

JOURNAL

Spring 2021

Hawaii Dental Association





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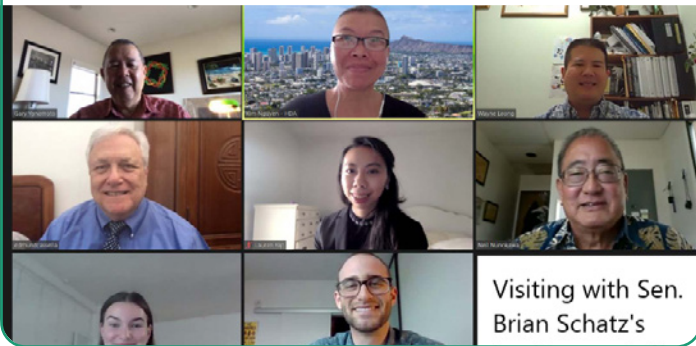
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Hawaii Dental Association JOURNAL

Spring 2021

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TMD vs TMJ

Temporomandibular Disorder (TMD) is caused by jaw, facial muscle, and joint problems. The joint responsible for chewing is called the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), and connects the temporal bone of the skull to the lower jaw.



SCIENCE behind TMD

The muscles and bones affected by TMD

- 1** TEMPORALIS MUSCLE
closes and retracts the mandible (jaw bone)
- 2** TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT
connects the temporal bone of the skull to the mandible.
- 3** MASSETER MUSCLE
closes the jaw for chewing.

TMD CAUSES



clenching or grinding teeth



day-to-day stress

FACT: many TMD/TMJ issues can trigger migraines and chronic headaches.

"As a 45 y.o. mother of 3 kids - I was having pain every day for the last 3 years. Finally - my dentist referred me for Botox and it's been incredible. My headaches are gone and my jaw feels so much better in the mornings. Wearing my night guard and using Botox for TMJ has improved the quality of my life. Thank you! - A.K."

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HDA President
Patsy Fujimoto, DDS

Advocacy is Key

Advocacy is a cornerstone of the Hawaii Dental Association Strategic Plan. For every piece of objectionable legislation that surfaces, there are hundreds of equally objectionable bills that never see the light of day because of the vigilance of the legislative program and our lobbyist.

It is this advocacy that makes this the busiest part of the year for the Hawaii Dental Association since the Hawaii state legislature is in session. This year the financial impact of the pandemic on the state's economy is paramount in the legislators' agenda. While the eventual volume of bills was high, the number of dental related bills were minimal. It was a conscious decision not to introduce any legislation at this time as we might do in pre-pandemic times. The legislative process is extremely fluid and volatile. This means that we cannot let down our guard so the vigilance continues until the final gavel!

The active surveillance of legislation during a legislative session is just one of four facets of advocacy. The other facets that are equally important are: the development of relationships with our legislators; grassroots efforts by our members, and the support of HDPAC and ADPAC.

Over the years, the HDA has hosted our annual legislators' breakfast the week before the session opens. The Hawaii County Dental Society has also hosted for several years their annual Thank You Legislators dinner after the session ends. Both events give the legislators and our members a chance to meet in a relaxed setting and develop relationships that transcend issues and debates.

Unfortunately, with changes in the Ethics Commission rules, such events are no longer possible. However, we continue to look for ways to develop and nurture our relationships with legislators and we may indeed ask members' help in continuing those relationships in other ways.

We often underestimate our abilities as individuals to affect legislative outcomes. However, legislators do take seriously the thoughts and opinions of their constituents. It isn't always possible to personally contact your representative. Fortunately, our lobbying firm Hawaii Public Policy Advocates has instituted VoterVoice, a digital system for members to contact their legislators to weigh in on dental issues. A message will be sent to the legislator in your district voicing your support or opposition to a bill. This works on the federal level when ADPAC issues an alert to its members-literally thousands of messages are sent to federal lawmakers when dentally related bills are pending. Grassroot efforts can be effective!

By now, we are all very aware that campaigning for public office is an expensive venture. Donations from HDPAC and ADPAC aid legislative candidates with interests in dental issues in their campaigns. It is one more way to support those that support us. While this pandemic year has wreaked havoc on dental practices, I would urge our members to continue or start to support the PACs.

Advocacy is only as good as the strength and numbers of our membership. Legislation at the state and federal level can affect to a



Advocacy is only as good as the strength and numbers of our membership.



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LETTER FROM THE 2021 PRESIDENT



high degree the way we practice and the doctor patient relationship. As the process of renewing membership in the association continues, I want to strongly urge those members who have not renewed to join us again. I firmly believe that our advocacy efforts alone are worth the price of our dues.

I wish to sincerely thank those members who have renewed their membership even in the face of a trying year. It is your support that makes our legislative efforts stronger and more effective and the impetus for us as your leadership and legislative team to redouble our efforts on your behalf. 🦷

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HDA Executive Director
Kim Nguyen, MSW

Spring is Here!

