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Anchorage	November 1 st
Spokane	December 13 th
Seattle Airport	January 17 th
Honolulu	Jan 31 st day after annual meeting.
Eugene	February 21st

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“Great presentation. Very informative. This was definitely time well spent!” **Dr. Daniel Lundquist, Ilwaco, Washington**



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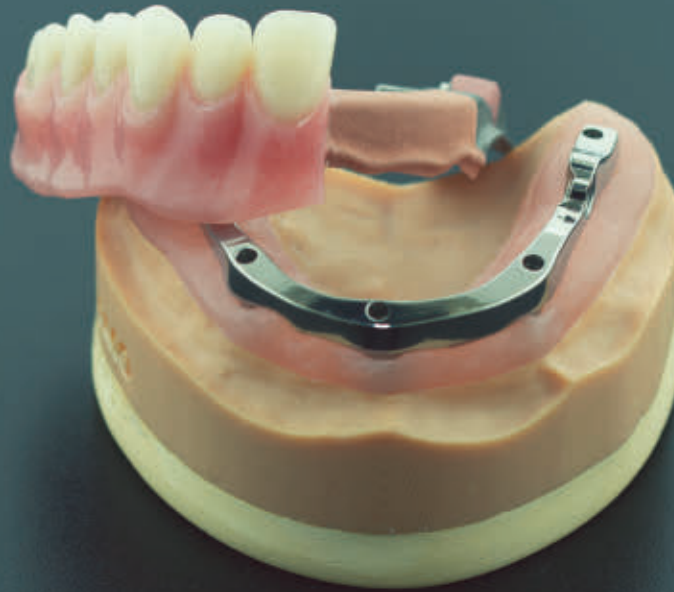
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House of Delegates or an Annual Meeting?



By Barry Taylor, DMD,
ODA Executive Director

THE OREGON DENTAL ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES has had several discussions over the past year regarding the current structure of our House of Delegates. The conversations started in earnest at the November 2024 board meeting, which was devoted to the Oregon Dental Association Strategic Plan and setting priorities for 2025. One of the goals in the current strategic plan is organizational health and financial sustainability, which includes the strategy to "evaluate value of the House of Delegates." The question to the board, and to the membership at large, is whether the House of Delegates is still the best format for representing ODA members' diverse views and conducting the business of the ODA. The board is exploring the option of a hybrid business meeting held annually at the regional event to replace the current all-virtual House of Delegates model. This would be a bylaw change requiring a two-thirds majority vote at this year's House of Delegates, to be held virtually on October 11.

Over the past 10 years, it has been a challenge to meet the quorum (two-thirds of assigned delegates)

for the House. Each year, there are also three to five components that are not represented at all. In 2018, the House was moved to a one-day meeting, and in 2020, the House became a virtual meeting. Neither of these changes increased delegate participation. Since 2020, the task of recruiting delegates has largely fallen on ODA staff as components have been less engaged in governance. There has also been an argument that the format of the House of Delegates is too formal and structured, which may be a deterrent to many members.

The House does play an important role in our governance structure because it is an annual meeting at which all members are invited to participate. Attendees elect trustees and officers, and it is an opportunity for the president and president-elect to share what is currently happening within the ODA. ODA bylaws allow the Board of Trustees to set policy; however, the House allows an opportunity for all members to submit resolutions as well.

The hybrid business meeting model that is currently being proposed is based on a policy forum that the Minnesota Dental Association adopted when they sunset their House of Delegates. The proposed Oregon Annual Meeting would be held during the ODA's regional event and would be a hybrid format so that members could participate either in-person or virtually. The quorum would be set at 1% of total membership (quorum would have been 19 in 2024, compared to the quorum of 61 in the current bylaws), and a minimum of five components

would need to be represented by at least one member. Just as it is now, voting members of the ODA Board of Trustees would not be able to vote at the Annual Meeting. The meeting would be open to all ODA members. Changes to the bylaws would still require approval by two-thirds of members attending the meeting. The ODA would also maintain the Speaker of the House position, as this individual would run the annual meeting and continue to serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees.

The agenda of the meeting could include reports from the ODA president, president-elect, as well as election of the trustees, speaker, editor, and ADA delegates. Members registered for the meeting would also still be able to bring forth resolutions regarding ODA policy, which would have to be passed by a simple majority of those participating unless it was a bylaw change requiring the two-thirds majority.

It is important that all members have an opportunity to be a part of this process in evaluating our current House of Delegates. On June 30, there will be a virtual meeting to discuss these proposed changes, and this meeting is open to all ODA members. At the July 12 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board of Trustees will vote to decide if the proposed bylaw changes should be moved forward to the October 11 House of Delegates for discussion and a vote by the delegates present. If it were to be passed, the first ODA Annual Meeting would be held in November 2026 at the regional event. 🗳️



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Welcome New and Returning ODA Members

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST AND RETURNING MEMBERS! Please reach out to these members and welcome them into the ODA community.

Arielle Avant Pearson, DMD
Coastal Cascades Dentist Society

Drew Pearson, DMD
Coastal Cascades Dentist Society

Michelle Wu, DDS
Multnomah Dental Society

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Events & Education Component CE Calendar

Calendar provided by Mehdi Salari, DMD

This calendar is current as of May 21, 2025

Please visit the host dental society website for the most up-to-date information.

