

# THE JOURNEY & THE HORIZON

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP. A FUTURE OF POSSIBILITY.



**JOHN S. RUTKAUSKAS**  
CURRENT CEO

27 years of vision,  
leadership, and impact.  
A foundation that  
will endure.



**JESSICA Y. LEE**  
FUTURE CEO

Building on a legacy  
of excellence to  
lead us forward.





# THE JOURNEY & THE HORIZON

A **LEGACY** OF LEADERSHIP. A **FUTURE** OF POSSIBILITY.

AAPD's Chief Executive Officer **John S. Rutkauskas, DDS, MBA, CAE** will retire on June 30, 2026. During AAPD 2026 in Las Vegas, a tribute will be presented for his 27 years of service during the Opening Keynote Session on Friday morning. Please join us in showing appreciation to Dr. Rutkauskas for his tremendous leadership and stewardship of the AAPD. Among the many accomplishments during his tenure:

- Membership grew from slightly over 4,000 to **over 11,000**.
- First year residency positions increased from **180 to over 500**, thanks in large part to AAPD's successful federal advocacy for Title VII funding for pediatric dentistry. This has made pediatric dentistry the second largest dental specialty, next to only orthodontics.
- AAPD's revenue has grown to over **\$11 million** annually, along with 100% of annual revenue maintained in reserves.
- The AAPD Foundation's assets peaked at more than **\$22 million**, driven by a focus on access to care grants to clinics serving the most vulnerable children. Since 2010, the Foundation has issued nearly **\$12 million** in grants to **191 organizations in 41 states** and the District of Columbia. Foundation grantees have helped nearly **905,000 children**.
- Annual Session average attendance doubled from under 3,000 to **over 6,000**.
- There was steady growth in well-attended stand-alone CE courses such as Safe & Effective Sedation for the Pediatric Dental Patient, New Comprehensive Review: Advances in Pediatric Dentistry, Oral Clinical Exam Review, and unique international courses with the Royal Colleges of Surgeons in both Scotland and Ireland.
- Creation of comprehensive online CE for members via Education Passport.
- Development of **Leadership Institute (LI)** at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, now up to Cohort VIII, and the Advanced Leadership Institute at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. At the direction of the Board of Trustees, LI is now officially named the **Dr. John S. Rutkauskas Leadership Institute**.
- Initiation of the **AAPD PAC**, which has helped Congressional Liaisons and other AAPD advocates build good relationships with Members of Congress.
- Creation of the **Research and Policy Center (RPC)**, which has grown to be a leader in public policy analysis concerning children's oral health.
- Engagement of a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm, which has been critical to AAPD's federal advocacy success.
- Implementation of the **Public Policy Advocates (PPA) program**, modeled after the California Society of Pediatric Dentistry's PPA experience, to bolster state legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts by state chapters. This has led to many gains, including Medicaid dental fee increases and insurance reforms in a number of states. This network has also proven critical to bolstering state and local decisions in support of community water fluoridation.
- Implementation of two robust **podcast** series.
- Re-creation and re-imagining of the **FAAPD/ Fellowship program**.
- Opening of the online member social media **Little Teeth Chat**.
- Growth of headquarters staff to **30**, with expanded skill sets including three with dental degrees, three with MBA degrees, five with master's degrees, one with a law degree, five with CAE (Certified Association Executive) status, two with CFRE (Certified Fundraising Executive) credentials, two with CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) credentials, and one Certified Chief of Staff.

## AAPD ANNOUNCES THE NEW INCOMING CEO

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) proudly announces the appointment of **Jessica Y. Lee, DDS, MPH, PhD**, as its next Chief Executive Officer, transitioning June 1, 2026. A globally recognized leader in pediatric dentistry, health policy, and academic innovation, Dr. Lee brings an unparalleled record of achievement and vision to the nation's leading organization dedicated to advancing optimal oral health for all children.

Dr. Lee's career exemplifies excellence and impact. She currently serves as the William M. Demeritt Distinguished Professor of Pediatric Dentistry and Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Leadership Development at the University of North Carolina Adams School of Dentistry, where she has helped shape the future of dental education and pediatric dentistry. Her leadership within AAPD spans nearly 30 years, including service as AAPD President (2020 to 2021).



A recipient of the U.S. Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the AAPD Merle C. Hunter Leadership Award, the AAPD Pediatric Dentist of the Year Award, and numerous other honors, Dr. Lee has consistently championed innovation, advocacy, and collaboration. Her work includes groundbreaking contributions to improving access to dental care for children, advancing oral health literacy, strengthening Medicaid policy, and developing pediatric care delivery models, as well as mentoring the next generation of pediatric dental leaders.

"Dr. Lee's appointment marks a bold and exciting new chapter for AAPD," said AAPD President Dr. Tom Ison. "Her visionary leadership, deep expertise, and unwavering commitment to children's oral health will propel

our organization forward as we navigate the evolving landscape of pediatric dentistry and healthcare."

"Dr. Lee is the ideal leader to take AAPD into the future. Her passion for advancing children's oral health, her proven ability to unite stakeholders, and her innovative approach to solving complex challenges will ensure that AAPD continues to thrive and lead the profession globally." said AAPD CEO Dr. John Rutkauskas.

As CEO, Dr. Lee will lead AAPD's mission to ensure that every child has access to safe, high-quality oral health care. She will spearhead strategic initiatives in advocacy, education, and research, while fostering partnerships that advance innovation across the profession.