We are now into the 2nd quarter of 2021, and everyone is clearly working towards recovery in 2021:

- Inquiries for vaccines have slowed down and many of you have established a rhythm in your practices in this new normal (this is not to say that we haven't had any inquiries).
- Governmental restrictions are slowly and cautiously being lifted. But please continue to be safe!
- Inquiries about non-COVID matters are returning to our office (imagine a time when all inquiries were all about COVID!).

All this, while we embark on 2022 planning with the same unknowns that faced 2021:

- What will our 2022 convention/CE courses look like now that new convention models have been borne and attendees' choice of attendance (in person or virtual) may have changed?
- Will our work be a combination of virtual meetings and in-person interactions; and if so, at what cost and to whom?
- What will our membership look like? Already, a good handful of our older members have retired, and our young members are moving on, all from the impact of COVID.
- How can we continue to minimize and even reverse, the economic impact that COVID-19 has had on our convention, CE courses, and events? While there have been cost-savings to our travel for conferences and meetings, these restrictions made the greatest impact on our ability to deliver our traditional, two-day, in-person convention.

These unknowns are challenging for everyone—the HDA, our sponsors, but namely, you—our members. We understand, but please know that we are doing our best to meet your membership needs.

While all of this is ongoing, our other “typical” work remains:

- We are still trying to rent our vacant suites and keep up with the maintenance and repairs of our building.
- We have two more CE courses to offer you! Join us on July 15 for “To Tweet or Not to Tweet” and we will “End the Year Strong” (Practice Management) on September 16.
- Keep all your documentation of all CE courses taken in 2020–21 for license renewal later this year. The Board of Dentistry just approved a waiver to allow for CE credits received from virtual courses. Because we are living in COVID times, your documentation is more important than ever. You can send copies of these to the HDA office for safe keeping in your hard copy files, but please note that HDA does not input your CE courses into your ADA member profile—unless the course is an HDA-hosted course. When you have time, please log into your ADA member profile, and enter your CE courses so that these are captured electronically.
- Our programs and task forces continue their work—read about the legislative, dental education, endorsement, and Foundation work further on in this *Journal*.

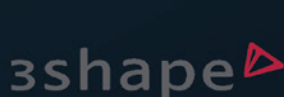
On behalf of the HDA staff, I thank you for your dedicated membership. Take care of each other and take care of yourself! 💕



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to meet your
membership
needs.

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2021 HDA Meeting Calendar

All HDA Members Welcome at All HDA Meetings

Board of Trustees

8:30am–1pm

via Zoom (unless otherwise noted)

Thursdays

July 8

September 30

Executive Council

6:30–8:30pm

via Zoom (unless otherwise noted)

Tuesdays

June 23

August 11

October 27

House of Delegates (HOD)

8:30am–COB

Ala Moana Hotel

Sunday, November 21

HOD Reference Task Force (RTF)

TBD



Conferences & Events

HDA 2021 CE Series

July 15 and September 16 (via Zoom)

Western States Presidents Conference

July 31–August 1, Monterey

ADA 14th District Caucus I

August 27–29, Salt Lake City

ADA “SmileCon” Annual Session & House of Delegates

October 10–16, Las Vegas

Dates/times subject to change. Please call to confirm attendance. If you would like to add your event, please contact the HDA office.



E Komo Mai! New Members

Dana Adachi, DDS

David Ching, DMD

Brendt Lum, DDS

Yunsang Park, DDS

Brian Sakamoto, DDS

Scott Segawa, DDS

Emilie Sumida, DDS

Kendall Tada, DDS

Eric Yamaura, DDS



In Memoriam

Richard Haruki, DDS

William Ohara, DDS

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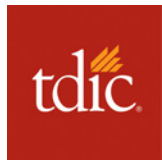
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Smiles Update!

By Dr. Scott Morita, HDA Foundation Secretary

With February representing National Children's Health Month, the Hawaii Dental Association Foundation's (HDAF) Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) team continued to plan diligently for the keiki of Hawaii while adapting for the pandemic.

Mayoral Proclamation

This year, Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi presented a GKAS proclamation to the HDAF. On February 22, HDAF President Dr. Gary Yonemoto and Secretary Dr. Scott Morita visited with Mayor Blangiardi to receive the proclamation at Honolulu Hale (cover photo), with Fred the Flossasaurus making his annual appearance. The HDAF appreciates the Mayor's recognition of the importance of oral health, especially during a pandemic, as well as the collaborative efforts of the community to support Hawaii's oral health and the new HDAF program, Give Hawaii a Smile, which broadens HDAF outreach. The HDAF looks forward to working with the mayor and other statewide officials to advance oral health efforts for our keiki, kupuna, and kamaaina!

