeopardize your coverage by switching carriers. Changing carriers doesn’t mean higher exposure, and a new carrier can pick up your prior acts.

4. We believe your malpractice coverage should be a standalone policy. You don’t want to risk losing your professional liability coverage or increasing your premiums because of a claim made on your business policy.

5. You should question your new carrier’s experience. It’s important to know that the company you trust with your professional reputation has experience with dental malpractice claims and has a high trial win rate.

6. Financial strength is important. Sometimes, malpractice claims can take years in court and legal fees can be expensive. You want to choose a carrier that offers pure consent so you have say in whether a claim is fought to the end or settled.

Regardless of your carrier, every market disruption carries real impact. Don’t let this change disrupt the protection of your livelihood and reputation.

GDA partners with MedPro Group, an industry leader that has been offering dental coverage for over 100 years, and counts over 45,000 dental insureds currently. Use the chart below to see how we stack up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CNA</th>
<th>Aspen</th>
<th>MedPro Group</th>
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<tr>
<td>Years Offering</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100+</td>
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<td>Continuous Admitted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dental Coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td># of Dental Insureds</td>
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<td>?</td>
<td>45,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pure Consent</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent to Settle</td>
<td>Policyholder has pure consent</td>
<td>Carrier determines if policyholder refusal to settle is unreasonable</td>
<td>Policyholder has pure consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>55</td>
<td>No minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tail Coverage</td>
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Because we work exclusively with the dental community, we understand what is important to you and how to protect every part of your life—from personal to professional. As GDIS expands our offerings to include new products, we’re excited to assist with all of your needs. Contact us for a free quote on policies to protect what matters to you.

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Give Kids a Smile Day Approaches

By Dr. Aaron Schwartz

Give Kids a Smile Day (GKAS) is a nationwide event intended to help low-income children access a team of dentists, hygienists, assistants, and administrators. Chris Shim and I assumed leadership of the Northwest District GKAS event in 2011. The motivation behind this endeavor rested in our core belief that donating some time each year to help treat the less fortunate children and most disenfranchised members of our community is an absolute privilege that shouldn’t be taken for granted. GKAS seemed like a clear, community-minded event, allowing us to donate our time as dentists.

Give Kids a Smile serves as a compelling tool to help diagnose dental diseases and oral-pathologies, and ultimately make appropriate referrals to volunteering dentists for follow-up care. On average, approximately 50 children and teenagers attend the GKAS event hosted by the Northwestern District Dental Society in partnership with the Fortis College of Dental Hygiene in Smyrna. This arrangement allows for a streamlined, well-oiled team of professionals within a state-of-the-art facility. Dentists who volunteer are introduced to a budding crew of third-year dental hygiene students. A dental prophylaxis is performed by these dental hygiene students, then a dentist provides a thorough clinical exam. Radiographs are then ordered by the dentist and taken by students. Sealants may be allowed to be placed on healthy, posterior teeth. Diagnosing dental disease and pathology is common among the patient base, and proper referrals are made out for follow-up care.

Every day in our offices we are reminded of the good that we do. We listen, we heal, and we care for those who seek our skill set. Volunteering for GKAS allows dentists to be reminded that our expertise grants us the ability do the same outside our office walls. The degree of hope we give to these families is immeasurable. The most rewarding part of this annual experience is the fellowship among the volunteering dentists, alongside motivated hygiene students. Collectively, we witness the good that Give Kids a Smile Day can achieve.

Low Medicaid reimbursement rates for children’s dental care in Georgia are not attracting enough quality providers to treat these children and teenagers. In turn, they are left with unmet dental needs. In
my experience as a pediatric dentist, the largest segment with unmet treatment needs are teenagers with restorative challenges on adult teeth.

While GKAS events help identify some of these unmet needs, there is always room to grow and become better. In the Northwestern District, we hope to increase attendance this year—both from volunteer dentists and families seeking care for their children. We aim to streamline the referral system to maximize follow-up treatment care within select dental offices, and are also working on collaborating with the Ben Massell Dental Clinic this year, which will help provide follow-up treatment or diagnostics.

We welcome all dentists interested in volunteering for local Give Kids a Smile and Children’s Dental Health Month events! Dr. Aaron Schwartz coordinates the Northwestern District Give Kids a Smile Event. To volunteer at this event, or help provide follow up treatment, contact him at aschwartzdds@gmail.com.

Get Involved
To volunteer at a Children’s Dental Health Month event in February, or to help provide follow-up treatment, contact GDA. Every district hosts events in February that GDA member dentists are invited to participate in.