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**"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to serve as the next CEO of AAPD. Together, we will build on the Academy's strong foundation to expand access, embrace innovation, and empower pediatric dentists to deliver exceptional care."**

*Dr. Jessica Y. Lee*



## WHO ATTENDS ANNUAL SESSION?

YEARS IN PRACTICE

Student/Resident	17.6%
Less than 1 Year	3.8%
1-5 Years	20.3%
6-10 Years	15.1%
11-15 Years	14.3%
16-20 Years	11%
More than 20 Years	17.4%

### FUTURE ANNUAL SESSION SITES

- 2027—Washington, D.C.
- 2028—Nashville, Tennessee
- 2029—Honolulu, Hawaii
- 2030—Boston, Massachusetts
- 2031—Louisville, Kentucky

# WELCOME TO AAPD® 2026

The Council on Annual Session, including Local Arrangement Chairs, Drs. Cody Hughes and Ruth Alvarez, have worked closely with the Scientific Program Committee, led by Dr. Martha Wells.

- The **Preconference Course** entitled Esthetic Restorative Frontiers in Pediatric Dentistry takes place on Thursday, May 21, and has a fantastic lineup of speakers.
- **Over 5,900** have registered for the meeting, including 2,650+ members, 700+ residents, and nearly 900 office staff.
- 495 research poster presentations have been accepted (242 participating in the competition and 253 presenting only).
- 285 exhibit booths have been sold, representing 193 companies.
- Nearly 3,400 will attend the AAPD and AAPD Foundation **Welcome Reception** at Caesar's Forum, featuring Kevin Griffin of

**Better Than Ezra**, John Ondrasik of **Five for Fighting**, and Robin Wilson and Jesse Valenzuela of **Gin Blossoms** who will perform the hit songs that defined a generation—including Good, Superman (It's Not Easy), 100 Years, and Hey Jealousy—while sharing the stories behind them. They will be backed by Nashville's acclaimed band **SIXWIRE**, returning from AAPD25 by popular demand.

- The **President's Farewell Dinner** will be a fabulous evening at the Keep Memory Alive Event Center. Outgoing AAPD President Dr. Tom Ison and award winners will be honored at this event.
- The **AAPD Store** can be found in booth 422. The AAPD Store offers great products like the most recent edition of The Handbook of Pediatric Dentistry or souvenirs from AAPD 2026.
- There are attendees representing **35 countries** around the world!

*Figures are as of April 6, 2026, so final numbers will be larger.*

THIS PDF IS INTERACTIVE. EVERY SECTION HAS CLICKABLE LINKS THAT ALLOW YOU TO EXPLORE TOPICS AND LEARN EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY.



Did you know? In Las Vegas, there's a network of flood tunnels beneath the Strip—and some people actually live in them, hidden from the city above. It's a stark contrast to the luxury just overhead, with millions of visitors passing by without ever realizing it exists.



# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Thank you to our 2026 Corporate Sponsors for their partnership with the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry throughout the year. Together, we're making a difference for AAPD members, their staff, and the children in their care.



## VISIONARY



## STRATEGIC



## GOLD



## SILVER



## BRONZE



# AAPD® MEMBERSHIP IS STEADY AT OVER 11,000

AAPD’s member retention remains strong, with an overall rate of 87.7% and an even higher 88.8% among Active and Life members. These numbers reflect more than just statistics; they highlight the strength of the pediatric dentistry community and the meaningful connection our members have to the Academy’s mission.

This continued commitment is what allows the AAPD to grow, evolve, and provide valuable programs, services, and support for pediatric oral health professionals. Thank you for being such an important part of the AAPD community—we truly appreciate your ongoing support!

## AAPD MEMBERSHIP 2025 – 2026

Active Member	7,112
Life Member	427
Affiliate Member	394
Associate Member	52
International Member	126
International Colleague Member	4
International Colleague Member (3 year)	18
International Student Member	74
Post Doctoral Student Member	1,061
Pre Doctoral Student Member	364
Friends of Pediatric Dentistry	8
Retired Member	1,658
Allied Member	18
Honorary Member	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,318</b>



# AAPD PEDIATRIC DENTISTS BY DISTRICT

Northeast Society of  
Pediatric Dentistry  
**1,713**

NorthCentral Society of  
Pediatric Dentistry  
**1,254**

Southeastern Society of  
Pediatric Dentistry  
**1,594**

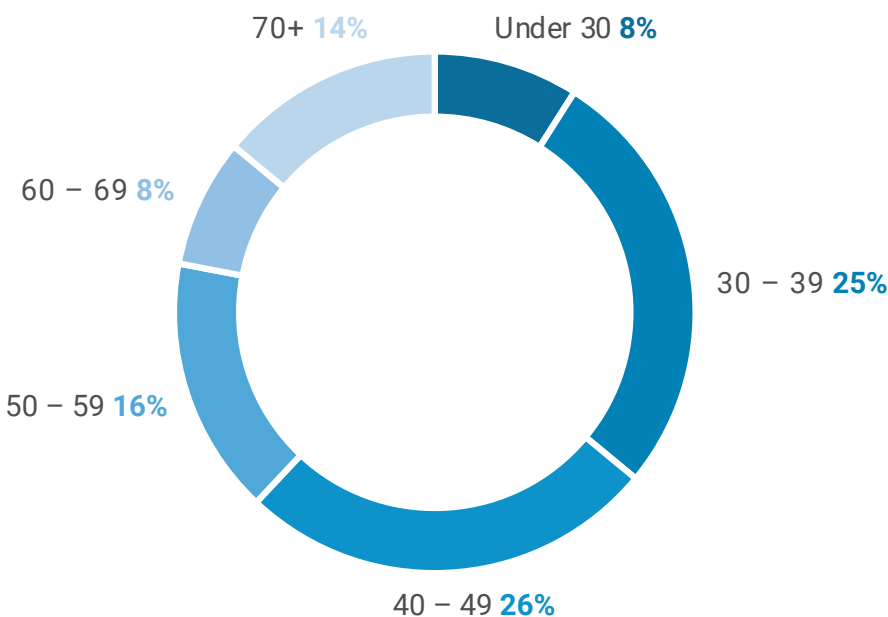
Southwestern Society of  
Pediatric Dentistry  
**1,163**