Date	Dental Society	Course or Event Title	Speaker	CE	Location	More Information
06/10/25	Coastal Cascades	Retiree Luncheon	-	-	Eugene – Roaring Rapids Pizza	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
07/08/25	Coastal Cascades	The Top 10 Financial Planning Strategies for Dentists	Loyd Bureson III – Financial Freedom for Dentists	2	Eugene (Lane Community College)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
08/01/2025 & 08/02/2025	Coastal Cascades	Friday CE and Saturday Social with Family Activities	Dr. Timothy Bizga	6	Newport (Best Western Agate Beach)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
08/02/25	Coastal Cascades	Morning Golf Social	-	-	Newport (Agate Beach Golf)	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
09/12/25	Coastal Cascades	The Esthetic & Long Term Considerations of Cementation & Material Choice	Dr. An	2	Eugene – Valley River Inn	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
09/12/25	Coastal Cascades	Oral Cancer Foundation Walk/Run	-	-	Corvallis – Willamette Park	https://ocf.donordrive.com/event/oregon
09/18/25	Southern Oregon	Advanced Techniques for Full Arch Cases	Nobel Biocare	2	Margaritaville – Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
09/18/25	Multi-Component	Fall Kick-Off Tailgater	-	-	Wilsonville – ODA Office Parking Lot	Info/Register: www.multnomahdental.org
09/23/25	Coastal Cascades	Fall Dentist Social	-	-	Eugene – TBD	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
10/09/25	Coastal Cascades	Contemporary Approach to Dental Implant Maintenance for Long-term Success	Lynn Peneck RDH MS	2	Eugene – Lane Community College	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
10/16/25	Southern Oregon	Dental Emergencies	Dr. Rajagopal	2	West Ortho Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
10/23/25	Coastal Cascades	Digital Work Flows in Implant Dentistry	Dr. An	2	Albany Golf and Event Center	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE
11/13/25	Southern Oregon	Fee Schedule Evaluation 38% back	Benco Dental	2	West Ortho Medford	sodentalsociety@gmail.com
12/05/25	Coastal Cascades	Hands-On Stain & Glaze: Chairside Techniques to Set your Practice Apart	Max Thomas	2	Eugene – Lane Community College	Register: www.bit.ly/LCDSEVENTBRITE

Find this calendar online at www.oregondental.org. Click “Meetings & Events” > “Calendar of Events”.

Looking for additional ways to get CE? The American Dental Association has a large collection of webinars and on-demand video learning opportunities available, many of which are free to members. Visit adaceonline.org to catch up on the latest offerings on your own schedule. 🎧

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Julie Spaniel, DDS

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Southern Oregon Dental Society
Editor
Scott Hansen, DMD
Multnomah Dental Society
Speaker of the House

Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights

Oregon Dental Association
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 21, 2025

- The Board of Trustees is evaluating the current format of the House of Delegates and will discuss further at the May Board meeting.
- The Component Enhancement Plan was approved for 2025.
- The ODA is now endorsing TDIC Long Term Care Insurance.
- Dr. Todd Carris and Dr. Ashish Patel were reappointed to the Annual Meeting Council for three-year terms.
- Dr. Rick Asai was awarded the 2025 Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award, which he received at the 2025 Oregon Dental Conference Party on Friday evening, April 4. 📷

Correction

In our March issue, the list of Board of Trustees on page 21 omitted two at-large members:
Jennifer O'Connor, DMD, Washington County Dental Society
Shannon Woods, DMD, MS, Central Oregon Dental Society

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DC or Bust – ODA Members Advocate at National Lobby Day

THIS YEAR, THE OREGON DENTAL ASSOCIATION SENT eight Oregon dentists and six OHSU dental students to Washington, D.C., for three days to attend the American Dental Association Dentist and Student Lobby Day. Hear first-hand from some of the attendees about what they learned, and what made an impact.

Stacy Geisler, DDS, PhD

Lobby Day 2025 was exciting! It was wonderful to meet with Representatives Dexter and Salinas in order to discuss interest on student loan debt, closing federal insurance loopholes, and advocating for well-designed scientific studies on community water fluoridation.

I was shocked that Representative Salinas remembered me from our

meeting in Salem in 2017, when I was a member of the Oregon Dental Association Leadership Academy and she was a newly elected representative. I think that sometimes we forget how important small steps are in building relationships for a strong future.

Julie Spaniel, DDS

It was both an honor and a privilege to once again join the Oregon Dental Association in Washington, D.C., for the annual American Dental Association (ADA) Lobby Days. This event is always a meaningful opportunity to advocate for our profession, connect with colleagues from across the country, and engage directly with our federal legislators on key issues affecting dentistry and oral health care.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the event – year after year – is the opportunity to spend time with our passionate and talented dental students from Oregon Health & Science University. Their presence, energy, and professionalism were nothing short of impressive. Listening to them articulate the challenges they face and the changes they hope to see in the profession during our meetings with senators and representatives was truly a highlight. Their voices are powerful, and their insights are invaluable. It is clear that the future of dentistry is in exceptionally capable hands.

Strong student representation is not just encouraging, it is essential. Empowering our future dentists to speak up about the issues that impact them most helps shape a profession



that is forward-thinking, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the public.

This year, I was especially pleased to meet Senator Jeff Merkley and Representative Suzanne Bonamici in person. We had productive conversations about having legitimate studies on fluoride safety, insurance reform, and essential student loan reform. These initiatives benefit Oregonians and patients across the nation.

Events like ADA Lobby Days reaffirm the importance of advocacy in dentistry. They remind us that every voice matters – and that together, we can help create meaningful changes for our patients, our communities, and our profession.

