



Signature

CENTRAL COAST DENTAL SOCIETY

Volume 34, Number 1

Feb/Mar 2024



CCDS President Dr. Craig Fitch

I am honored to introduce myself as the newly elected President of the Central Coast Dental Society (CCDS) for the year 2024. My name is Craig Fitch DDS, and I am excited to lead our esteemed organization following the remarkable tenure of past president, Keyla Springe DDS. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Keyla for her outstanding contributions and dedication to our dental community.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Sorina Ratchford for her commendable two-year term as president prior to Keyla. Sorina's leadership during the Covid crisis laid a strong foundation for the society. Sorina continues to contribute to the organization as she and her husband, Forest, as well as Drs. Voss and Witcher have worked for the last year bringing DA and RDA training programs to the county. Perhaps even an RDH program may evolve from their efforts.

As we embark on this new chapter, I am enthusiastic about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. The past

few years, marked by the global pandemic, have tested our resilience and adaptability. I extend my sincere appreciation to all dental professionals who have navigated these challenges with unwavering commitment to patient care.

One crucial opportunity to serve the overall health of the children in our community is through school screenings. The kids in our region are truly awesome, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure their oral health contributes to their overall well-being. As part of our commitment to community outreach, I encourage all CCDS members, especially those who treat children, to consider accepting one or two cases of those kids who need dental care the most. By actively participating in school screenings and offering our expertise to those in need, we can make a significant impact on the oral health of the younger generation. For an opportunity to help with the school screening and treatment process please contact Dr Brack Linscott at 805-466-0627.

In pursuing these goals, I also urge our members to refer to the valuable resources provided by the California Dental Association (CDA) and the American Dental Association (ADA). These reputable organizations offer guidelines and standards of care that serve as essential references for our profession. Staying informed and adhering to these standards ensures that we continue to provide high-quality, ethical, and patient-centered dental services.

I am optimistic about the future of dentistry on the Central Coast and am confident that, together, we can overcome challenges and foster a collaborative, innovative, and supportive dental community. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me as your president. I look forward to working alongside each of you to advance our shared mission of promoting oral health, excellence in dental practice, and ensuring a brighter, healthier future for the children in our community.

Warm Regards,
Craig Fitch, DDS
CCDS President

CENTRAL COAST DENTAL SOCIETY

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All expressions of opinion and supposed fact are those of the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views and policies of the Central Coast Dental Society.

This publication solicits announcements, essays, and articles of interest to the general membership of the CCDS. All contributions are subject to space and/or content editing at the editor's discretion.

CLASSIFIEDS:

Free to members of CCDS (limit 25 words). \$50.00 per issue for non-members (\$.50 per word after first 25 words)

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THANK YOU TO DR. PAUL ERBEN FOR HIS ENDODONTIC PRESENTATION

“Root Resorption, Diagnosis and Treatment” at the CCDS General Membership Meeting



EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to encourage our members to submit articles, events, birth announcements or local news to me to include in our newsletter. Please forward them to my email address:

Jonfu.dds@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

Jon Fu, DDS
CCDS Editor



CDA'S FOUNDATION NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The CDA Foundation began its mission to increase access to oral health for Californians over 20 years ago and is still a strong force of philanthropic spirit of California's dentists. Ron Mead, DDS, one of CCDS's long time leaders, began serving on the CDAF board in 2017 and later served as its Chair. Dr. Mead was a moving force to promote and grow Foundation programs like CDA Cares, increasing access to fluoridated water statewide, and provide scholarships for dental students.

When the CDA Foundation began not that many years ago, Ron Mead, DDS, one of CCDS's long time leaders, served as its President and was a moving force to initiate CDA Cares to provide free dental services to thousands with unmet needs, and to secure funds to fend off fluoridation opponents and provide scholarships for dental students.

Today, those programs have grown: CDAF has received \$9.1M in grant funds provided over \$25M in treatment for more than 30,000 persons with dental needs. In addition, we have added a wellness program that assists dentists with substance abuse issues and raised funds to support dental needs in Ukraine. This Spring we will launch a new CDA Cares model that will provide free care for patients and place those patients into a permanent dental home.