Western Society of  
Pediatric Dentistry  
**1,695**

# AAPD PEDIATRIC DENTISTS BY STATE

Alabama	86	Louisiana	85	Ohio	223
Alaska	30	Maine	17	Oklahoma	64
Arizona	157	Maryland	176	Oregon	92
Arkansas	49	Massachusetts	235	Pennsylvania	271
California	772	Michigan	176	Puerto Rico	24
Colorado	175	Military	29	Rhode Island	18
Connecticut	92	Minnesota	98	South Carolina	114
Delaware	20	Mississippi	48	South Dakota	16
District of Columbia	25	Montana	34	Tennessee	166
Florida	375	Missouri	116	Texas	605
Georgia	195	Nebraska	56	Utah	96
Hawaii	55	Nevada	67	Vermont	11
Idaho	43	New Hampshire	42	Virginia	213
Illinois	227	New Jersey	266	Washington	222
Indiana	122	New Mexico	19	West Virginia	22
Iowa	72	New York	504	Wisconsin	108
Kansas	50	North Carolina	254	Wyoming	13
Kentucky	97	North Dakota	17		

# AAPD MEMBERS BY AGE



# AAPD MEMBERS BY GENDER

**55%** Female  
**45%** Male

# AAPD PEDIATRIC DENTISTS BY GENDER (ACTIVE/LIFE)

**60%** Female  
**40%** Male

# AAPD POSTDOCTORAL MEMBERS BY GENDER

**74%** Female  
**26%** Male

# STATE/DISTRICT DUES COLLECTION

AAPD is currently collecting membership dues for **42 state chapters** and all **5 district chapters**. The table below lists the membership/market share for each chapter, which is the percentage of AAPD member pediatric dentists who also joined the state or district. While it is not mandatory, the AAPD strongly encourages state and district membership. New for FY26, the AAPD will now collect for the Missouri Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
Alabama	72%	91%	92%	92%
Alaska	86%	89%	83%	94%
Arizona	83%	91%	81%	79%
California	82%	88%	76%	85%
Colorado	90%	90%	80%	85%
Connecticut	84%	83%	70%	82%
Delaware	N/A	N/A	67%	64%
District of Columbia	95%	77%	80%	61%
Florida	77%	77%	64%	61%
Georgia	90%	85%	76%	87%
Hawaii	83%	98%	87%	78%
Idaho	91%	84%	82%	89%
Illinois	88%	88%	74%	81%
Indiana	92%	88%	85%	88%
Iowa	85%	94%	85%	91%
Kentucky	90%	84%	88%	92%
Louisiana	83%	91%	83%	96%
Maine	84%	91%	95%	83%
Massachusetts	78%	73%	68%	84%
Maryland	82%	84%	70%	84%
Minnesota	91%	91%	87%	85%
Mississippi	80%	91%	94%	85%
Montana	93%	100%	91%	97%
Missouri	N/A	N/A	N/A	90%
North Carolina	90%	87%	79%	88%
Nebraska	96%	85%	87%	87%
New Hampshire	94%	97%	88%	75%
New Jersey	94%	84%	72%	84%
Nevada	76%	85%	72%	83%
New York	74%	75%	57%	75%
Ohio	74%	79%	84%	91%
Oklahoma	80%	77%	94%	91%
Oregon	90%	91%	81%	79%
Pennsylvania	87%	87%	75%	78%
South Carolina	89%	88%	85%	88%
Tennessee	85%	83%	66%	88%
Texas	78%	80%	66%	75%
Utah	N/A	N/A	N/A	75%
Washington	89%	91%	80%	87%
Wisconsin	89%	93%	83%	94%
West Virginia	83%	100%	85%	89%

## NEW MEMBERS FOR FY 2025 – 26

Active	6
Affiliate	52
Allied	8
Associate	3
International	9
Postdoctoral Students	359
Predocctoral Students	221
International Students	55
International Colleague	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>716</b>

**New Active Members from the Class of 2025** **501**

**Active Reinstated** **240**  
**Affiliate Reinstated** **21**

District	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26
NorthCentral Society of Pediatric Dentistry	86%	85%	78%	82%
Northeastern Society of Pediatric Dentists	79%	77%	63%	64%
Southeastern Society of Pediatric Dentists	80%	79%	67%	67%
Southwestern Society of Pediatric Dentists	57%	77%	63%	63%
Western Sociality of Pediatric Dentists	81%	84%	68%	70%



## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The AAPD continues to offer a wide array of membership benefits, and is always on the look-out for new opportunities. A few of the current programs are highlighted below.

### VIEW AAPD MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

#### FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM (FAAPD)

The fellow program focuses on leadership, organized dentistry and community involvement. There are 1386 AAPD members that have this designation:

- 728 AAPD members have Fellow Status
- 658 members qualified for Fellow Life Status.

#### BECOME AN AAPD FELLOW

#### SOFI STUDENT LOAN REFINANCING

AAPD has partnered with SoFi to offer members a 0.250% rate discount when they refinance through [SoFi.com/AAPD](https://www.sofi.com/aapd). For most in the dental community, student debt is a challenge to manage. SoFi evaluates borrowers holistically to offer low rates that ultimately can save borrowers thousands. AAPD members can check their rate in two minutes with no impact on your credit score. Residents can refinance as well!

#### CAREER CENTER

This online center is the beehive for all professional opportunities in pediatric dentistry, and easy-to-use resource for both job seekers and employers.

#### VISIT THE AAPD CAREER CENTER

#### DENTAL PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY (MALPRACTICE) INSURANCE

The AAPD endorses MedPro Group for the malpractice protection of our members. MedPro is a Berkshire Hathaway company and industry leader, protecting over 40,000 dentists nationwide. MedPro is rated A++ by A.M. Best and offers our members affordable rates. This plan is administered by the AAPD's insurance broker, Treloar and Heisel. For more information, please contact them at (800) 345-6040.