Give Kids a Smile Events

A virtual dental education program designed by the HDAF's GKAS team and our communications firm Hawaii Public Policy Advocates will be implemented this year to help educate Hawaii's elementary public school children statewide. The interactive presentation aims to help our valued educators teach Hawaii's keiki the

importance of dental care, proper technique, and recommendations to see their dentist regularly. Pending the state's future pandemic guidelines, the HDAF hopes to resume in-person GKAS events statewide starting in February 2022.

Give Kids a Smile Fundraiser

Please save the date! The HDAF plans to host the Annual Give Kids a Smile Fundraiser next year at Alohilani Hotel on October 1, 2022. It is with your help and support that we can continue to impact keiki's oral health for the better through our GKAS program. 🦷



Ms. Melissa Pavlick (legislative consultant), HDAF President Dr. Gary Yonemoto, and HDAF Secretary Dr. Scott Morita receive the GKAS Proclamation from Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi.



The HDAF appreciates the mayor's recognition of the importance of oral health... as well as the collaborative efforts of the community to support Hawaii's oral health.



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HDA CE Series

By Dr. Jaelyn Lum, *Chair, Dental Education Program*

In place of an annual convention, HDA has planned a **2021 CE series**. Please be on the lookout for further details through emails. Classes will be available to both dentists and their staff, and pricing will be based on HDA membership.

These courses have already occurred:

- Ethics: January 21, by Mr. Art Curley (492 attendees).
- HIOSH: March 4, by Mr. Alan Yamamoto (294 attendees).
- Sleep Apnea: April 22, by Dr. Fernanda Almeida (169 attendees).

The following are **“Save the Dates”** with topics to be determined: Mr. Ali Oromchian will present “To Tweet or Not to Tweet” on **July 15** from 9am–11am, and Ms. Cindy Ishimoto will present “Finishing the Year Strong” (practice management) on **September 16** from 9am–12pm. More details to come in future emails.

If you feel that you are not receiving emails from HDA, please check and confirm that we have your **current** email that *you* check (it is easy to overlook updating info).

Update: The Hawaii State Board of Dentistry has just approved a waiver to allow for CE credits received from virtual courses. HDA reminds all members to take those courses you need/want; retain all relevant documentation; and renew when the time arrives. Dentists may need to submit a waiver if audited. Continue to review the BOD FAQs at <https://cca.hawaii.gov/pvl/boards/dentist/> (click on Dentistry COVID-19 FAQs). HDA continues to

monitor and communicate with the BOD and will push out updated information when received.

The **Western Regional Dental Experience** hosted by the Arizona Dental Association was held virtually in April. All attendees were able to access recorded courses until May 10. There have been 121 HDA members who signed up to virtually attend. Arizona fortunately has the platform and staff to provide recorded webinars (that can be viewed later for credit). This is easier said than done (upon implementation) and we appreciate the invite to HDA members to access this method of virtual classes.

Polling results from HDA members have rolled in:

- Most of our members are fully vaccinated or will be (at the time of the poll).
- Most have also indicated that they are looking forward to an in-person convention for 2022 preferably in the first half of the year.

While that sentiment is very valuable, planning and executing it is not the

same. Our Dental Education Program is working on 2022 and we have found that planning for groups over 100 attendees is *very* different than planning for smaller groups (say, 50 or more people like a study club). There are facility fees and government safety restrictions to consider/meet. Our state leaders and state regulations and restrictions will determine when conventions can occur. We are trying to help our members meet your CE needs, retain goodwill among our attendees and host venue, while minimizing losses in planning resources and revenue. A big chunk of our revenue usually comes from exhibitors (from the mainland). Though they would like to come exhibit, they are also facing their own changes in travel policies and limited budgets.

Please be patient as we navigate this planning for gatherings for over 100 people, with huge hopes in the near future to once again host another annual in-person convention.

Mahalo for your membership! 🍷



We are trying to help our members meet their CE needs, retain goodwill among our attendees and host venue, while minimizing losses in planning resources and revenue.

Our 2021 County Presidents

In this Spring 2021 edition, we're getting to know our four county presidents!

By Dr. Candace Wada, HDA Member

Dr. Alan Fujimoto

Dr. Alan Fujimoto, our Hawaii County Dental Society President, was born in Hilo when Hawaii wasn't even a state yet! He spent his high school years across the island at Hawaii Preparatory Academy in Kamuela. He then attended the University of Southern California earning an undergraduate degree in Chemistry. He met his wife, Phyllis, in his final year of undergrad at USC. He went to the University of Southern California Dental School and got married two days after he graduated from dental school.

After seriously considering music or a career in chemistry, Alan said, "I knew the most about dentistry having worked in my father's dental practice. It allowed me to expand my love of science with a touch of creativity and art as a bonus." Although he was encouraged to specialize in prosthodontics by faculty mentors, after a few years back home doing general dentistry, he was sold—it gave him the opportunity to practice a little bit of everything.

For fun Alan enjoys an occasional round of golf; he also wants to pursue a second career in the culinary arts since he has been in the kitchen cooking ever since he can remember. He and Phyllis have been blessed with four indoor rescue cats.