To support these programs, we need your help and support. For the first time, CDAF will host a Silent Auction at CDA Presents in Anaheim from May 16-18 where more than 15,000 attendees are expected, and we are seeking your support for the event. There are a myriad of ways you can do that. Some ideas for donations include season tickets, sports memorabilia, vacation home getaways, themed baskets, wine, wine tours and tastings, handmade items such as quilts and baby blankets, green fees, art, dental items, or dining experiences. As an example, Dr. Mead is donating a large print of one of his amazing photographs. And finally, if you are unable to donate an item, your cash contribution is an appreciated alternative.

Whether you attend CDA Presents or not, you will still be able to bid on items as they will be available for viewing in an online version of the event.

Linda Seifert, a SLO resident, and former CDA staff and General Counsel, is a Public Member of the CDA Foundation Board and is happy to talk to you about CDAF, your interest in contributing, and will transport your donation to the event in Anaheim. Linda can be reached at 707.386.9150 or elljay4254@gmail.com. The CDA Foundation staff support is Marissa Allen at Marissa.allen@cda.org. Your contribution is tax deductible and donation forms will be provided.

CDA MAJOR ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. SB 1369: Predatory Dental Insurance Fees (CDA-Sponsored)

CDA is sponsoring legislation to curtail the usage of virtual credit cards (VCCs) as a method of payment used by dental insurance companies. Dental plans are more frequently using third party companies to issue payments to dental offices through VCCs, which take a processing fee of 2-5%, plus the merchant transaction fee through their credit card terminal. These predatory fees can take up to 10% off the top of the payment owed by the plan.

VCC payments in many cases become the default payment method. While dental practices can opt out of VCC services, the opt-out process is often difficult and not always permanent. VCC companies are known to reinstitute the payment method with its excessive fees after the provider opts out, even as soon as the very next payment. Furthermore, requesting an alternative payment method can delay receipt of that payment, waste administrative staff time and create challenges for office accounting.

Ultimately, this trend takes health care dollars away from patient care. SB 1369 by Sen. Monique Limon (D-Santa Barbara) will address this issue by:

- Requiring that the default payment method must be one that does not include a fee. If a provider would like to use VCCs as their primary payment method, they may do so, but only by signature – and they may opt out of VCCs again at any time.
- Requiring plans to provide notice of any fees associated with a particular payment method and advise dentists of alternative methods of payment along with clear instructions as to how to select an alternative method of payment.
- Requiring dental plans to provide notification of any profit-sharing or fee arrangement with the VCC company.

As dental patients continue to seek care deferred during the COVID-19 pandemic, timely access to care is imperative as ever. The fees associated with virtual credit cards can cause a significant increase in dental office overhead costs, leading to reduced office hours, limited patient scheduling and delayed care. It is essential to reduce predatory practices of dental plans and VCC companies to maximize the health care dollars going to patient care.

2. Dental Staffing Shortages/Dental Board Sunset Review

Approximately every four years the state Dental Board, like other regulatory boards, undergoes a standard evaluation by the state legislature, called sunset review, of roles and responsibilities of the board and the laws it enforces. CDA strongly supports continuation of the existing Dental Board and will be advocating for the following issues to be included in this year's sunset review legislation, SB 1453 (Ashby):

Dental Assistant Licensure Pathways

Dentistry is facing a critical shortage of dental staff, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among dental assistants. CDA is proposing new ways to become a registered dental assistant (RDA) to help expand this workforce:

- Streamline and shorten the existing 15 months of on-the-job training to 800 supervised hours, inclusive of educational and clinical experience. 800 hours is the current standard in RDA educational programs, so this will create parity between the two options.
- Allow individuals who move to California and hold a certified dental assistant certificate to apply for RDA licensure if they meet certain criteria.