#### MEDJET ASSIST

This program offers worldwide emergency medical evacuation and consultation to members who become hospitalized (domestically or internationally) more than 150 miles from home, and wish to return to a hometown or specialty hospital. Members can call (800) 527-7478 and mention the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) to receive the special AAPD-only rates.

#### LIFE LOCK IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION

This protection is even more critical with ongoing internet scams threatening your identity and financial/credit information. AAPD members receive a 30-day free trial and 10 percent off their first year of LifeLock identity theft protection.

Sign up or call 1 (800)-LifeLock (543-3562) use Promo Code AFFINITY 1.

#### ODP BUSINESS SOLUTIONS (FORMALLY OFFICE DEPOT)

AAPD Members can save up to 75 percent on over 93,000 products. Great for your printing, cleaning and office needs. Shop online. Enjoy FREE next-day delivery on online orders over \$50!

#### ENJOY YOUR SAVINGS

#### IN-OFFICE ANESTHESIA ACCREDITATION

AAPD partnered with QUAD to develop an accreditation program tailored to pediatric dental practices. AAPD's longstanding commitment to safety aligns with QUAD A's core mission of patient safety. The program is designed to ensure the highest safety standards in outpatient pediatric dental clinics, particularly those offering in-office anesthesia. Accredited pediatric dentistry practices or facilities must meet standards for the delivery of safe pediatric dental care with anesthesia, with support and guidance offered by peers who are pediatric dentist practice owners and have been through the process. Accreditation improves the preparedness of pediatric dental teams and can prevent adverse incidents while working toward optimal oral health for children.

#### LEARN MORE

#### AAPD STAFF CONTACTS FOR MEMBERSHIP INQUIRIES

VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP AND CHAPTER RELATIONS **SUZANNE A. WESTER, MBA, CAE**  
MEMBERSHIP AND MARKETING COORDINATOR **LEE GONZALEZ**

# AAPD® FINANCES REMAIN SOLID

INCOMING 2026–27 AAPD BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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EDITOR IN CHIEF **DR. NOEL K. CHILDERS**

CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON **DR. WARREN A. BRILL**

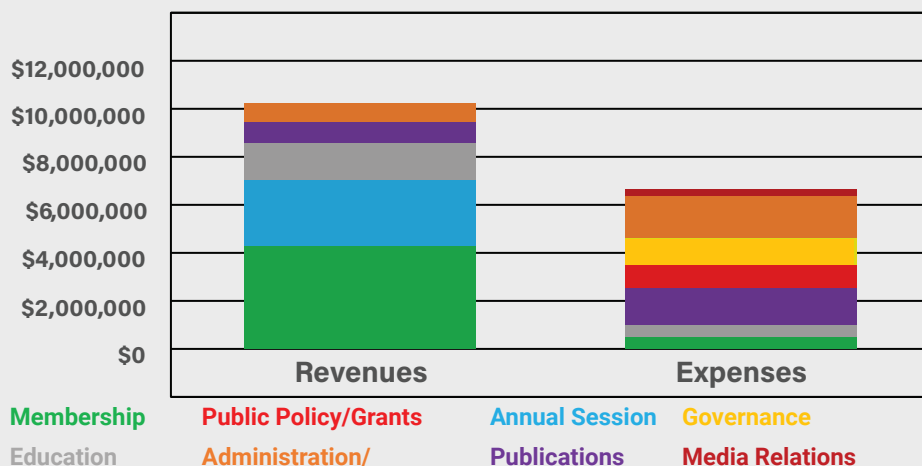
CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON **DR. JADE MILLER**

PARLIAMENTARIAN **DR. JESSICA ROBERTSON**

CEO **DR. JESSICA Y. LEE**

The accounting firm of Martin and Martin conducted the audit of AAPD’s financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. AAPD experienced a net loss during the year of **\$357,578** reflecting total revenues of **\$12,394,637** compared to expenses of **\$12,752,215**.

Between July 2025 and March 2026, we added **3.6 million dollars** with the main sources of revenue from dues renewals, CE registrations, registrations from Annual Session and investments. The financial highlights for the current fiscal year through March 2026 are provide below. The AAPD acknowledges the outstanding leadership, not just on financial issues but on visionary programmatic planning, of the AAPD Board of Trustees.



We also acknowledge outgoing board members for their service: Immediate Past President Dr. Scott D. Smith, Northeastern District Trustee Dr. Hakan Koymen, Southeastern District Trustee Dr. Ann M. Bynum, At-Large Trustee (liaison to federal uniformed services) Dr. Anthea Drew Mazzawi, and Parliamentarian Dr. Sarat “Bobby” Thikkurissy.

## AAPD STAFF CONTACTS FOR FINANCES AND BUDGETING

DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES **MARY PURNELL, MBA**

ACCOUNTING ASSOCIATE **SIERRA SMITH**

## KIDS NEED US NOW

Children’s oral health faces a growing threat across the country. Efforts to discredit fluoride and sweeping Medicaid eligibility changes last summer have created a slow-moving crisis that could leave 20 million children without needed care.

The AAPD Foundation supports nonprofit and dental school clinics that care for vulnerable children. Access to care is crucial to our mission. We understand the clinics’ limited resources and pressures. Our grants fund patient care, community outreach, extended hours, and transportation. However, grants represent only a small portion of clinic revenue. Two-thirds of funding for child oral health safety net clinics depends on Medicaid and federal sources. Recent Medicaid changes will

increase the number of uninsured children and reduce clinic capacity, potentially leading to closures.

In response, the Foundation has set aside \$4 million for emergency grants to help clinics weather revenue gaps caused by federal cuts later this fall. This funding will only partially address the need. As we prepare for the coming uncertainties, we provide this summary of our work over the last year. Thank you for your ongoing support!