When asked how it was when he attended dental school he replied, "USC dental school in the late 70's and 80's was strict; many on the faculty made sure that you knew you were a student and they were the professors. Their stern



Dr. Alan Fujimoto then



Dr. Alan Fujimoto now

ways were very demanding and often-times cruel with criticism. I have had the opportunity to help the Bay Clinic of Hilo residency program, as their informal CAD/CAM director, helping train and mentor residents and staff. It seems dental education has become more relaxed and supportive over the years. I've tried to perpetuate that style of teaching." Alan has actively practiced for over 36 years in Hilo.

"It is an exciting time in dentistry—CAD/CAM, CBDT integration, 3D printing, CEREC, lasers, computers, and software, as well as implantology, have all changed the landscape of dentistry forever. They improved my practice and expanded my treatment options. They have kept my passion for dentistry alive," said Alan. "Our compassionate care and understanding of patients have remained the same. Many of my patients don't know that I use special materials or techniques,

but they do know I would try anything to make things better for them."

In Hilo, Alan has served in many service organizations and boards. However, when he decided to step away from local community service, he turned to his profession. Alan said, "My father Edwin, was an HDA President and my sister Patsy is now in her third term as HDA President. I followed in their path of service through the Hawaii County Dental Society, Hawaii State Board examiner, ADEX, and got on the Board of Trustees of the HDA. Unfortunately, my body didn't cooperate, so I retired from active practice and pursuit of the HDA Presidency. However, I've returned as the Hawaii County Dental President again, and hopefully have encouraged the next generation of younger dentists to get involved with the HCDS, HDA, and ADA. After all, they *are* the future of dentistry."





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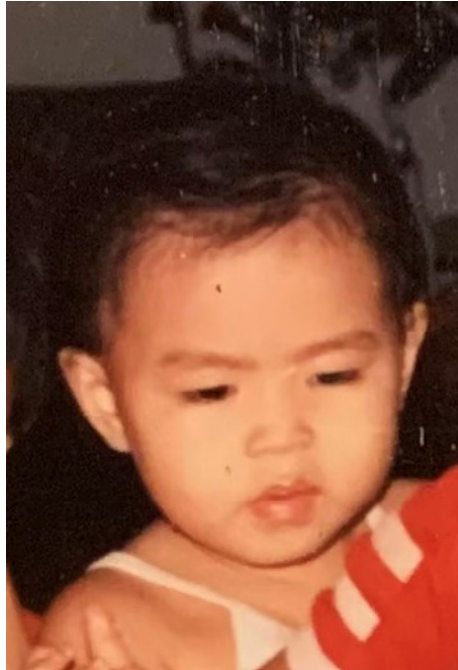


Dr. Rosemarie Tan

Dr. Rosemarie Tan, our Honolulu County Dental Society President, was born in Manila, Philippines and moved to the states when she was about two years old. She grew up in Michigan and later moved to Illinois. She attended college at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is the youngest of four and the only girl in the family.

All her life she wanted to be an obstetrician-gynecologist. She attended college at the University of Illinois-Chicago. When asked how she decided to become a dentist, she said, “One day in college, a friend asked me if I was planning on taking the DAT that was scheduled for the following week. I decided to study that week and take the test. As I was waiting for the results, I researched the pros and cons of being a dentist and fell in love with the notion of owning your own business and setting your own hours. I applied for dental school later that year and the rest is history.”

She graduated from dental school in 2006 and worked as a general dentist for one year. She then decided to specialize in prosthodontics. She said, “During my prosthodontics residency, I worked with a few orthodontists on several complex cases. I was so intrigued in this multidisciplinary approach that I then decided to go into orthodontics after receiving my prosthodontics certificate.” She is a big fan of technology including the Itero scanner, paperless technology, and the CBCT. She is in private practice in Kaka’ako. For fun she likes to sunbathe, ride her electric scooter, buy vintage cars, and play pickleball.



Dr. Rosemarie Tan then



Dr. Rosemarie Tan now

When asked how she got involved in organized dentistry, Rose replied, “My involvement first started in the Young Dentist group. Next thing was serving as a Board Member of the HDA Foundation, Treasurer of Honolulu County, President-Elect and now President of Honolulu County Dental Society.” According to Rose, although

dentistry has changed a lot through the years. One thing that has not changed is “compassion for our patients.” Her advice to colleagues: “Live and learn, and you’ll thrive. Find what you love to do, work to be great at it, pursue it, and do it. And, continue to chase your best self.”



