



Michigan Dental Association
Unofficial Board Actions
September 15-16, 2022

Trustee Report: Dr. Lauryne Vanderhoof

Our September board meeting was held in conjunction with the ADA 9th District Pre-Caucus in Benton Harbor. To kick off our board meeting, Dr. Jane Grover, Senior Director of the Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention gave the board a presentation on health equity. To achieve health equity, barriers of access to care need to be reduced. She gave us “bite sized” tips for how we can do our part to help ensure optimal health for *all*.

We discussed the new state budget, and how it includes one of the largest increases for dental benefits and funding in decades. The state budget will take effect in October. In this budget, there are increased reimbursements for hospital and ambulatory operatories- up from \$200 to \$2,300 and \$1,495, respectively. The fee schedule for anesthesia is still being worked on, and there could be an increase there as well. As reimbursements increase in these settings, providers will hopefully have an easier time getting access to the surgical setting they need for sedation dentistry. This will increase access to care for our most vulnerable patient populations who need it most.

Looking at the MDA’s financials, there is a deficit budget going in to 2023. The organization is feeling the burden of inflation and costs across the board are up. Another harsh reality is a decline in membership, especially among new dentists. To increase recruitment and retain members, the MDA plans to increase spending on targeted marketing to lagging markets and to also add a full-time employee to their membership department who will focus on new dentists and dental students. Serving on the Committee on Finance, we understand the frustrations with rising costs of membership. To minimize the amount that dues are raised, the plan is to use part of our reserves to cover anticipated expenditures. Overall, the MDA has healthy reserves that are funded above target goal, and the organization is financially stable.

Another issue I wanted to bring to your attention is a ballot initiative up for vote November 8th in Massachusetts. The ballot has a proposal on insurance reform regarding Medical Loss Ratio and dental insurance companies.

What is Medical Loss Ratio? It is the dollar amount of paid claims out of the total amount paid through premiums. If premiums get paid, but the money is not spent on dental care, where does the money go? This proposal aims to set the medical loss ratio for dental plans at 83%, requiring insurers to refund any excess premium to the customer.

It is time to fight back against the unfair practices of dental insurance companies, and your organization is putting its money where its mouth is. The ADA has donated \$5 Million towards the cause and your board approved a \$50,000 donation.

I know this legislation is not up in Michigan, but if it is approved in Massachusetts, it will set a precedent that would allow similar insurance reform to pass in other states. Dental insurers have plenty at stake with the proposal, too. They are estimated to be spending as much as twenty million dollars to solicit a “NO” vote. Massachusetts needs all the help they can get, so please consider making an individual donation.

That is my trustee report, if you would like more details about the meeting, please see the document below!

Lauryne Vanderhoof, DDS MDA Trustee

Highlights from the Board of Trustees Meeting

Board Development

The Board meeting began on Thursday, September 15 with a presentation by Dr. Jane Grover, ADA Senior Director, Council on Advocacy for Access and Prevention, on health equity. She defined health equity as the optimal level of health for all people. Three steps to pursue health equity include focusing on societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, reducing barriers to access to care, and recognizing the need for action. The Board learned that there are many issues which impact health, such as where you live, your access to affordable healthy food, employment and working conditions, government policies and social structural influences, discrimination, and bias, as well as insurance and access to health care providers, among others. There are racial disparities in recent achievements in children’s dental health as well as continuation of disparities in adults, although there has been positive movement since the year 2000. Dr. Grover highlighted ADA policy priorities to address dental health equity and also shared ideas that could be implemented at the local level to advance dental health equity.

Generative Discussion: The Board held a generative discussion on Dental Health Equity, following up on Dr. Grover’s presentation. One recent accomplishment is the 2023 State of Michigan budget investment in dental Medicaid as well as funding which will enhance access for special needs patients to hospital/ambulatory care centers. There is a need to continue to address dental health disparities by raising awareness among legislators.

The discussion also yielded many opportunities for individual dentists to advance dental health equity at the local level by getting involved with the local oral health coalition and addressing local challenges such as transportation. It was suggested that short, practical, and accessible information about incorporating practices to support dental health equity in the dental office could motivate more dentists to take positive steps. Spreading the word about positive examples, as well as highlighting MDA Foundation grants supporting access to care, could have a positive impact. More information about the MDA Committee on Access and Prevention initiatives will be provided.

Topic of Discussion: The Board also viewed and discussed a video by Sam Bowtell on “[Being Agile - Values and Principles](#).” Agile is of interest to the Board, as the ADA has undertaken this system of project management. The video highlighted the “Agile Manifesto,” a document that sets out the key values and principles behind the Agile philosophy and serves to help development teams work more

efficiently and sustainably. The highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early, and continuous, delivery of valuable information.

Budget, Dues, and Optional Dues Items

2023 Budget: The Committee on Finance presented the draft budget and Treasurer Chris Gorecki noted that it had been transmitted to the House of Delegates for comment and no comments received. The Board approved the 2023 budget as presented. It is 3-4% higher in terms of both revenues and expenses. The budget includes increased resources to address member value and member engagement, especially among new dentists. Full dues were set at \$580 and it is a deficit budget, with a net revenue of (\$59,020). As the MDA reserves are well over the target of 75% of operating budget, the Board believes this balanced approach is in alignment with the Strategic Plan. Dues invoices will also include voluntary items for the Dental Pac at \$65, ADPAC at \$65, and the MDA Foundation at \$65. Washtenaw District Dental Society members' invoices will also include the option to support its scholarship fund at \$65.

Governance

Strategic Plan: Karen Burgess gave an update on progress on the 2021-25 Strategic Plan for each of the strategic plan goals. Current activity includes:

- Qualitative research among D3 and D4 dental students and early career dentists (Member value)
- Implementation of marketing automation technology (Member engagement)
- Evaluation of Products and Services (Organizational sustainability)
- Upcoming launch of the Michigan Diverse Dental Alliance website (Understand and improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)
- Positive metrics for member engagement with advocacy initiatives and increased member communications on advocacy (Effective advocacy)

MDA Health Plan: The MDA Board approved Drs. Michelle Dziurgot, Mark Johnston, Eric Knudsen, Elizabeth Ralstrom and Michele Tulak-Gorecki to run for election for the MDA Health Plan Board; the four other nominees are nominated by the MDA Insurance and Financial Group Board. The entire slate of nine member dentists must also be confirmed through election by the MDA Health Plan's participating employers.

Policy

Massachusetts Loss Ratio Ballot Initiative: The Board of Trustees took action to make a contribution of \$50,000 from the Non-Reserve Fund to support the Massachusetts Ballot initiative which will require dental insurance carriers to spend at least 83% of premium dollars on patient care rather than on administrative costs, salaries and profits. The ADA made a \$5 million donation to support the campaign, and donations are anticipated from other state societies across the country. Individual donors are also encouraged to give.

MDA Vision Statement and Guiding Principles: The MDA's Vision Statement and Guiding Principles were approved in June 2009. Upon review and discussion, the Board decided to revisit the vision and guiding principles, as well as the MDA mission statement (Helping Member Dentists Succeed). This will be discussed and a recommendation brought forward at the December 2022 meeting.

Intra-Oral Piercing and Tongue-Splitting: The Board adopted the updated ADA policy that advised against this practice, and requested the Committee on Governmental and Insurance Affairs to look into regulating this practice in Michigan. Currently, these procedures are done in tattoo parlors with no mechanism to address adverse outcomes.