## ACCESS TO CARE

### 2026–2027 ACCESS TO CARE GRANT RECIPIENTS

Twenty-six organizations will receive a One Year Access to Care Grant from the AAPD Foundation, worth up to \$30,000. These grants fund community-based initiatives in the U.S. that provide care to underserved children. Across the 26 funded projects, a clear, urgent picture emerges: millions of children in America lack basic oral healthcare due to poverty, language barriers, lack of insurance, geography, and disability. The recipients will use the support to continue fighting barriers to dental care and working to positively impact their communities. As of this report's publication, grant recipients with signed commitments include:

- Bellefaire JCB; Shaker Heights, Ohio
- Bethesda Health Clinic; Tyler, Texas
- Brooker Memorial Pediatric Dental Center; Torrington, Conn.
- Community Dental Care; Maplewood, Minn.
- Conway Regional Health Foundation; Conway, Ark.
- CrossOver Healthcare Ministry; Richmond, Va.
- Ezra Medical Center; Brooklyn, N.Y.
- Gracelight Community Health; Los Angeles, Calif.
- Healthcare Network; Immokalee, Fla.
- JPCHC Foundation, Inc.; Indianapolis, Ind.
- Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry; Augusta, Maine
- LevelUp Kids, Inc.; Kansas City, Mo.
- Little Lights Dentistry; Stuart, Fla.
- Mercy Health Foundation Washington; Washington, Mo.
- Open Arms Free Clinic, Inc.; Elkhorn, Wisc.
- OVP Health Care, Inc.; Proctorville, Ohio
- Promise Community Health Center; Sioux Center, Iowa
- Reeves Memorial Medical Center Foundation; Bernice, La.
- The C. W. Williams Community Health Center, Inc.; Charlotte, N.C.
- The Research Foundation of SUNY Stony Brook; Stony Brook, N.Y.
- University of Louisville Foundation; Louisville, Ky.
- University of Minnesota Cleft and Craniofacial Clinic; Minneapolis, Minn.
- University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry; Oklahoma City, Okla.

## GRANT APPLICATION REVIEWERS NEEDED!

With federal funding changes in late 2026, the Foundation anticipates at least 400 applications for our one-year, \$30,000 grants. Become a grant reviewer between mid-September and mid-November to get involved with the Foundation.

Reviewers participate via Zoom in a how-to calibration. All review work is done remotely via our web-based grant interface. Prepare to complete 25 to 35 applications over six weeks. Reviewers can work at their own pace, reviewing applications in small groups. Serving as a grant reviewer helps identify programs helping children in need. Interested? Visit the Foundation's booth (#931) at AAPD 2026 or email Jasmine Williams at [jwilliams@aapdfoundation.org](mailto:jwilliams@aapdfoundation.org).

## DR. BEVERLY A. LARGENT ACCESS TO CARE INNOVATOR AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED



Sponsored by Elevate Oral Care, this award (affectionately known as “The Bevy”) was named for Dr. Beverly Largent, a trailblazing pediatric dentist and first woman president of both the Academy and the Foundation, recognizes excellence in providing dental care to children, especially vulnerable populations. The ideal recipient is creative, committed, and works to help as many children as possible, often with limited resources.

Congratulations to this year's winner, Mr. **Ernesto Hart** from The Floating Hospital! Over 34 years, Mr. Hart transformed The Floating Hospital's dental program from a modest screening service into a fully equipped clinic serving thousands of NYC's most vulnerable children. He understood that overcoming trauma and anxiety was as important as clinical excellence, working with complex populations like migrants, domestic violence survivors, and children with disabilities. Known as the “heart” of The Floating Hospital, Mr. Hart's dedication is truly inspiring.

This year's award, including a \$10,000 grant for The Floating Hospital, will be presented during the Foundation Donor Appreciation Reception on Saturday night during AAPD 2026.



# LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

## COHORT VII GRADUATES

Congratulations, Graduates! Cohort VII of AAPD/AAPD Foundation Leadership Institute held its final session December 11-14, 2025, at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Cohort VII graduates include: Drs. Alexander Alcaraz, Aarika Anderson Elter, Natasha Bramley, Aaron Bumann, Brianne Butler, Glenn Canares, Vanessa Carpenter, Carolyn Crowell, Matthew Geneser, Tiffany Green, Colleen Collins Greene, Marcio Guelmann, Brittaney Hill, Bina Katechia, Venetia Laganis, Flavia Lamberghini, Clarise Law Eyre, AnnMarie Matusak, Jeffrey Miles Mazzawi, Brianna Muñoz, Hubert Park, Don Schmitt, Brandon Schwindt, and T.P. Sivakumar. Three representatives from the American College of Dentists, along with a corporate representative, also are members of Cohort VII.



## DR. JOHN S. RUTKAUSKAS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE COHORT VIII ANNOUNCEMENT COMING SOON!

More than 80 AAPD members applied for one of 30 spots in the newly renamed Dr. John S. Rutkauskas Leadership Institute. Renamed for the retiring AAPD/AAPD Foundation CEO Dr. John Rutkauskas, confirmation of all 30 invitees still was pending as this report went to press.

