A Message from the Executive Director

IN 2021 WE LEARNED THAT WE CANNOT wait for a return to “normal” and that we need to learn not just to operate an association, but also thrive, in an ever-evolving environment. The ODA membership continued to provide leadership and were engaged throughout the year. In 2021 we had much to celebrate, including a partnership with the Oregon Wellness Program funded by the generous support from Permanente Dental Associates, a partnership with OHSU to provide COVID-19 vaccines to dental healthcare workers, and a very successful virtual Oregon Dental Conference.

Advocacy continued to be one of our greatest strengths as we addressed legislation regarding dental therapists and continual regulatory burdens on the profession. Our advocacy successes depended upon the involvement and leadership of our volunteer members. There is truly strength in numbers.

We look forward to 2022 bringing many new 2021 initiatives into action. In 2022 we will see the ODA mentor program move from a tested beta model to an expanded program, new opportunities with endorsed entities, and the development of regional events to increase engagement outside of the tri-county metropolitan area. And of course, the return of an in-person ODC. None of this can happen without membership engagement. Thank you for all that you do for our association.
**COMMUNITY**

**Membership**

As another unpredictable year closes, we are proud of ODA’s ongoing COVID-19 pandemic support offered to our members. Our efforts were evident in our partnership with Oregon Health and Science University to offer multiple vaccine clinics (providing 1,200 vaccination opportunities to dental professionals), our ongoing member communications navigating a continually changing regulatory environment, the expansion of wellness resources available to dentists, and our tireless advocacy in an ever-shifting back-to-work environment with new vaccine mandates. Through these pandemic-focused initiatives and other support and services offered in 2021, we believe we have continued to demonstrate the true value of tripartite membership.

This past year a concentrated effort was placed on strengthening communication and support efforts with the 16 local dental societies throughout Oregon. With limitations on in-person meetings, we worked closely with local component leadership to retain and recruit members throughout the state using a variety of methods. Member engagement was focused on virtual programming, email, direct mail, digital ad campaigns, and social media. We plan to continue this support initiative into 2022 and encourage all local leaders to attend the monthly Live Leadership Exchange offered virtually using Zoom. This platform brings leaders from around the state together to foster participation and engagement at the local level, as we know this is critical to member satisfaction and the recruitment of new members.

The ODA also continued its focus on highlighting member value to new dentists in 2021. In May, a member value survey was sent to new dentist members 0-5 years out of school. The survey helped to identify opportunities to better support new dentists and better understand value perception. Mentorship was identified as critically important, especially with the current pandemic. The New Dentist Council continued work in redesigning the ODA Mentor Program into a mentor pod concept, conducting beta testing in 2021. Each mentor pod consisted of 10-12 people including established, new, and retired dentists, plus OHSU D2-D4 students. Pods met every other month, attended ODA-sponsored events, and utilized a text group for casual communication. Meetings took place virtually and in person, allowing participation from throughout the state. The beta program was a remarkable success, receiving positive feedback from all participants and attention from the ADA and other state dental associations across the nation. This program will be expanded in 2022.

We are pleased to share that with the support and hard work of our volunteer leaders and staff across the state, we met our strategic plan retention goal, retaining 92% of membership. Welcoming 123 new members into ODA membership in 2021, we ended the year with membership totaling 2,152 dentists and dental students throughout the state. As we move forward into 2022, we will continue to concentrate on retention of current members while demonstrating the value of membership. Our strength comes in numbers, and we thank you for your support of organized dentistry!
Wellness Initiative

As pandemic impacts on individual wellness persist, the ODA’s Wellness Committee sought to better understand the needs of members by conducting a member-wide survey. The top three areas of worry among participants included: work-life balance (1), future plans/retirement (2) and HR issues (3). The top three ways to manage stress included: exercise (1), talking to friends/colleagues/family (2), and mindfulness (3). When it comes to the ODA’s Wellness Initiative, which was launched in 2019 and continues to grow, survey participants identified confidential peer-to-peer support as the most valued benefit. The ODA’s peer-to-peer support program continues to thrive, offering a robust network of 20 dentist Ambassadors from throughout Oregon, who are ready to provide support on a multitude of wellness issues.

Thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Wellness Committee to identify a confidential, immediate access solution for dentists who need support beyond what the peer-to-peer program can offer, the Oregon Wellness Program was expanded to include dentists as of September 2, 2021. Through the program, all Oregon licensed dentists can now receive up to eight free counseling sessions with one of the Oregon Wellness Program’s mental health providers. We thank Permanente Dental Associates (PDA) for providing a generous three-year grant, which made this expansion possible.