Amberena Fairlee, DMD

My favorite part of Lobby Day was getting to meet Senator Merkley. He spoke frankly about the state of our current government and was well informed about the issues that dentists and dental students face. My favorite of the issues we discussed was regarding community water fluoridation and how we need high quality, well-funded NIH research completed before we as a

country make any sweeping public health policies.

Dylan Steslicki, OHSU Student

I am a fourth-year dental student who had the pleasure of going to Lobby Day to represent Oregon this year. It was an amazing experience to be able to see and appreciate the power of advocacy on a national level, and to see all the students and staff present in support of the same cause. I also really enjoyed getting to meet and connect with all of the dentists and staff who were also there representing the ODA. My favorite memory of the trip was getting to meet and discuss issues with Senator Merkley in person.

Elizabeth Tomczyk, DMD

As an active member of the ODA, I have seen the impact of organized dentistry at the state level. Witnessing the national scope of our collective efforts at ADA Lobby Day was truly remarkable. As a dentist who works with patients who have difficulty accessing care and with dental residents, the bills we were lobbying for this year will be especially impactful to me. Getting to express this directly to our

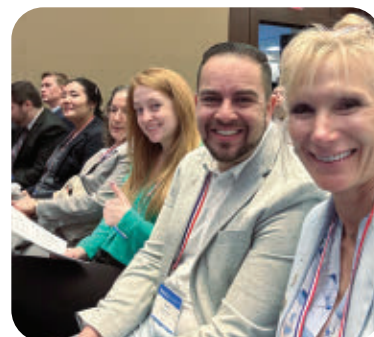
Oregon representatives and senators was amazing. This experience underscored, to me, the importance of a unified dental community in shaping the future of oral health care!

Jessica Lee, OHSU Student

The ADA Lobby Day was the most impactful conference I have attended during dental school. It was an incredible opportunity to engage with practicing dentists from Oregon and meet directly with our state legislators. Discussing current dental policies and advocating for public health – particularly, the fluoride initiative – felt especially meaningful given today's national climate. I am truly grateful for the experience and look forward to continuing my involvement with the Tooth Party and organized dentistry!

Michael Naughton, DMD

I arrived at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in Washington, D.C., Saturday evening, on the last weekend in March. The weather was spectacular, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival was in full stride. In addition to the resident politicians, bureaucrats and public servants who make up the daily fabric of D.C. life, there were





hundreds of thousands of tourists, and, separately, over a thousand dentists and dental students. I was one of many individuals representing the American Dental Association for the annual Lobby Day. Our contingent consisted of several OHSU DS-2, DS-3 and DS-4 students, dentists, and specialists from all over Oregon. On Sunday afternoon, we attended breakout sessions discussing Medicaid's future with potential funding cuts, community water fluoridation, and the ADA's advocacy efforts at both the national and state level to help promote and protect oral health. After the breakout sessions, the ADA hosted a Sunday evening reception with heavy appetizers and an open bar. Each and every morning at 6:15 a.m., there was an organized run around the national monuments with ADA President Brett Kessler, as well as alternative yoga and Barre3 classes to get participants ready for the day.

On Monday, all 1,100+ dentists and students gathered to hear from President Kessler, the ADA Congressional Affairs team and Representatives Herb Conaway, MD, and John Joyce, MD. They discussed the legislative process, the current political landscape, and how to be effective advocates, for the dental profession. The Oregon contingent met with the Oregon representatives, aides,

and our two senators over the next two days to discuss issues involving dental insurance reform, student debt, and community water fluoridation.

This was my second time visiting Washington, D.C., but my first time meeting with Oregon's elected representatives and senators. It was a truly unique experience to witness the day in a life of our senators, congressional members, and aides, and get the opportunity to represent the dental profession and organized dentistry. It was a pleasure getting to know my fellow dental colleagues on a more personal level, and I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the dental students and hearing about their educational experiences and future goals. I was impressed with their knowledge and their commitment to the dental profession, and I believe the future of dentistry is bright in their very capable hands.

Jared Adams, DDS

Attending the ADA Lobby Day in Washington, D.C., this year was eye-opening and most definitely encouraging. Joining together as dental professionals from all around the country, we walked all over Capitol Hill collectively and in small cohort meetings with one common mantra: "Oral health is health!" I was inspired to hear and see the passion that came forward from our peers

with professionalism and tact as we advocated for dentistry and shared our thoughts and concerns with key decision makers at our nation's capital. It was an honor to represent the dental profession to those who lean red, others blue, while we highlighted white as "The Tooth Party!" I'm so proud of my fellow Oregonian colleagues and other dentists and dental students who took the time to have a seat at the table where decisions are made. Together we rise!

Alayna Schoblaske, DMD

This was my second national Lobby Day, and what really stood out this year was the number of actual representatives that we got to meet with. Last year, we met with mostly aides that worked for the legislators, and this year, our ODA dentists and dental students got to talk directly to Representatives Bentz, Dexter, Bonamici, and Salinas as well as Senator Merkley. Wow! It really felt like we were engaging in the democratic process to advocate for oral health! The second highlight was talking to Rep. Salinas' legislative assistant, Molly, about the REDI Act. She remembered our discussion about the same bill from the year before, and shared how impactful it had been for her and Rep. Salinas' team. It's so great to know that our stories – and our annual presence – are making a difference! 🌟

Dr. Rachel Meek: Breaking Barriers and Building Trust Between Native Dentists and Patients

GROWING UP WITH BOTH OF HER PARENTS

working in medicine, Dr. Rachel Meek said there was no way she was going to follow in their footsteps. Today, as one of two dentists working for the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, she concedes that she is doing exactly what she was always meant to do.