Contact Megan Capaldo at 404.636.7553 or megan@gadental.org. For a full list of events, visit gadental.org/cdhm.
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JANUARY 19, 2018

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Steven Wingfield, DMD, President, Tralongo, LLC

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Dr. Steven Wingfield is a sought after speaker, consultant and educator. He provides executive oversight of Tralongo Management strategic growth and operations, using metrics to analyze business systems and clinical data to ensure efficiency and maximize profit and quality of care.

Dr. Wingfield's vast clinical experience and depth of knowledge makes him a valuable resource as a mentor and coach for our recently graduated associate dentists. He also assists our regional managers in developing training and business protocols to improve team relations and establish delivery of care models for a comprehensive dentistry program.

Prior to joining Tralongo Management, Dr. Wingfield served as a U.S. Navy Dentist in Iraq and has experienced firsthand the results when a team comes together. He is fully committed to creating and maintaining a culture of camaraderie as part of the Tralongo Management philosophy.

Dr. Wingfield practices in the Buckhead and Midtown Smile™ Center locations, where he provides full service dental care including placement of dental implants, complete restorative and cosmetic dental makeovers and neuromuscular management of TMJ disorders.

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January–June 2018

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UPCOMING EVENTS—CE & CERTIFICATION COURSES

Friday, February 9, 2018

CPR Certification
Terry Dickerson, AHA Certified

Friday, March 16, 2018

Marketing: Making Your Presence Known
Pam Willoughby, President, Relish Marketing

Friday, April 20, 2018

HIPAA, OSHA and Infection Control Compliance
Karen Gregory, RN, Director of Education and Compliance, Total Medical Compliance

February 23–24, 2018

Expanded Duties
Dr. Rebecca Weinman, Instructor

April 13–14, 2018

Expanded Duties
Dr. Joe Hair, Instructor
This course will cover the following:

- **Tax basic concepts**
  - Income Taxes
  - Other Taxes
- **Tax Update for 2017 and beyond**
  (if Congress actually passes a law, not known at time of this printing!)
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Georgia Mission of Mercy events have been some of the most impactful experiences in my dental career. Although I was unable to participate in the first event in 2011, I was proud to serve for the Norcross and Perry weekends.

The level of planning and organization required for this monumental task has always been extremely impressive to me. Being more of a “worker bee” than a leader, my involvement has been totally physical and clinical labor. In Norcross, I was able to spend the entire first day with my dear friend Dr. Eddie Pafford as he supervised the clinic setup. We unloaded trucks, set up clinical stations, and even did a little plumbing. The logistical challenges were immense, and it took all night to get things up and running. On the first clinical day, my assistant joined me and we performed more restorative procedures than I would normally do in a week.

In Perry, the setup day was quite different. Dr. Jimmy Cassidy and his team along with the facility staff were like a well-oiled machine. We completed the setup in record time and without complication. It seemed that no request was too difficult for the staff at the Perry venue. I served as the “Prosthetic Lead” for the clinic, and was responsible for coordinating the fabrication of removable appliances for patients that were missing anterior teeth or patients that were having anterior teeth extracted. I got to place all of the final prosthetics in the clinic, and therefore seemed to get all of the credit. After receiving accolades for GMOM prosthetic success, I posted the following on social media in an attempt to set the record straight:

Please consider getting involved at the 2018 GMOM in Augusta, GA. Here’s how you can help:

SAVE THE DATE

GIVE
Make a contribution at gadental.org/foundation.

ADVOCATE
We need your stories of patients and past events in advance of GMOM 2018. Share them with us at communications@gadental.org.
“Just like clinical practice, the last person seeing the patient (undeservingly) gets most of the credit. GMOM was such a humbling experience. James Cassidy, Terry Fohey, and I have participated in many dental events over the last 30 years and have developed an expression for those that put their nose down and go to work... “piling on.” It would take an entire book to name all of the folks that “piled on” for these needy people: Jimmy and Wendy Cassidy provided incredible leadership and organization for this amazing event. Terry Fohey and his laboratory staff did the impossible and (as usual) made us all look good. Donnie Brown ran interference and set the stage for us. Our professor, mentor, and friend Arun Nayyar worked every minute of both days. Gene Waites and many other volunteers manned the clinic. Mike Pruett and our wonderful residents did continuous, difficult surgery for two solid days. I didn't even make it down to the other end of the building where thousands of patients were being treated.”

Terry and I were continually faced with situations that were inappropriate and/or impossible for this venue. On Father's Day weekend, we absolutely felt the presence of our fathers, Drs. James Cassidy Sr, Jim Fohey, and Watt McDonald looking over our shoulders and saying, “Go for it.”