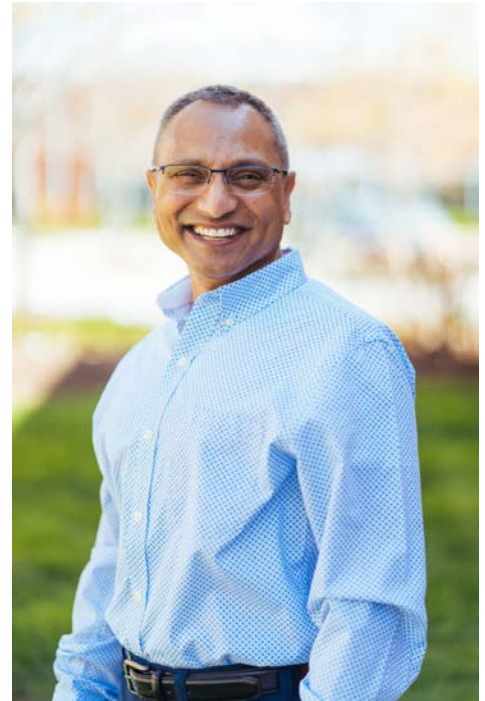


## ON THE MOVE: FOUNDATION LEADERSHIP

Congratulations to Dr. **Deven Shroff**, who will become AAPD Foundation President with the conclusion of AAPD 2026 in Las Vegas. Congratulations and thank you to Dr. Mario Ramos, whose two-year term as Foundation President will conclude in May.

Special thanks to AAPD President Dr. Tom Ison, who will be rotating off the Foundation Board of Trustees with the conclusion of his term as AAPD President. In addition, due to changes in policy and terms, a number of Trustees will be rotating off the Board in May. They include Drs. Teresa Fong, Douglas Keck, Oariona Lowe, Kerry Maguire and James Nickman. We are grateful to all of them for their years of service!

Joining the AAPD Foundation as Trustees, Class of 2026-2029, are Drs. Scott Cashion, Paula Coates, and Keri Discepolo.



### AAPD FOUNDATION 2026-2027 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### OFFICERS

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VICE PRESIDENT **DR. JEANNIE BEAUCHAMP**

SECRETARY **DR. HARLYN SUSARLA**

TREASURER **MR. KEN THOMALLA**

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT **DR. MARIO RAMOS**

AAPD PRESIDENT **DR. CHARLIE BERTOT**

AAPD PRESIDENT-ELECT **DR. JACOB LEE**

AAPD/AAPD FOUNDATION CEO **DR. JOHN RUTKAUSKAS** (THROUGH JUNE 30, 2026)/**DR. JESSICA LEE** (JULY 1, 2026)

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**DR. SHARI KOHN**

### AAPD STAFF CONTACTS FOR AAPD FOUNDATION

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# AAPD® RESEARCH AND POLICY CENTER



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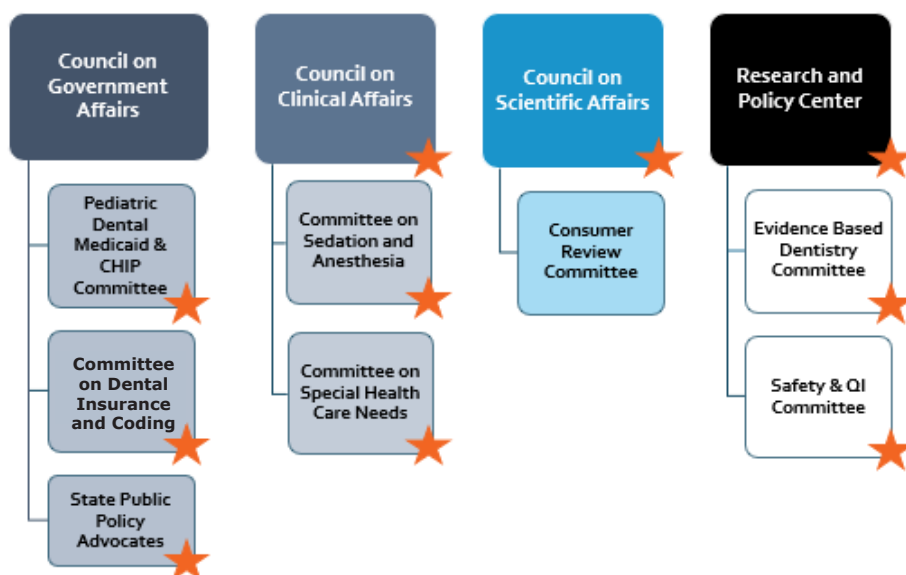
### HARRIS FELLOW

**DR. BHAKTI DESAI**

The AAPD Research & Policy Center (**RPC**) leverages expertise in oral health, health policy, health services research, and public health to support the Academy in its efforts to achieve optimal oral health for all children. Guided by an Advisory Board of pediatric dentists and affiliate member experts, the RPC conducts work in areas that include:

- **Medicaid** policy and program implementation
- **Federal policy** and its implications for children’s oral health
- **Evidence-based** dental care delivery
- Access to **high-quality, safe** dental care for children
- Contemporary issues at the intersection of **oral health, public health, and health policy**

**Of the Academy’s 23 councils and committees, the ones starred here are staffed by the RPC.**



## NEW CDT 2027 CODE FOR PEDIATRIC-TO-ADULT TRANSITION SERVICES

The AAPD submitted a proposal for the development of a new CDT code for **pediatric-to-adult dental care transition**. The proposal was presented by Dr. **Jim Nickman** (AAPD Dental Benefits Consultant) and supported by Dr. **Jessica Meeske** at the ADA's Code Maintenance Committee (CMC) Meeting in March 2026. Feedback indicated that stakeholders were most amenable to a code that was specific to **people with disabilities or special health care needs**, and that amendment was approved at the meeting. Dr. Nickman is the AAPD's official representative to the CMC.

**Effective Jan. 1, 2027, pediatric dentists are strongly encouraged to include the transition code (CDT number yet to be determined) when offering transition services, and to educate your colleagues – particularly the adult providers to which you are or could be referring – to do so also.**

**DXXXX (TBD) dental case management – pediatric-to-adult transition services, patients with special healthcare needs**

Planning, execution, and integration support for a patient (child or adult) with special healthcare needs transferring from a pediatric-centric to an adult-focused dental home. Includes patient/family/caregiver readiness assessment, education, and sustained bidirectional communication and care coordination with shared decision-making between pediatric and adult dental teams and the patient and family.