While earning her undergraduate degree at Washington State University, Dr. Meek worked as an orthodontic assistant, learning about the inner workings of a dental office. That work, combined with her undergraduate thesis on sustainable ways to address iron deficiency and anemia, led her to volunteer for service trips where she received even more exposure to dentistry and the important role it plays in a person's overall health.

"We would go to remote villages and check their iron levels, while working with dentists and pre-dental students and Guatemalan dentists," said Dr. Meek. "I fell in love with not only the impact that dentistry has on people but also how dentists did everything for a patient – they took a part of the body and focused on that and did everything around it."

Dr. Meek received an Indian Health Service Health Professions scholarship to attend OHSU's School of Dentistry and knew from the beginning of her time in dental school that she wanted to serve a native population.

"My family is Cherokee, and when I got to dental school, I hadn't realized how few native dentists there are," said Dr. Meek. "The need is huge. The scholarship worked well for me

because serving native populations is what I wanted to do anyway."

After graduating from dental school, Dr. Meek was hired by the Siletz Community Health Clinic. The other dentist in the practice is a Siletz Tribal Member, and the clinic is proud to also have two native hygienists, and three out of the remaining four staff members are also native.

"Not many other places have that," said Dr. Meek. "Having a staff that's primarily native helps build a lot of trust."

The trust that comes with being treated by a dentist with a shared background is a regular topic of conversation for the Siletz Clinic staff and for the Society of Indian American Dentists, which Dr. Meek is an engaged member of.



RACHEL MECK



"We talk a lot about ways to improve native oral health, and one way is by changing the narrative and building trust between providers and patients," said Dr. Meek. "My family is from the Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma, and when patients learn that about me, it's almost like a wall comes down."

Ninety-five percent of the patients served at the clinic are native, and most are members of the Siletz Tribe. And Dr. Meek and the other staff members work hard to break down barriers and mistrust that many in their community have from dental experiences earlier in life. Much of that day-to-day dental work includes a lot of preventative and minimally invasive dentistry. Dr. Meek enjoys that their clinic has a full scope of practice, including everything from fillings and extractions to dentures and restoring implants.

"From a public health perspective, the work we do is unique because we serve a population that has different rates of dental disease, decay, gum disease, etc.," said Dr. Meek. "We end up doing a lot more preventative and minimally invasive dentistry than a normal private practice would do."

Dr. Meek also appreciates the whole health aspect of working in the Siletz Clinic, with medical, dental, optometry, pharmacy, lab, and dental services all under one roof.

"We have a beautiful clinic that incorporates all aspects of medicine," said Dr. Meek. "It allows our patients who are in need of care to be seen sooner. For example, if someone comes to the medical facility and needs dental care, they can walk them upstairs to see us, and the same with pharmacy – they can walk downstairs and get what they need right there. It allows us that warm hand-off to make sure that care is being received."

As a newer dentist, Dr. Meek also appreciates the ability to work with her colleagues in the clinic. For instance, if someone sits down in her dental chair with high blood pressure or another condition, she can walk downstairs and get a medical practitioner who can discuss a treatment plan.

"It's nice to know that I have a huge team to help me and that we have that safety net, especially being in a remote community. The closest city to us is Corvallis, which is still 45 minutes away," said Dr. Meek. "That distance really pushes my team and I to do as much as we can for our patients, because we know there's that physical barrier to more advanced care. We try to do as much as we can for everyone in our building and get them the best care that we can."

Dr. Meek says that her experience working in public health has made

her a lot more aware of the issues the state faces with the Oregon Health Plan, Medicaid, access to care, rates of disease, and side effects and oral health outcomes of the opioid epidemic, among other challenges that patients face. She's also had a unique experience as a recent graduate working in a remote community and in public health, which has led her to spend a lot of time with continuing education, mentors, and focusing on learning more about minimally invasive dentistry.

"I've learned that there are a lot of things I can do to improve people's experience in the chair and ways to do dentistry without drills and anesthetics," said Dr. Meek. "Being in this environment where I have a larger scope of practice, seeing how I carry those things into a future in dentistry has been invaluable. This is treatment that belongs everywhere."

Dr. Meek has brought that perspective to the Oregon Dental Association, serving on the ODA's Regulatory Advisory Council and Legislative Task Force.

"I was the ODA liaison through ASDA in dental school, and the ODA was one of the reasons why I wanted to stay in Oregon after graduating," said Dr. Meek. "The ODA provided so much meaning and drive for the profession, and I was able to see that



very clearly. As a first year, I lobbied for dentists to give vaccines, and by my fourth year, I was giving those vaccines to patients. I saw concrete ways that we were able to move the profession forward and help dentists and patients in the state.”

She also appreciates the opportunity to provide her rural public health perspective on dentistry and patient needs and says that the ODA does a great job of making sure task forces and committees have a lot of diverse voices included.

Not only does the ODA offer an opportunity for Dr. Meek to influence policies and legislation impacting dentistry, but it also provides a valuable resource for connection and learning that she may not otherwise have due to her geographic location.

“Especially being out here, we’re pretty isolated, so I don’t see other dentists that often,” said Dr. Meek. “The ODA makes dentistry feel less lonely. I enjoy getting to talk to people with different experiences and with the same goals. The ODA is a really good resource to talk to people about

their experiences and mentorship even though I’m not physically close to a bunch of other dentists.”

However, the greatest value she sees in her ODA involvement is the tangible policy changes she has seen thanks to the association.