Dental Foundation of Oregon

The ODA’s charitable arm, The Dental Foundation of Oregon (DFO), finishes another year, making huge strides in advancing oral health education and providing charitable care for Oregon’s children and vulnerable communities. The DFO’s flagship program, the Tooth Taxi, started serving children at schools throughout Oregon in 2008 and hasn’t stopped changing lives since.

Since the Taxi started rolling, the team has provided oral hygiene education in the classroom to 25,655 students, screened 25,186 patients, and provided $8,548,552 in care during 14,932 appointments. These impressive stats are possible due to the generous support of ODA members, DFO partners, and the community. Looking ahead to 2022, the DFO is excited to unveil Tooth Taxi 2.0, which is currently under production.
**EDUCATION & PRACTICE SUPPORT**

**Virtual 2021 Oregon Dental Conference**

For the first time in the 128-year history of the Oregon Dental Conference (ODC), the 2021 event was offered 100% virtually. This included all continuing education courses and the Solutions Marketplace (exhibit hall). The virtual conference started on April 8, 2021, and was open on the ODC virtual platform through May 15, 2021. Offering over 30 days of virtual access allowed attendees additional time to connect with ODC partners and learn from content experts while earning up to 90+ CE credits.

The virtual 2021 ODC hosted 44 scientific sessions featuring 41 speakers. The virtual Solutions Marketplace featured 56 exhibitors. Attendees were able to interact directly with exhibitors via text or video chat, view show specials, and link to exhibitor websites. ODC participation exceeded our expectations and would not have been possible without the support of our loyal ODC community. A big thank you to the 2,631 individuals who attended the 2021 virtual conference (2,293 dental professionals and 338 exhibitor personnel).

Based on the feedback of members and ODC attendees, the 2022 Oregon Dental Conference will be offered as a hybrid format. The Solutions Marketplace and the majority of CE sessions will be offered in person as the ODC returns to the Oregon Convention Center in Portland after a two-year hiatus. In addition to the in-person offerings, 10 CE courses, including most courses required for licensure renewal, will be offered virtually on-demand on the ODC’s virtual platform. Virtual courses will be available starting on Thursday, April 7th and will run through Sunday, May 15th. All virtual on-demand courses will be included for no additional charge as part of full conference in-person registration. Attendees who only wish to attend virtually will be able to register in a “virtual only” category.

We look forward to bringing the Oregon Dental Conference back in person and providing the ODC community with the opportunity to Reconnect, Learn, and Grow!

**Webinars**

In addition to the virtual ODC, the ODA continued to offer members other educational opportunities throughout the year providing wellness support and guidance on key issues facing dentistry. One highlight was a fall webinar, “Employment Law Regarding Oregon’s Healthcare Provider Vaccine Mandate,” presented by attorney David Briggs. This offering helped hundreds of ODA dentists and their staff better understand the employment law implications of the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers in Oregon.

**Member Perks**

Through ODA-endorsed and co-endorsed offerings, we negotiate deals and discounts providing members savings on the products and services on which they rely. In the last year, two new co-endorsements were added: Laurel Road Mortgage Solutions and Stynt. Laurel Road offers savings to members who are looking to purchase a new home or refinance an existing mortgage with special discounted rates and savings on closing costs. The ODA also co-endorsed Stynt in 2021 to provide members with another tool to assist with current workforce issues. Stynt offers on-demand temporary and permanent staffing assistance, connecting members with dental professionals in the area who are ready to help. These new offerings join a wide collection of tools and services available exclusively to ODA members.
2021 Legislative Session

Oregon’s 81st Legislative Session adjourned on Saturday, June 26th, finishing what will be characterized as one of the most challenging sessions in Oregon’s history. The state capitol, closed to the public because of the coronavirus pandemic, was limited to just legislators and staff. All committee hearings were conducted virtually, house and senate floor sessions were limited to smaller groups of people at one time, and lobbying occurred by text, email, and phone calls.

Certainly, the most controversial and largest body of work for ODA during the session was on HB 2528, the dental therapy bill. ODA had significant concerns with HB 2528 as introduced and spent the entire session working with legislators and negotiating the bill to add critical constraints that will increase patient safety, increase education, and limit scope. The final bill was a reflection of hours of tough, but successful, negotiations and member-driven work. ODA members engaged on this bill throughout the process, from our Legislative Task Force directing staff work, to members testifying during committee hearings, and the 138 members who wrote letters to the legislators on this bill.