**Remember: Code for what you do, not only what you will get paid for.** Regardless of reimbursement, code utilization is the first step in demonstrating the importance of the service and the need for fair compensation to reflect the resources required – including your time and that of your dental team and referral network. Please refer to the AAPD's *Policy on Transitioning from a Pediatric to an Adult Dental Home for Individuals with Special Health Care Needs* for additional guidance on transition.

This effort was inspired by the Academy's Transition Advisory Group (TAG), part of the *Transforming Transition* project funded by the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health and awarded to The AAPD Foundation. The TAG identified the absence of a procedural code for transition services as a major barrier. The creation of a code has the potential – if adopted, utilized, and eventually reimbursed – to:

- Improve transition experiences for people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers;
- Recognize pediatric and adult dental teams for the substantial time and effort required for comprehensive transitions; and
- Embed transition as a routine expectation across dental professionals and the dental care system

For information on other CDT updates going into effect in 2027, please visit <https://www.ada.org/publications/cdt>. The AAPD RPC will host a webinar later in the year to review the revisions most relevant to pediatric dentistry. Don't want to miss it?

[SIGN UP FOR THE RPC RUNDOWN](#)

## DR. BEAU MEYER RECEIVES NIH R01 AWARD FOR SDF POLICY RESEARCH

Congratulations to **Dr. Beau Meyer** – a Fellow on the RPC Advisory Board and affiliated with Nationwide Children's Hospital, The Ohio State University, and Partners for Kids – who was awarded a highly coveted 5-year R01 Research Project Grant from the National Institutes of Health (2025-2030). **The AAPD will receive a sub-award from this grant with research participation from Dr. Chelsea Fosse.** The aims of the project are as follows:



- Determine the impact of Medicaid SDF reimbursement policies on A) downstream state-level oral health outcomes, and B) provider adoption of SDF treatment.
- Identify constellations of child-level clinical and social determinants of health factors associated with increased or attenuated SDF efficacy.
- Identify reimbursement policy drivers and barriers to SDF utilization among Medicaid-participating dentists.

The advisory committee for this award also includes Drs. **Jessica Lee** and **Paul Casamassimo**. Year 1 activities are currently wrapping up and the project team is eager to move forward with the first stages of analysis in Year 2.

## RECENT RPC PUBLICATIONS

Fosse, C., Mann, L., Veazie, M., Vartanian, B., Gosnell, E.S., Webb, J. and Lee, J.Y. (2026), **Policy Levers to Support the Transition from Pediatric to Adult Dental Care for People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**. *J Public Health Dent*, 86: 88-95. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jphd.70038>

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)

Mann, L., Fosse, C., & Meyer, B. (2026). **The Impact of Medicaid Cutbacks on Children's Oral Health and Pediatric Dentistry Training**. *Journal of the California Dental Association*, 54(1).

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)

# AAPD LEADS THE WAY ON FLUORIDE ADVOCACY SUPPORT

**FDA's Challenge to Fluoride Supplements:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in partnership with the Reagan-Udall Foundation, hosted a public meeting on ingestible fluoride prescription drug products in July 2025. The FDA had previously announced plans to remove these products—such as tablets and drops used in young children to prevent tooth decay—from the U.S. market. The Academy was proud to have Dr. **Tim Wright**, Chair of the AAPD's Evidence-Based Dentistry Committee and editor of JADA, representing AAPD at the meeting.

## READ THE COMPLETE AAPD WRITTEN COMMENTS

While fluoride supplements for children remain available on the market, the FDA advised against using prescription fluoride supplements for children under 3 years old. Fluoride supplements are vital for children in communities without access to fluoridated water or where topical applications are insufficient or inaccessible, and they have long been used by dentists and physicians to help prevent dental caries. The removal would particularly harm pediatric patients at high risk for dental caries. The claims made against fluoride related to the microbiome and neurocognitive defects have been debunked; they do not apply at the levels of fluoride seen in the U.S. In response to the FDA's October 31, 2025 press release finalizing their plans, AAPD reiterated strong support for fluoride supplementation as an evidence-based caries-prevention strategy for vulnerable children.

**EPA's Challenge to Community Water Fluoridation:** In early 2026, the AAPD submitted comments on the **Environmental Protection Agency's** (EPA) Fluoride Preliminary Assessment Plan and Literature Survey. The Academy warned that the EPA's current trajectory relies on discredited reports and inapplicable information that threatens safe community water fluoridation, triggering a public health crisis for American children. The AAPD was joined by over 150 state and national organizations in its concern over the EPA plan and its repercussions and publicized this via a widely distributed press release.

**State Challenges:** The RPC continues to work with AAPD Public Policy Advocates and other member leaders on fluoride challenges in their states. We've been sharing new research, resources, and opportunities to be a proactive fluoride advocate in your state. RPC continues to collaborate with our colleagues at the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dental Association, and many other organizations for amplified impact protecting and promoting children's oral health.

**JAMA Health Forum:** *Removing Fluoride From Water? An Oral Health Crisis Will Unfold.* Dr. Scott Smith (AAPD Immediate Past President) and Dr. Brett Kessler (ADA Immediate Past President) shared this perspective piece with JAMA Health Forum, published in September 2025.

**WHY WE'RE CONCERNED**

- 1 The EPA is using studies from other countries with much higher fluoride levels that don't apply to the U.S.
- 2 The EPA is ignoring the massive benefits of fluoride in preventing cavities.
- 3 The EPA suggests labeling "mild fluorosis" (which is cosmetic) as "toxic."

The AAPD is fighting to keep science in the driver's seat so your kids can keep their healthy smiles!

Visit [AAPD.org](http://AAPD.org) to read our full response.