“The fact that I actually saw things pass as a first year and affect my life before I graduated dental school really encouraged me,” said Dr. Meek. “As a practicing dentist, I saw these challenges in public health, and I know that there are more things that we’re working on that we can change through the ODA.”

Dr. Meek encourages any young dentists to not only consider getting involved in the ODA and advocating for the profession, but also to consider a career in public health and particularly tribal health as an option for their career.

“There’s so much to explore and learn in this environment, and it also offers a great opportunity to push my scope. It’s stimulating and challenging and an opportunity to change people’s lives and perspectives.” ●

TRANSITION POINTER

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ACCURATE PRACTICE APPRAISAL?

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Giving Back with Purpose: How Oregon Dentists Make a Lasting Impact Through Volunteerism

By Carrie Peterson

EVERY DAY ACROSS OREGON, CHILDREN AND ADULTS go without access to even the most basic dental care. Whether due to economic hardship, geographic isolation, or systemic barriers, these individuals face oral health challenges that impact their overall wellbeing, self-esteem, and long-term health. This is where you can make an extraordinary difference.

As dentists, you're uniquely equipped with skills that few others possess. The

ability to alleviate pain, restore confidence, and quite literally put a smile on someone's face. At the Dental Foundation of Oregon (DFO), we believe that volunteering your time and expertise is one of the most impactful ways to serve. While financial support and advocacy are incredibly valuable, your clinical skills are a rare and critical resource.

Through the DFO's Tooth Taxi mobile dental clinic, we've seen firsthand how just a few hours of volunteer time can



Dr. Gerald Kennedy with Assistant Jessica Mitchell



Dr. Dave Caneiro and Patient



Tooth Taxi Volunteer Dr. Rick Asai

TOOTH TAXI STAFF

“Volunteering on the Tooth Taxi, other free clinics, or charitable care in my office I found to be rewarding and much easier to schedule. The Tooth Taxi team working with schools does all the preparation for getting ready to do screenings and provide care at schools. It was so easy to be a part of that team and deliver care. I can’t thank the Tooth Taxi team enough in allowing me to provide needed care right here in Oregon.”

– Rick Asai, DMD

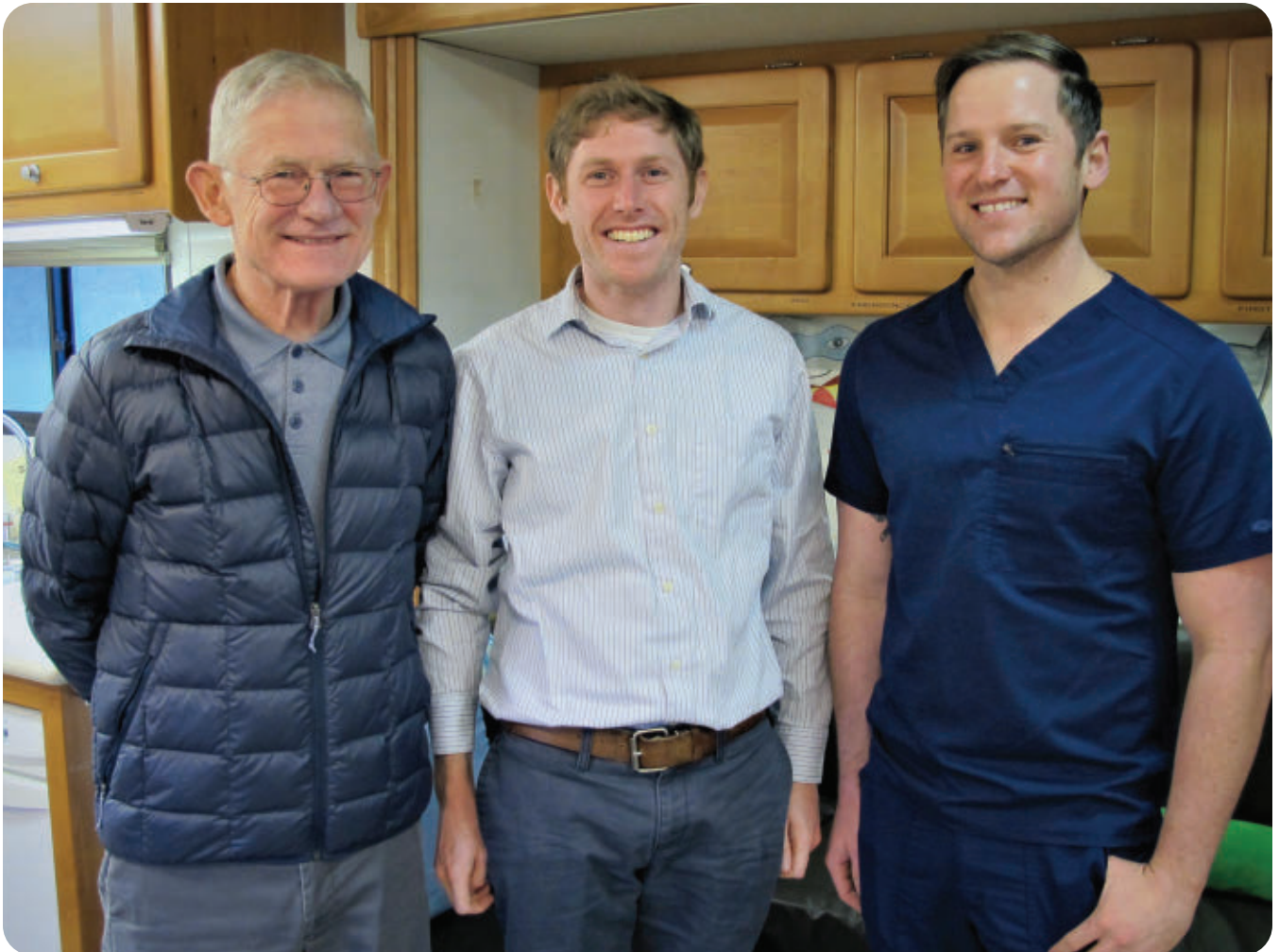
change the course of a child’s life. Over the years, we’ve welcomed hundreds of volunteer dentists and strive to make the experience both enjoyable and seamless – for our volunteers and for the children receiving care. We provide all necessary supplies and experienced dental assistants, allowing you to focus on what you do best: dentistry.