Another key ODA success during the legislative session relates to dental reimbursement rates. At the beginning of the year, OHA cut reimbursement rates for dental care to 2014 levels, significantly impacting the Medicaid population. ODA successfully joined our Dental Care Organization partners in lobbying legislators to restore these cuts. In the last bill of session—commonly called the “Christmas tree bill,” which allows groups to add/hang their last requests—Section 265 included a $19 million appropriation to the emergency board to be allocated to the Oregon Health Authority to fund dental rates for medical assistance programs. ODA members were key to this success, writing 90 letters to key legislators urging action on this important issue.

On February 4, 2021, ODA members and students gathered for a virtual lobby day to learn about ODA’s advocacy work and engage directly with key legislators. Senator Fred Girod and Representative Hayden, both dentists, were joined by Representative Prusak, chair of the House Health Care committee, to share their insights from session and connect with ODA members. The evening’s virtual format was quite successful in allowing ODA members from around the state to easily participate in an event that would normally require travel and time away from patients.

Regulatory

When the legislative session is complete, passed bills then move to the regulatory process for agencies to implement. ODA spends considerable time ensuring that dentists are represented in rulemaking processes and bill implementation.

HB 2362, passed in the 2021 session, directed the Oregon Health Authority to examine and monitor the competitiveness of the health care market, and approve or deny mergers, acquisitions, and affiliations among hospitals, insurers, and provider organizations. Early drafts of the rules would have required all transactions, including providers contracting with insurance panels, to file and engage in an expensive administrative process to even be considered exempt. ODA joined other provider stakeholders and successfully advocated for reasonable requirements. We expect the final rules to have limited direct impact on ODA members after our advocacy work.

Vaccine CDT Code Development

Building on our successful work from 2019 with the legislative authorization of dentists administering vaccines, ODA is tackling barriers providers may face in implementing this new scope of practice. Ensuring providers have CDT codes to submit for billing purposes is an important piece. To that end, ODA submitted a CDT code request for the HPV vaccine to the ADA Code Maintenance Committee and co-sponsored a request for additional COVID-19 vaccine codes. If approved, dental providers would be able to use these new CDT codes in coming years.
ODA leaders are the livelihood of the organization, giving their time and expertise to advance the association, profession, and patient care. We continue to see record participation in leadership positions and opportunities for membership engagement. This is in part due to the highly successful Leadership Academy, which offers members the opportunity to experience a backstage pass to ODA experiences and offerings while developing and enhancing their leadership and interpersonal skills.

Since the program launched in 2018, the Academy has assisted 38 individuals on their leadership journey, matching 70% of graduates with an ongoing leadership role in the association.

It is the collective efforts of our diverse leadership that allow us to advance the ODA’s vision and achieve the goals outlined in the 2020-2022 Strategic Plan in the areas of engagement, advocacy, development, and organizational health. With continued emphasis on a united membership that embraces all backgrounds, beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and expertise, the ODA analyzed the leadership composition of the board, councils, and committees to determine if leadership is reflective of overall membership. We focused on three areas: women, new dentists, and dentists of racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. We are happy to share that the ODA exceeded all best practice standards, but our work does not stop here. As we move into 2022, we will continue to build upon our current successes and further prioritize inclusiveness in all our endeavors. We are truly stronger together.

**House of Delegates**

The 2021 House of Delegates was offered virtually on September 25, 2021. Seventy-one delegates from throughout the state came together to discuss important issues and vote on resolutions that will guide the association moving forward. The final report and recommendations from the House of Delegates Task Force were considered by the group, adopting a resolution to hold the meeting virtually on a permanent basis. This recommendation came after a successful virtual meeting in 2020 that reduced barriers to member participation and the cost to host the meeting. The cost savings on the ODA’s end will be reallocated in the budget to develop and offer regional event offerings throughout the state, with the goal of further engaging members with the ODA while also fostering local community connections. Plans for these new offerings are still being developed, with additional details coming in 2022.

**Closing Message**

As an ODA member, you are part of something bigger. The successes outlined in this report are due to the collective efforts of the ODA community including members, leadership, partners, and staff. ODA’s successes are your successes. Thank you for your individual contributions and your ongoing support of the ODA and the profession. ODA is your organization, and we look forward to all that we can accomplish together in 2022.