My favorite patient story was documented in one of the news videos. We treated a beautiful young lady that was missing both of her upper central incisors. For the laboratory technicians and myself, this was a straightforward case and the result was stunning. A TV crew interviewed her during the event, and during questioning, she revealed that she had lost the teeth through domestic violence. Suddenly, our simple little case just took on a deeper purpose. The patient was very appreciative and we were all in tears. (See “Patient Leaves GMOM with Dental Care and a Smile” story in the sidebar.)

GMOM has enriched my life and my career. The opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of compassionate, committed professionals is a side benefit to the delivery of this desperately needed patient care.

Patient Leaves GMOM with Dental Care and a Smile

Mariah Dorsey is pleased with her smile, but she didn’t like showing it off after her ex-boyfriend knocked out her two front teeth during an argument.

In June of 2015, GMOM volunteers helped Mariah and gave her a partial to replace her missing teeth.

“We took some molds of her upper and lower teeth and some bite records and selected the shade of her teeth,” said dentist Dr. Tom McDonald, “On those models, we fabricated a removable appliance.”

Dr. McDonald said what he enjoys most is giving patients their confidence back. “Universally, they’re amazed at how good they look and so happy and it makes us cry, too, because it’s such a rewarding experience,” he said.

Dorsey was inspired by the care she received at GMOM. “I want to be a plastic surgeon, so just like they helped me smile, I hope I can make other people smile,” she said.

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When to Train and Retrain?

By Karen Murphy, Total Medical Compliance

One of the first questions an OSHA investigator will ask after an incident occurs is:

**“Did the employee receive adequate training to do their job safely?”**

How often does your office do safety training and what kinds of things do you train? Workplace safety under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 requires employers to provide a safe and healthful workplace. Workers must be trained on the skills and knowledge required to safely do their jobs. New hire training is especially important because research shows that newly hired workers have a higher risk for accidents and illness. Safety training is an investment for both employers and employees.

The following types of required training affect medical and dental facilities:

- **Bloodborne Pathogens**  
  Bloodborne Pathogen Training must be provided at hire and annually for all employees that have a risk of exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material. Additional training must be provided when there are any changes with procedures or equipment that could increase their risk of exposure.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**  
  Employers must train employees required to use PPE upon hire. Training must include: when to use protective equipment, what to wear when performing tasks that pose a risk of exposure, how to properly put on and remove PPE, and how to maintain and dispose of contaminated PPE. Retrain employees when there are changes in the types of PPE used, or changes in the workplace that renders previous training obsolete.

- **Emergency and Fire**  
  Employers must communicate a plan for emergencies. Employers with 10 or fewer employees can do this orally. Employers with more than 10 employees must provide a written action plan that includes hazard sources, safety equipment, procedures and assignments in the event of possible emergencies. Emergency and fire training is a great way to inform new hires and provide review for existing hires on self-protection from the unexpected emergency.

- **Hazard Communication**  
  Employer must provide information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of initial assignment and whenever a new chemical hazard has been introduced into their work area. Employers are also required to provide training on the new Globally Harmonized System which includes how to read the new pictograms, labels and the new SDS format.

  Choose topics that are interesting, relevant, and fit the needs of your office. Some ideas for optional and easy site-specific safety trainings are general first aid, how and when to use an eyewash, how and when to use a spill kit, and workplace violence preparedness.

  Be sure to keep a record of all safety and health trainings. Include training date, attendance form, trainer name and credentials and contents or summary of the training session. Training records must be maintained and be available for examination for at least three years of the last training date.

  Training employees on the site-specific and safe way to do their jobs will result in fewer injuries and illnesses, better morale and improved productivity.

  A complete list of training requirements for General Industry can be found at www.osha.gov/Publications/osha2254.pdf.

Karen Murphy is a graduate of Georgia Tech OSHA Training Institute as an Outreach Trainer. Karen received her Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene from the Medical College of Georgia and has a Master degree in Organizational Management.

Learn more about GDA Plus+ Partner Total Medical Compliance at GDAplus.com/tmc.

Total Medical Compliance Offers Free Hotline to Georgia Dental Association Members in February 2018.