From emergency care that relieves chronic pain to preventive treatment that lays the foundation for improved lifelong oral health, your volunteer work does more than fix teeth – it builds futures. Giving back can be a deeply fulfilling way to connect with our communities,

strengthen professional bonds, and demonstrate to the next generation of dentists what it truly means to lead with compassion and purpose.

We invite every ODA member to consider how you might contribute – whether it’s spending a day on the *Tooth Taxi*, mentoring a student, supporting statewide oral health initiatives, or donating supplies. Whatever you give, your impact will be real, lasting, and deeply appreciated.

To learn more about how you can support our mission or volunteer with the *Tooth Taxi*, visit smileonoregon.org or contact Carrie Peterson, *Tooth Taxi* Program Manager, at carrie.peterson@modahealth.com. 📞



Volunteers Dr. James Goertz and Dr. Jacob Goertz and Tooth Taxi Dentist Dr. Travis Davis

2025 Oregon Dental Conference

THE 2025 OREGON DENTAL CONFERENCE TOOK PLACE on April 3-5, 2025, at the Oregon Convention Center. Attendees enjoyed three full days of continuing education including a heartfelt keynote from Dr. Jeffrey Gurian on surviving a career in dentistry using humor and positive thinking.

Attendees also had the opportunity to meet over 120 exhibitors in the exhibit hall, including the return of supply houses Henry Schein Dental Supplies, Burkhardt Dental Supply, and Patterson Dental.

Events included the New Dentist Social, the Friday night ODC Party: Casino Royale, a blood drive, free professional headshots, and a showcase of OHSU School of Dentistry research posters.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 2026 Oregon Dental Conference April 9-11, 2026! 🌐









ODA New Dentist Award – Mariah Baldwin, DMD



CHALLENGES DURING CHILDHOOD MOTIVATED

DR. MARIAH BALDWIN to pursue a career in dentistry and dedicate her career to helping underserved patients in Southern Oregon who have the greatest need.

“I had a really challenging childhood, and going to the dentist are some of the best memories I have from childhood. It was a very fun, positive experience,” she said, adding she faced several dental complications as she grew up. “As I got older, I knew I wanted to become a dentist, and that was the light at the end of the tunnel that kept me going and gave me a purpose in life.”

Dr. Baldwin received a scholarship through the National Health Service

Corps that paid for three years of dental school in exchange for working in public health. While she was in dental school at Roseman University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine in Utah, she completed a master’s degree in business administration because she thought she might want to own her own practice someday.

However, after graduating in 2021, Dr. Baldwin began practicing at a community health clinic in rural Iowa and knew that public health was the better fit for her. She joined the team at La Clinica in 2023 and is now a dentist and dental director at its Central Point Health Center. She also is pursuing a master’s degree in public health.

“It just kind of clicked, and I realized that the patients I was seeing are some of the most underserved people in our country, and that gave me more purpose than the idea of working in a private practice,” she said. “I feel like I owe a lot to the world, and this is a way to give back for the privilege I’ve had in my own life.”

Dr. Baldwin said the most rewarding part of her work is helping people who

are living with chronic pain and easing their suffering. She is passionate about oral health prevention and dental education. In addition to her full-time practice with La Clinica, she provides dental care part time at the Jackson County Jail for adults in custody.

“There is a lot of overlap with my patients that I treat in the jail and my patients in the public health setting. I see a lot of people who have been neglected by the public health system and there is a lot of need,” she said.

Organized dentistry is essential in meeting that need, Dr. Baldwin noted, adding Oregon has a big population of underserved people to care for. “It’s important to practice responsible, sustainable, and conservative dentistry. My goal is to help contribute to a more efficient and more sustainable world of dentistry,” she said.

Dr. Baldwin described receiving the ODC New Dentist Award as both surprising and humbling.

“I have a bit of Imposter Syndrome, and this award is something I’m accepting with grace and humility, but it’s very humbling and validates that I’m doing important things in my life,” she said.



ANDIE PETKUS PHOTOGRAPHY

2025 ODA New Dentist Award Nominees

We’re excited to celebrate new dentists (10 years or less out of dental school) who demonstrate excellence and inspire others in science, research & education, practice excellence, philanthropy, leadership, and advocacy. Congratulations to the nominees for the 2025 ODA New Dentist Award!

- Blake Anderson, DMD – Rogue Valley Dental Society
- Rebecca Forshaw, DMD – Southern Oregon Dental Society
- Ryan Thrower, DMD – Multnomah County Dental Society
- Mikhail Bondarew, DDS – Multnomah County Dental Society
- Michael Moody, DMD – Multnomah County Dental Society

Be on the lookout for the 2026 ODA New Dentist Award nominations to begin in January of 2026.

Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award Winner – Rick Asai, DMD



By Melody Finnemore

WHEN DR. RICK ASAI GRADUATED FROM THE

Oregon Health & Science University School of Dentistry in 1981, an economic recession made jobs practicing dentistry difficult to find. He began his career teaching at Mt. Hood Community College and then joined a practice near Sandy before taking over his Beaverton practice in 1985.

Over the next four decades, Dr. Asai practiced general dentistry, dedicating a portion of his services to patients enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan. He said he appreciated the stimulation the combination of science, research, and new materials and techniques added to his career.

“With general dentistry, I also had the opportunity to see people on a regular basis and develop relationships,” he said. “There is the affirmation that you’re doing a good job when people bring in their children and grandchildren, and you can care for families and help people attain oral health stability.”

Dr. Asai also continued to teach dental hygiene and dental assisting to community college students in the Portland area. He broadened his own dental education through many seminars and study clubs over

the years, including an emphasis in restorative and cosmetic dentistry.

When he retired in 2019, Dr. Asai continued to provide oral health care as a volunteer for the Tooth Taxi, Medical Teams International mobile dental vans, and a public health clinic in Hawaii. He admires colleagues who volunteer overseas but feels the need is just as great at home.

“Unfortunately, our health care system has not historically prioritized supporting a broader provision of dental care, so some people simply can’t afford it or don’t have access to health care,” he said. “It’s been a fun transition, and it’s kind of hard to give it up all at once, so it’s nice to help out here and there.”

Organized dentistry has long been a priority for Dr. Asai, who has served in professional dental organizations at the local, state, and federal levels. This includes terms as president of the Washington County Dental Society and the Oregon Dental Association. On the national level, he has served on the boards of the American Dental Association and the American College of Dentists.

“Through organized dentistry, we have a much stronger voice and,

maybe not control, but we can help shape outside influences, whether it’s insurance or regulations, and help make things manageable for practicing dentists. There is strength in numbers,” he said.

Dr. Asai expressed his gratitude for the opportunities to serve dentistry in a number of capacities and said his selection for the Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award was unexpected but much appreciated.

“This one means a lot because it’s from my home state and local professional community that I refer to as my tribe. These folks know me better than other folks around the country, so this is more meaningful because of that,” he said.

Established at the 2017 House of Delegates, the Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award is the highest humanitarian and service award for the dentists of Oregon. Award criteria include:

- A significant number of years as an ODA member.
- Active in leadership roles within the ODA and their local component society.
- Demonstrated commitment to being an active member in their local communities.
- Demonstrated to their communities and the ODA a unique attitude and a willingness to serve.
- Mirror the image of Dr. Tom Tucker with a can-do attitude and a genuine desire to serve the common good.

Submit your nominations to

leadership@oregondental.org

by December 1, 2025, for the 2026

Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award. 



ANDIE PETKUS PHOTOGRAPHY



COMPONENT HIGHLIGHT

Clackamas County Continuing Education Program

By Dr. Barry Taylor, ODA Executive Director

ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 22ND,

THE Clackamas County Dental Society (CCDS) brought together more than 25 member dentists for an engaging night of learning, networking, and professional development. Held over dinner, the event offered a mix of timely updates, clinical insights, and community connection – hallmarks of CCDS's commitment to supporting local dental professionals.

The evening kicked off with a presentation by Dr. Barry Taylor, executive director of the Oregon Dental Association (ODA). Dr. Taylor provided a comprehensive update on current ODA initiatives and offerings,

while also giving attendees a glimpse into the legislative work underway in Salem for the 2025 session. From advocacy to member resources, his remarks reinforced the ODA's continued focus on protecting and advancing the interests of dental professionals across Oregon.

Following the update, attendees were treated to an in-depth, two-hour continuing education course led by CCDS member Dr. Olesya Salathe. Her presentation offered an introductory look into the use of Botulinum Toxin Type A and dermal fillers within dental care – a growing area of interest and application in modern dentistry. With clarity and clinical insight, Dr. Salathe

highlighted how these tools can enhance patient care, from therapeutic applications to aesthetic outcomes.

The evening was made possible in part thanks to the generous sponsorship of Columbia Healthcare Banking, whose support helped create a welcoming and professionally enriching event for all in attendance.

As always, CCDS continues to foster a strong sense of community among local dentists while providing high-quality education and resources. This latest event was a perfect example of that mission in action – informative, well-attended, and a reminder of the strength of professional collaboration. 📸



ODA STAFF

ODA Mentor Program Continues to Provide Community

ODA EVENT

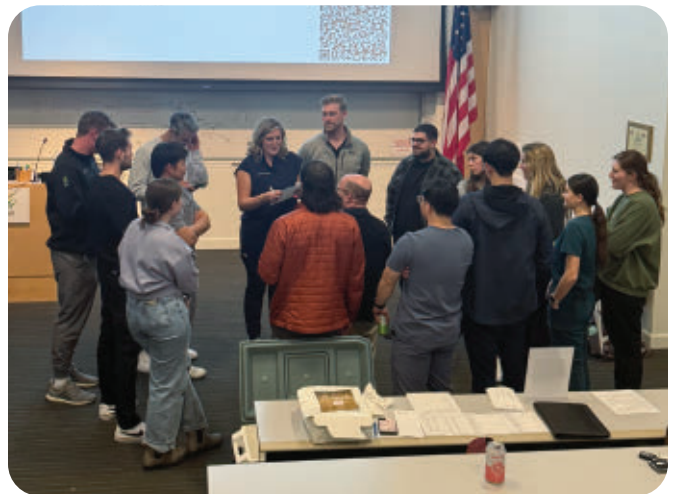
By Heather Langdon, ODA Membership Coordinator

AT OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL of Dentistry, the Oregon Dental Association Mentor Program continues to be a powerful resource for students navigating the path from classroom to clinic. Designed to connect students from all four years – D1 through D4 – with practicing doctors in their community, the program offers a unique blend of professional development and peer support.