My involvement first started in the Young Dentist group. Next thing was serving as a Board Member of the HDA Foundation, Treasurer of Honolulu County, President-Elect and now President of Honolulu County Dental Society.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Kanoe Baird

Dr. Kanoe Baird, our Kauai County Dental Society President, was born on and raised on Kauai. She went to Kamehameha in the seventh grade and boarded until graduation. She then attended UH-Manoa, receiving a B.S. in Dental Hygiene; she later went to dental school at Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health, where they instill a devotion to community service, creating clinicians with service in mind. Kanoe said, “My first patient in dental school was in her mid-40’s and needed a denture. It was so disheartening that I had to make a prosthesis for someone so young. I thought the best way to help people would be to start from the beginning, creating a culture of prevention and comprehensive care in pediatric patients.” She went on to a career in pediatric dentistry having gone through the NYU-Langone Pediatric program here in Hawaii.

After dental school, she became engaged. She and her supportive other half have a 14-month-old child together and they split time between Chicago and Hawaii. Kanoe said, “My parents instilled a strong engagement to community service in me at an early age. Hawaiian culture and values were reinforced daily by my mom.” She said she wanted to be a dentist from an early age, having had admiration for her dad and wanting to do anything he did. She said, “I like to say I have been in dentistry, my whole life because the practice of dentistry involves a team: as a child, I had to take the trash out as a chore, I assisted when I was in college, and now I finally have the opportunity to



Dr. Kanoe Baird then

serve patients as a clinician.” Kanoe has been practicing for about five years now.

When asked how she got involved in the local dental society, Kanoe said, “It was forced on me—just kidding!” She first volunteered as secretary, and then next thing she knew, succession meant she became president. Seriously, she said it gives her the opportunity to meet all the dentists on Kauai. She said she has always supported and loved organized dentistry. Her dad set a good example for her—he was a



Dr. Kanoe Baird now

trustee on the HDA Board and later served on the Board of Dental Examiners, eventually as president.

Lastly, when asked for any words of wisdom, she said, “My advice, and something that I try to accomplish, is to never stop learning. As dentists we are great at wanting to be better, to do more, and to keep up with the latest technology.” She is a big proponent of community collaboration. She said, “On Kauai, we are fortunate to have wonderful dentists that support the success of each other.”



My advice, and something that I try to accomplish, is to never stop learning. As dentists we are great at wanting to be better, to do more, and to keep up with the latest technology.

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Matt Porter recently outlined questions to ask a Dental Services Organization that approaches you with an offer to sell your practice. To read the article, scan the QR code or type the following website into your web browser: www.bit.ly/2QlyGjZ

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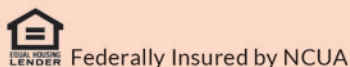
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Dr. Heather Hearon

Dr. Heather Hearon, our Maui County Dental Society President, was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona and graduated from Salpointe Catholic High School. She had a collegiate swimming career at the University of California-San Diego, which she credits as the place where she discovered she wanted to be a dentist, in particular the UCSD Pre-Dental Society, where they ran three free dental clinics helping the underserved populations of San Diego get access to dental care. Heather said, “One experience that stood out was when a dentist made a Maryland bridge for a patient who was missing a front tooth. She picked up the mirror and immediately teared up when she saw herself complete with her front tooth. It was a gratifying moment.”

Heather attended the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health in Phoenix, Arizona, where there is an emphasis on technology. She adds, “We had courses and hands-on experience with digital impressions, lasers (for periodontal and restorative procedures), and implant placement.”

She moved to Maui almost ten years ago, right after graduation from dental school for her residency program. Her parents and siblings are all on the mainland. She met her husband, Josh, here on Maui while paddling for Na Kai Ewalu. She said, “We have a wonderful, smiley, curious, funny 5-year-old, Caden, who is growing up entirely too fast.” She loves crafting, swimming, reading, and spending fun times with friends. She said, “I have been practicing dentistry for ten beautiful years here in the Maui community.”



Dr. Heather Hearon then

Heather said, “As the timeless adage goes: the only constant in life is change. My greatest hope for our profession is that as we make these changes to try to keep up, that we always strive to keep sight of why we are dentists in the first place, to help people. If I can help as many people as I can feel better about their smiles, feel better about themselves, using the best technology possible, then I have done my job. I have seen the most improvement with my practice after I have gone to various dental continuing education courses. These courses allow me to learn new techniques and bring them back to my practice.”



Dr. Heather Hearon now

Believing that “we are all stronger together,” she feels the camaraderie in the Maui County Dental Society has been a great support system. She has many friendships that have grown out of her involvement with the HDA. She said, “I also appreciate being informed of decisions being proposed and made in the legislature that impact our profession; we have seen the impact we have had.” Advice from her father that she was given as a little girl, “Every day and in every way, I am getting better and better. That means taking the lessons of your past, growing and learning from them, and applying them to your future.” 🦷



I am getting better and better. That means taking the lessons of your past, growing and learning from them, and applying them to your future.