Pediatric Sedation Permits

A law that took effect in 2022 unintentionally prevents qualified pediatric dentists from sedating their patients who are 13 and older. CDA is seeking a technical fix to allow pediatric dentists who hold a pediatric minimal sedation permit to continue offering minimal sedation for treatment that requires it.

3. State Budget: Specialty Dental Clinic Grant Program

CDA is opposed to a funding delay proposed in the 2024-25 state budget for the Specialty Dental Clinic Grant Program. In 2022, CDA and a broad coalition of disability, consumer and provider groups advocated for \$50 million in one-time funding to establish the program, which would fund the construction of at least 10 new dental clinics for patients with special needs and disabilities. The intent of the program is to increase capacity and access to care for those who cannot receive care in traditional dental settings. Currently capacity is limited and often centralized in urban areas, so patients and their families are often forced to wait, sometimes up to two years, and travel long distances to receive basic oral health care. CDA recognizes the significant budget shortfall and the need to make difficult decisions. However, the deferral of these funds will undermine the potential progress in expanding dental access for individuals with special health care needs. The

(Major Issues cont. on page 6)



GIANT PLANT SALE



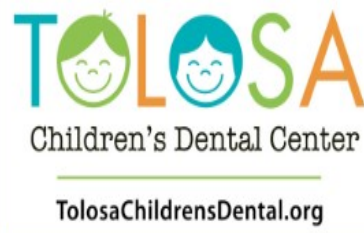
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(Major Issues cont. from page 4)

budget shortfall this year further demonstrates the need to implement innovative one-time programs to address the long-term challenges facing vulnerable populations. CHFFA worked swiftly to develop the grant program and guidelines with applications currently open through April 1, 2024. Now, as applicants are preparing to submit their applications for shovel-ready projects, the future of the program is at-risk. CDA and our coalition partners are urging the legislature and Governor Newsom to avoid the delay of these crucial funds.

4. AB 2701: Medi-Cal coverage for Adult Dental Cleanings (CDA Sponsored)

Current Medi-Cal Dental benefits cover two cleanings and exams per year for those up to age 21. However, once an individual is age 21+, Medi-Cal only covers one cleaning and exam per year. The standard of care for most people is two dental cleanings and exams per year to prevent long-term dental disease, while some high-risk adults may need up to four cleanings annually. Unfortunately, prevalence of dental disease and tooth loss is disproportionately high among individuals who have lower incomes. Individuals eligible for Medi-Cal are likely to be most in need of additional preventive visits and the most harmed by only receiving one cleaning per year.

CDA is supporting AB 2701 by Asm. Carlos Villapudua (D-Stockton), which would expand California's Medi-Cal Dental benefits to include a second cleaning and exam for adults aged 21+. Over half of all states cover two adult cleaning and prevention visits a year, while California does not currently offer this basic preventive benefit.

5. 2024 Ballot Measure—Medi-Cal Funding

CDA has joined with the [Coalition to Protect Access to Care](#) to file a ballot measure for the November 2024 election that will protect and expand funding for California's Medi-Cal program. The measure would permanently secure new funding for Medi-Cal dental services, student loan repayments, health care workforce development and other programs.

Medi-Cal currently provides medical and dental coverage to 15 million low-income Californians (1/3 of all residents and half of all children), making it the largest provider of medical and dental insurance in the state. The program continues to grow and, after decades of underfunding, it needs long-term, permanent funding solutions.

The ballot measure is an important opportunity to build on Medi-Cal's recent progress and ensure health care dollars stay in the health care system. The restoration of Medi-Cal dental benefits that had been eliminated during the Great Recession, substantially improved reimbursement rates (40% increases or more across most covered dental services) and other major programmatic changes have led to meaningful and sustained results in the Medi-Cal dental Program. In the past five years, the state has seen a 30% increase in Medi-Cal dental providers, a rate that is consistently increasing each year, as well as a doubling of patient utilization of Medi-Cal dental services since the Great Recession.