The event on April 10 included 33 mentees and 11 mentors, a

dedicated group that represents just a portion of the broader mentor and mentee community involved in the program. The small-group format, known as “pods,” meets monthly or bimonthly with Pod 2 gathering on Tuesdays, Pod 3 on Wednesdays, and Pod 4 on Thursdays. In a new and exciting shift, students are now invited to attend meetings across any pod, allowing for greater flexibility and broader exposure to different mentors, topics, and experiences.

Meetings are a mix of social engagement and practical learning – offering students the chance to ask questions, hear real-world perspectives, and receive personalized guidance in a relaxed setting. Whether it's discussing clinical techniques, navigating academic life, or preparing for life after graduation, the mentor program is helping to build confidence, foster community, and reinforce the values that make OHSU a leader in dental education. 📸



ODA STAFF

Dental Students Care for Caribbean Patients

Patients flock to West Indies pop-up clinic for much-needed oral health care

By Rhonda Morin, APR

Reprinted with permission from OHSU Now.
<https://dy.si/FpEX9C2>

A PATIENT CHIPPED HIS FRONT TOOTH DURING a baseball accident as a kid. As a resident of the Dominican Republic, where dental care is limited, the patient hasn't been able to fix the tooth, until now.

"At the end of our procedure, he gave me a fist bump and thanked me for gifting him

a tooth he felt confident smiling with," said Aaron Bell, a third-year doctor of dental medicine student. "The gratitude our patients expressed was humbling and rewarding."

Bell traveled with a group of dedicated dental students to a sugarcane plantation in the Juan Dolio region of the Dominican



OHSU School of Dentistry students Valerie Truong, left, and Linh Vuong, right, and a local provider prepare for a community clinic in the Dominican Republic



School of Dentistry students Jack Klar, left, and Jill Sukraw, right, care for a patient in the Juan Dolio region of the Dominican Republic



School of Dentistry students Jill Sukraw, left, and Jack Klar, right, care for a patient in the Juan Dolio region of the Dominican Republic



School of Dentistry students Thomas Rezendes, left, and Noor Saeed, right, care for a patient in the Dominican Republic

PHOTOS BY SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Republic from Sept. 21 to 28 to provide its residents with oral health care. They also administered antibiotics and pain management medications. The clinic navigated medical concerns through a medical doctor.

“Working in a setting where dental resources are limited opened our eyes to the profound impact we can have on individual lives and entire communities,” said Valerie Truong, a third-year doctor of dental medicine student. “It gave us the chance to step outside the clinical setting we’re accustomed to and find creative, compassionate ways to deliver care with limited equipment and materials.”

The Bright Island Outreach Dental Mission trip involved performing cleanings, fillings, and root canals, providing removable partial

dentures and extracting teeth. Children with infections got treatments before they became urgent, while adults who had fractured teeth got them restored. The group offered care to 256 children, adults, and geriatric patients.

“It was an experience that humbled us and transformed our outlook on both dentistry and the community around us,” said Aleya Steckel, a third-year student.

Many patients appeared at the clinic not smiling because they didn’t have confidence in the way their teeth looked.

They left with large smiles on their faces.

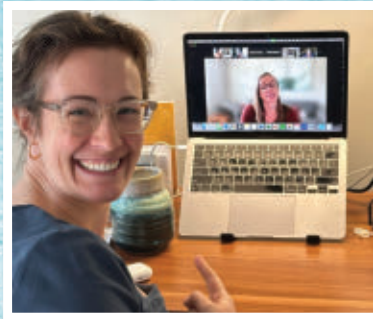
The Bright Island Outreach Dental Mission trip was funded by Permanente Dental Associates, Willamette Dental, and Toni Eigner-Barry, D.M.D. ’77, professor emeritus from the OHSU Russell Street Clinic. 📍



The pop-up dental clinic in the Juan Dolio region of the Dominican Republic

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2025

ODA House of Delegates!



The 2025 ODA House of Delegates will take place virtually on October 11th, 2025. All ODA members are welcomed and encouraged to attend- mark your calendars and plan to serve as a delegate for your local component society. We look forward to “seeing” you there!

ODA LEADERSHIP POSITION OPENINGS: APPLY BY JULY 1ST.

Have you ever wanted to make an impact in a new way? Lend your ideas and involvement today!

ODA has several open positions for members to serve in leadership roles: At-Large Trustee (two positions), Speaker of the House, Editor, and Leadership Development Committee. You can view descriptions of each position here: <https://www.oregondental.org/about-us/leadership-governance/house-of-delegates>

Interested? Submit a completed application and resume to Dr. Barry Taylor at leadership@oregondental.org by July 1st. Individuals may still declare candidacy after that date and from the HOD floor.



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- ▶ Gorgeous Portland Dental Practice for Sale for \$200,000 (ORD179)
- ▶ Southeast Portland Dental Practice, Free-Standing Building (ORD178)
- ▶ Eugene Busy Practice Needs Endodontist and GP Associate (ORD175)
- ▶ Salem Dental Building on Main Street for Sale (ORR105)

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