Ms. Melissa Pavlicek



Mr. Danny Cup Choy

Legislative Session Adjourns

By Ms. Melissa Pavlicek and Mr. Danny Cup Choy
Hawaii Public Policy Advocates/HDA Legislative Consultants

The 2021 legislature adjourned on April 29 and it was truly a legislative session unlike any other. The state capitol was closed to the public, which meant the entire session was conducted virtually. While advocates were unable to have the frequent in-person contact and face-to-face interaction most have grown accustomed to, this session provided unprecedented opportunities for engagement to residents across the state. Gone were the days of needing to take a day off from work, possibly fly from a neighbor island, just for the chance to testify on a particular measure. This year, from the comfort of their home, any individual (with access to a computer) could participate in the legislative process by virtually testifying. In addition, every legislative hearing was streamed online and then archived so members of the public could watch them at their leisure (as opposed to needing to be in the hearing room to see what happened). As we move towards the 2022 legislative session and the possibility of reopening the state capitol to the public, it will be interesting to monitor whether the virtual testimony and/or archiving of all legislative hearings will continue.

Thankfully, based largely on the federal stimulus package and eliminating many vacant state government positions, the state's budget pain was not as deep as initially feared. Many programs thought to be on the chopping block survived, there were no mass state worker layoffs or furloughs, and the legislature approved a \$31.2 billion

budget over the next two years. This has led some legislators to publicly call for bolder action in the 2022 legislative session. A sample of ambitious topics that many believe will be considered next year include raising the minimum wage, building more affordable housing, diversifying the local economy, legalizing recreational marijuana, and expanding broadband service.

Regarding issues of importance to the HDA, with state leaders' laser-focused on shoring up the budget shortfall, ensuring essential programs can continue, and reopening the local and tourist economy, traditional oral health issues we typically see were not front and center this session. There was little to no traction on any bills related to the regulation of dental assistants, dental therapy, restoring benefits for adult Medicaid recipients, and water fluoridation. We certainly expect most of these issues to return in 2022 with greater focus.

The HDA government affairs team will be engaging with policymakers during the interim to ensure that dentist's voices are heard in the policy discussion. This includes legislators, the board of dentistry, and numerous oral health stakeholders on all sides of these issues. We appreciate the willingness of HDA members to support these efforts and seek solutions to the pressing oral health issues facing our community, and we hope that you continue to participate with us as we chart our policy course leading into the 2022 legislative session. 🦷



The HDA government affairs team will be engaging with policymakers during the interim to ensure that dentist's voices are heard.

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2021 ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day

Hawaii Represents!

By Dr. Edmund Cassella, ADA Sr Delegate, Hawaii Action Team Leader, Hawaii ADPAC Chair

The 2021 ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day was held virtually again this year. It was organized and presented by the ADA's Political Action Committee (ADPAC). Over 450 dentists and students participated, including our Hawaii team, comprised of Action Team Leaders (ATLs) Drs. Wayne Leong, Neil Nunokawa, Gary Yonemoto, and Edmund Cassella, with support from our Executive Director Ms. Kim Nguyen. We were happy to have Dr. Lauren Yap, a pediatric dental resident from Hawaii, who is currently in Philadelphia finishing her pediatric dental residency, join us as well.

At the all-day virtual training on Sunday, April 25, attendees heard from political analysts, subject matter experts, and politically involved dentists on issues that affect oral health in the United States. Speakers also presented their take on the political climate in DC.

The three issues attendees reviewed at the training and which our ATLs discussed with our Congressional Delegation are:

1. COVID-19 Relief and Bills

- a. H.R. 2079 Eliminating the Provider Relief Fund Tax Penalties Act

b. H.R. 885 The Small Business PPE Tax Credit Act

2. Enduring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA) Bills

- a. H.R. 1916

- b. S. 754

3. Student Loan and Postgraduate Educational Debt and Bills

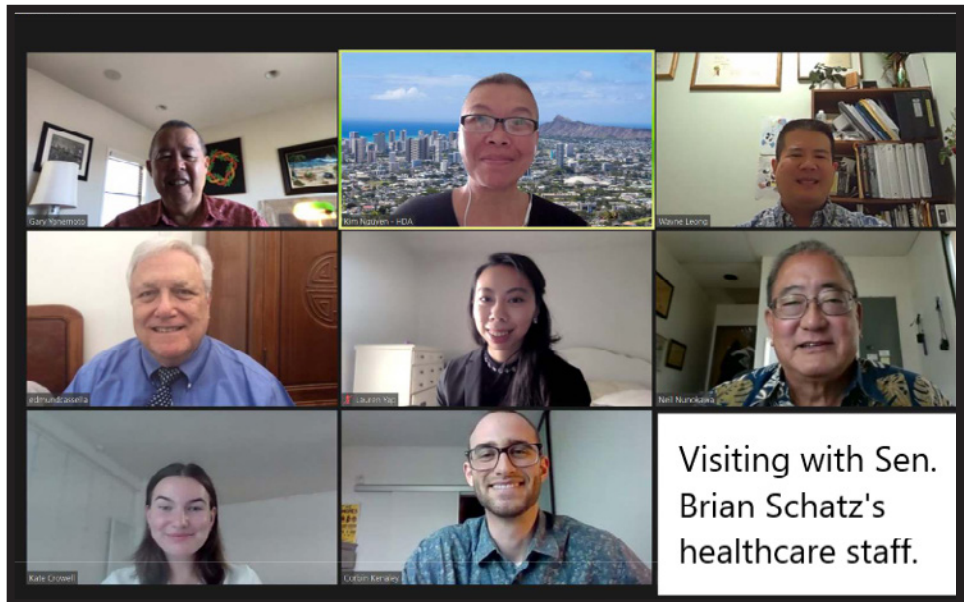
- a. H.R. 1918 Student Loan Refinancing and Recalculation Act