The GDA is teaming up with Total Medical Compliance (TMC) to offer a free hotline to members. During the month of February, member dentists and their staff may call TMC with general questions about OSHA compliance at no charge. If you are not already a TMC client, take advantage of this complimentary month of OSHA support and acquaint yourself with all of the great services that TMC offers. In February, just call TMC’s Client Service Center at 1-888-862-6742.*

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Meet Dr. Will Shin

This column highlights GDA members talking about their path to dentistry and the value they find in GDA membership. This month, we hear from Dr. Will Shin in the Northern District.
What did you want to be when you were growing up?
I wanted to be a garbage truck driver more than anything. My parents still tell stories of me leaping out of bed whenever I heard the trucks coming early in the morning so that I could watch them work. I’d even follow the trucks and my parents would have to come find me to bring me back inside!

What was your first job?
As a high school senior, I worked as a courier delivering medical records to various hospitals and clinics in Los Angeles and Orange County. Back then, I learned to navigate the land using a beat up Thomas Guide (a spiral-bound paperback atlas) under a tight schedule. I learned some good shortcuts and valuable lessons about traffic patterns in a busy metropolitan area that I am still thankful for. I attribute my sense of direction and comfort for reading maps from my first job.

Why did you decide to become a dentist?
I love working with my hands and have high standards for precision. I enjoy life sciences and social settings where I can form close relationships with people. Dentistry provides a path where my personality and interests can thrive. As a dental student, I kept an open mind and explored all my options. It was during my hospital rotation that I found Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. When I explored further, I was hooked. I was fascinated with the scope of practice, complexities and the way it changes lives.

How did you become a GDA member?
As a student and resident in multiple states, I found that an organized dentistry association is an effective way to get connected, learn about state-specific issues and forge new relationships with colleagues. My wife and I moved to Atlanta from New York City this past summer and I knew I wanted to get involved and start attending GDA meetings. I was excited to meet new people in my new home state of Georgia!

What was your first GDA event?
Just after enrolling in the GDA, I was greeted with a personal phone call from the GDA headquarters to welcome me to Georgia. I attended the Northern District Dental Society Executive Council Meeting at the GDA headquarters and I was met with warm greetings, smiles and enthusiasm! The members I met are clearly passionate about helping their community, advancing the dental profession of Georgia and getting involved in charity. I was most impressed!

What advice would you give a dental student about GDA?
Get involved and connected with your local district! There are a lot of issues that threaten our profession and the GDA works hard to protect our privileges. This continual work behind the scenes is what allows us to thrive in our industry and most of all, take care of our patients. Individual participation from members is crucial because it helps create a collective voice for providers to help guide the GDA.

As a member of your state and local district, you learn firsthand about relevant topics, issues and challenges that face our profession. You are also up to date about what the GDA is doing to improve and advance the practice of dentistry in Georgia. Being involved in organized dentistry is a great way to get connected to others who share your passion and career goals. It is also one of the ways you can participate to further help the industry with input and suggestions. It is each one of our own responsibilities to help the profession and the industry to thrive.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? Or how do you spend a typical weekend?
Family has always been the number one priority in life. My wife and I are expecting our first child in January 2018 and we are excited to become parents! When I’m not working, I’m in the pool. I love to swim and have been an avid swimmer since I was 12 years old. Swimming is therapy and it helps keep me balanced. Outside of the pool, I spend quite a bit of time in the kitchen with my wife trying out new recipes and enjoying good food. Our weekends involve spending a lot of time cooking, exploring our new neighborhood, and watching a lot of football. I’m also a huge fanboy of Sci-Fi and comics.

Have you made any friends or long relationships because of GDA?
So far, I met other Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and was pleased to see other dental specialists represented. I am hoping to forge great long-lasting relationships with all the good people in the GDA.

What is the single most important thing, in your opinion, the GDA can do to help members?
This was a tough question since I’m starting to realize how many benefits there are for members of the GDA. For providers, our practice of dentistry is becoming an increasingly complicated field with new laws, policies and regulations. The GDA can help its members by simplifying these new laws, policies and regulations because it is quite difficult to keep up to date and informed.

What advice would you give to people aspiring to go to dental school to become a dentist?
Never give up! You hear it all the time, but it is true! I didn’t get accepted my first time applying to dental school. After the first rejection I was crushed. I thought a lot about the time, effort and resources I spent on applying and it was painful. For the following cycle, I instead focused on the things I was in complete control of including: applying early, shadowing more doctors, perfecting my application and improving my interview skills. Those were tough years and it gave me (a lot of) time to reevaluate whether dentistry was something I really wanted to do. Being told “no” pushed me to work even harder and in the end it made me appreciate where I am now even more because of all the hard work and dedication I put in.

What is your all-time dream vacation?
To see the Great Barrier Reef in Australia!

Without saying “I am a dentist,” if someone asked, “What do you do?” what would you say?
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