The ballot measure would provide an ongoing funding source by permanently extending the state's recently renewed "managed care organization" (MCO) tax on health insurance companies. The revenue would be dedicated for Medi-Cal and specific health programs (as opposed to the state's general fund like previous MCO taxes) and Medi-Cal dental services would be among the programs receiving funds starting in 2027.

6. SB 1290?AB 2914: Adult Dental Care—Essential Health Benefits—Support if Amended

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a proposed rule near the end of last year that would give states the option of adding adult dental care as an essential health benefit (EHB). EHBs are ten categories of services that health plans are required to cover per the Affordable Care Act, including pediatric dental care. Each state selects a health care plan as the "benchmark" that identifies the minimum coverage that health plans must offer in the state, which may go beyond the federal EHBs. The new federal rule means that California may have the option to require health plans offered in the individual and small group markets to provide adult dental services. It is expected CMS will finalize the rule this Spring.

California cannot change or select a new EHB benchmark plan without legislation. SB 1290 (Roth) and AB 2914 (Bonta) would set a new EHB benchmark for California, and CDA is strongly urging that adult dental care be included in these two bills. Addition of adult dental services as an EHB would be a monumental step in recognizing dental care as critical for overall health and would set a minimum standard benefit for dental plans, in addition to bringing dental care to adults in California who still lack coverage.

Updated March 14, 2024

WELL-BEING INDEX AVAILABLE TO ALL ADA MEMBERS TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

Risk Assessment tool invented by Mayo Clinic available at no cost.



The Well-Being Index, an anonymous validated assessment, resource and measurement tool developed by the Mayo Clinic to address clinician distress and well-being, is newly available at no cost for every ADA member.

The ADA Council on Dental Practice pivoted its efforts from an ADA well-being survey to action by piloting the confidential, easy-to-use risk assessment tool, with the help of the ADA Wellness Ambassador Program.

Findings from the survey showed that 46% of the participant dentists are struggling or distressed.

“Having access to a tool such as the WBI is an important commitment to safeguarding the health and well-being of dentists,” said Kami Dornfeld, D.D.S., ADA Dental Team Wellness Advisory Committee chair. “Mental health is health. Our patients’ health depends on our being able to prioritize our own health and well-being.”

The Council on Dental Practice aligned its wellness priorities, such as the WBI, with those outlined by the National Academy of Medicine’s National Plan for Health Workforce Well-Being, to invest in assessment, measurement and resource strategies.

“Dentistry is a rewarding profession, but also a challenging one,” said Jeffrey Ottley, D.M.D., chair of the council. “As dental professionals, we have an ethical obligation to take care of ourselves physically and mentally. The ADA is offering the index tool so every member dentist may assess their own well-being over time.”

The index, used by hundreds of health care organizations, takes one minute to answer nine questions, evaluating risk of fatigue, depression, burnout, anxiety.

This ADA-licensed version directly connects participants to ADA resources. Members can continue to take the WBI at a selected frequency and can reference their own personal dashboard.

A dental version validation study was published in the peer-reviewed online journal British Dental Journal (BDJ) Open in January 2024 that concluded that the WBI can be effective.

To access the member benefit, visit tinyurl.com/mrxxx5bz to set-up a WBI account and then take the assessment.

For additional health and wellness resources, visit ADA.org/Wellness.

UPCOMING 2024 CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2024

In Person and Virtual—you choose
“Quality Care in a Material World”
Daniel Ward, DDS

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024

In Person and Virtual—you choose
“SuperGeneralist: The Pathway to Independence and Fulfillment”
Mark Malterud, DDS, MAGD

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

In Person and Virtual—you choose
“Infection Control, OSHA, Ethics and CA Dental Practice Act”
Nancy Dewhirst, RDH, BA

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024

In Person and Virtual—you choose
Brian Novy, DDS

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CONSTANTLY CHANGING,
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IN PERSON
**CDA PRESENTS THE ART AND
SCIENCE OF DENTISTRY**

May 16-18, 2024.....Anaheim, CA

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ADA ANNUAL MEETING
October 23-27, 2024.....Seattle, WA

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