- b. H.R. 2160 The Student Loan Refinancing Act

On Wednesday, April 28, we visited with healthcare staffers from Senators Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz's

offices, to ask for their support of these healthcare issues. Although we were unable to visit with Representatives Ed Case and Kai Kahele, we will maintain communication with them.

Although Lobby Day is a multi-day event, we strongly encourage all our members to participate in the legislative advocacy process, at the local, state, and federal levels throughout the year. Our collective voices are needed to elevate awareness of oral health issues among our decision-makers—for our patients and for the public. Visit www.ada.org/lobbyday for more information. 🦷





Handling Conflicts with Confidence: Tools To Reduce Tension and Risk

By TDIC Risk Management

In 2020 alone, The Dentists Insurance Company's Risk Management Advice Line received 18,018 calls from dentists seeking support to navigate practice challenges. It's a number that illustrates the myriad of conflicts dentists navigate today as well as the profound need for tools to help them expertly de-escalate potential crises.

Through the Advice Line, experienced analysts provide guidance to TDIC policyholders and members of dental associations in the states the insurance company serves—consulting on everything from COVID-19 pressures to

employment concerns to problematic patient situations. Regardless of the topic, a common theme across the thousands of calls is a lack of confidence or comfortability in resolving conflicts. In fact, dentists sometimes ask the risk management analyst if they would be willing to speak to a patient or employee on their behalf. However, it's the analyst's role to provide the education, support, and preventive advice to empower the dentist to independently engage in those conversations.

The ability to resolve conflicts comes more naturally for some than for

others, but many people avoid, delay or, at the very least, greatly dislike disagreements.

What's keeping you from conflict resolution?

The pull of procrastination

When we hold the false premise that all conflict is bad, of course we want to avoid it. However, the absence of conflict isn't harmony, it's apathy. When patients or staff speak their minds, it's usually because they care. As advice





line calls, claims, and cases illustrate, avoiding conflict only allows the conflict to grow. We must understand that conflict will not resolve on its own.

“Non-procrastinators focus on the task that needs to be done,” volitional psychologist Joseph Ferrari, PhD, explained in an interview with the American Psychological Association. “They have a stronger personal identity and are less concerned about what psychologists call ‘social esteem’—how others like us—as opposed to self-esteem, which is how we feel about ourselves.”

The aspiration to be agreeable

It’s natural to want to be nice and kind, especially when sustaining relationships with staff and patients over many years. However, a dentist or office manager will often support an agreement or compromise that is not in the practice’s best interest, simply to preserve their likeability. When approaching a situation with an intention of a resolution, rather than a win, it’s possible to disagree without being disagreeable. As author Max Lucado said, “Conflict is inevitable. Combat is optional.”

The lack of psychological safety

Trusting relationships among practice teams and between practices and their patients are built over time. Have you fostered an environment where staff can disagree without fear of hostility or being seen as disloyal? High-performing teams provide channels for feedback, encourage conversation, value reliability, and hold each other accountable.

The tendency to take things personally

In the heat of conflict, we can be so busy disliking each other that there’s no energy left for productive debates. The truth is that when a personal conflict exists, every conflict large and small is seen in a negative light. Evaluate conflicts with objectivity: Is the issue centered around a task or issue, a pattern of behavior, or truly the relationship? When every issue is interpreted as personal, our egos and esteem affect our ability to successfully resolve them.

Strive for these five principles to mitigate and de-escalate conflict

Be clear

Overgeneralization can increase drama. For example, “You’re always late to work,” is a broad statement that invites defensiveness. “I’m concerned that you’ve been about 30 minutes late the past three Fridays” is a specific, facts-based example. Alternately, to preserve likeability, communications may be so vague that both sides are left with different interpretations. If the dentist remarks on the employee’s lateness, even if there’s no specificity or follow through, the dentist may feel like they’ve addressed the issue and the employee may feel like they’re off the hook. This lack of clarity means a conflict is likely to occur in the future if the employee is late again.

With patients clarity comes with listening to concerns firsthand, not deflecting issues or delegating them to staff. Patients, just like everyone else, want to feel heard. Allow them

to voice their concerns without interrupting or speculating on what may be driving the issue. Listen attentively to the patient and then repeat back your understanding of their concern so there is no misunderstanding about the source of conflict.

Be empathetic

Whether at home, in the practice, or out in the world, we tend to judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions. Others do the same. In the case of an employee who is late to work, the dentist judges the action and the impact to the schedule. The employee judges their own intentions and everything they’ve done—fighting traffic, getting kids to school, skipping breakfast—to try to make it to work on time.

While the intention doesn’t excuse the action, an attempt to see both sides will facilitate more productive, solution-oriented discussions. Empathy also extends to saying thanks to employees for positive contributions of every size and offering sincere apologies when you’re in the wrong.

Be patient

Living with unresolved conflict can be stressful, but rushing to a solution rarely bears long-term gain. When a patient or employee has made a demand or offered a solution that you may not be able to accept in its current form, explain that you will need time to consider their request and return your decision. Understand that the individual with whom you’re working through the conflict may also need time to consider their answer to your proposed solution. However, if a patient’s demand is unreasonable, such as never scheduling a specific staff



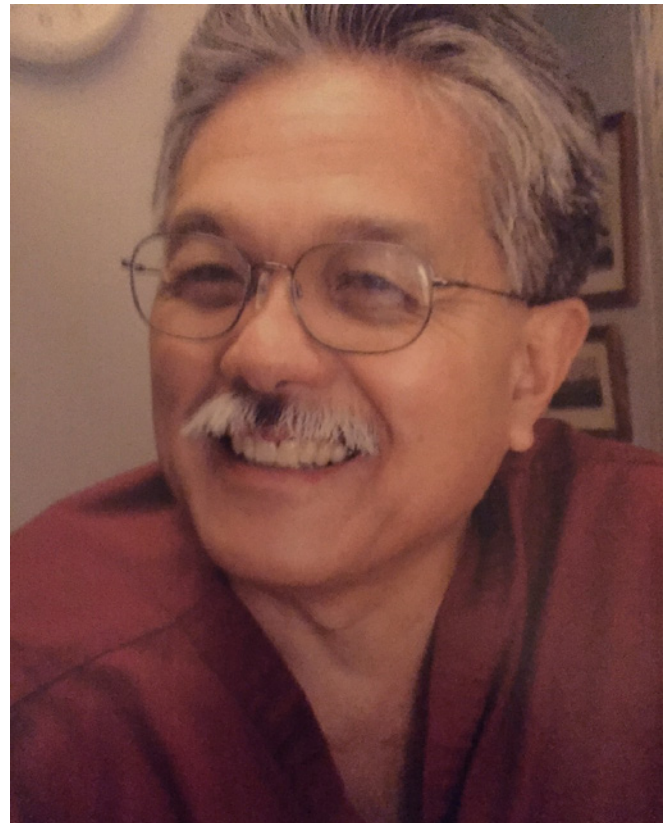
Volunteer Profile

By Dr. Carla Fukumoto, *HDA Secretary*

We're highlighting Dr. Clay Hiramoto, who volunteers for the Endorsement Program, where the group considers products and services that HDA may endorse. We posed the question to Clay, "How do you volunteer for the HDA, and why?"

He answers, "In short, to facilitate and to network. Facilitate, in order to make work easier for the committee and overall organization. Network, for future contacts socially or for reference concerning the organization, whether it is the HDA or Kauai County Dental Society."

We thank him for his time in volunteering! 🦷



RISK MANAGEMENT, cont.

member on the day that they come in for their appointments or demanding exorbitant compensation, it is fair to answer at the time. Give a measured response that keeps the discussion open to reasonable demands, such as, "I understand that you are unhappy, but I don't feel that your request is truly a fair assessment of the events," or "I don't feel it's reasonable to ask me to make adjustments that would create a disruption for my practice as well as other employees or patients."

Be objective

Easier said than done, isn't it? How the message is being delivered and who it is delivered by often determines how we'll engage more than the content. Taking a calm, respectful

approach and, if needed, finding a private place to talk helps create the space for an objective discussion. When struggling to approach or engage in a conflict, start with the facts. No need to disparage others' character or values or to bring up past conflicts unless there is an established pattern of issues. View the situation as an opportunity to analyze the point of conflict, share your observations and listen to the other perspective before pursuing a resolution.

Be curious

Empathy doesn't mean making assumptions about others' experiences. Listen first, engaging the patient or employee with questions to understand their perspective. Your curiosity can help de-escalate rapid

escalation of conflict. For the late employee, an approach could be, "I've observed that you're on time for most of your shifts, but not for the last few Fridays. Is there something going on that day that we can talk about?" Once you've heard the employee's side, invite their input in finding a solution.

Conflicts in the dental practice are inevitable, and the pressures of the past year have amplified disagreements in financial, scheduling, employment, clinical protocol, and health issues. By addressing conflicts early and reframing them as an opportunity to productively address unresolved issues, you can better protect your practice. 🦷



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