## OTHER FEDERAL POLICY UPDATES

### Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program:

The RPC team has been following the rollout of the federal RHT program. At least 14 states have indicated that some funding will go toward oral health activities. We are grateful to be working with intern Dr. **Sophia Pankratz** on a deeper dive on these programs. We encourage pediatric dentists to reach out to your state Medicaid agency for information on your state's RHT programs and how you can be involved. Stay tuned for more detailed information as these state programs get underway!



**Immunizations:** The AAPD reaffirmed its strong support for childhood vaccines in early 2026. The 2025-26 *Reference Manual* continues to rely on the immunization schedule based on the 2024 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (CDC-ACIP) recommendations, which is currently maintained by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP- see page 658 of the printed *Reference Manual* that was mailed to members). Additionally, AAPD

will continue to advocate for the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine during this time of heightened vaccine scrutiny. Read more here.

### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

AAPD members expressed interest in supporting their communities over the period of federal government shutdown. RPC shared information on social media and in other electronic communications to help connect members to local service providers with **WIC**, **SNAP**, and **Head Start**.

**Resources for Families Affected by the Government Shutdown**

Wondering how you may be able to support the patients and families you serve during the government shutdown? Check out these organizations for the latest information.

**SNAP**  
Forty-two million Americans (1 in 8) rely on SNAP benefits. Some states have announced that SNAP benefits will not be paid starting November 1.  
Find local food pantries: <https://foodfinder.us/>  
Find local food banks: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>

**HEAD START**  
Approximately 154 programs across 41 states will lose operational funding on November 1, affecting around 65,000 children. The hardest-hit states include Florida, Georgia, Missouri, and Ohio.  
Find your local Head Start program: <https://headstart.gov/center-locator>  
See shutdown impacts by state and congressional district: <https://rhpa.org>

**WIC**  
WIC serves nearly 7 million mothers, pregnant women, and children who rely on it for nutritious food, breastfeeding support, infant formula, nutrition education, and healthcare referrals.  
While WIC has typically remained open during shutdowns, many state agencies are now running out of funding options- escalating the risk of hunger and hardship.  
Find food assistance & other services: <https://www.findhelp.org/>  
Local WIC office contacts: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/program-contacts>

# RPC'S INFORMATIVE WEBINAR SERIES

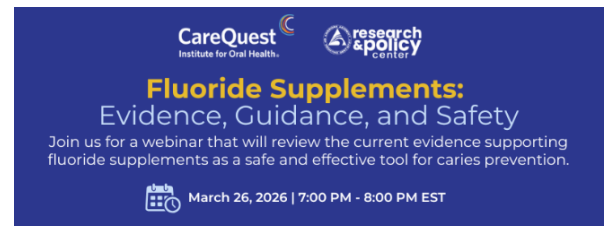
During 2025, the **RPC webinar series** attracted over **1,700 unique attendees**. Continuing education is offered for those who partic-

Date	Topic	Speakers	Attendance
02-14-25	Let's Talk Fluoride	Dr. Jessica Lee, Dr. Tim Wright, Dr. Steven Levy	770
03-28-25	Dental Practice Support for Providing Care to People with Disabilities	Dr. Holli Seabury, Dr. Jeffrey Johnston	115
04-11-25	Get Up To Date with CDT & G0330 for 2025: Key Changes & Implementation	Dr. Jim Nickman, Diane Millman	79
08-15-25	DQA & AAPD: Leveraging Quality Metrics for Pediatric Oral Health	Dr. Jill Herndon	107
09-12-25	Under Pressure: Providing Pediatric Oral Health Care in an Increasingly Fluoride-Skeptic World	Dr. Susan Fisher-Owens, Dr. Tim Wright, Dr. Mario Ramos, Dr. Cameron Randall	341
10-31-25	Tricks, Treats, and Federal Policy Updates: What Pediatric Dentists Need to Know	Dr. Aaron Bumann, Julie Allen, Lauren Mann	129
12-12-25	Unwrapping CDT 2026: Updates for the New Year and G0330 Successes from 2025	Dr. Jim Nickman	176

ipate in the live sessions. Slides and recordings are available at <https://www.aapd.org/research/policy-center/webinars/>. The topics covered in 2025 are listed below:

To kick off the 2026 series, the RPC co-hosted a webinar with The CareQuest Institute for Oral Health on March 26, 2026: **Fluoride Supplements: Evidence, Guidance, and Safety**. Speakers included **Lisa Simon**, MD, DMD, Assistant Professor, Director of the Initiative to Integrate Oral Health and Medicine, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Harvard Medical School) and **Dr. Chelsea Fosse**. During the webinar, speakers reviewed the evidence on fluoride supplements and community water fluoridation. There were over **700 attendees**. The recording is available *here*. Key take-aways included:

- Fluoride is highly effective at preventing caries, particularly for children at high risk, and the best-quality evidence supports that fluoride is perfectly safe at typical levels.
- Evidence suggesting possible neurocognitive effects from fluoride is flawed, but is still being used to influence important political and policy actions.
- Market restrictions on fluoride supplements may continue and expand; prescribers (e.g. pediatric dentists) should diversify familiarity with available products and collaborate with other prescribers both within and outside of dentistry.
- Understanding the evidence is important when discussing fluoride with patients.



Join the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and CareQuest Institute for a webinar that will review the current evidence supporting fluoride supplements as a safe and effective tool for caries prevention.

Through case examples and practical discussion, our expert speakers will examine clinical indications for fluoride supplementation, common access barriers, and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration between dental and medical providers. They'll also share strategies and communication tools to confidently address patient and caregiver questions and concerns related to fluoride supplements.

## PROTECTING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN SEDATION

For a recap on the Fall 2025 events pertaining to ADA House of Delegates' consideration of ADA Resolution 407 (addressing pediatric sedation and anesthesia guidelines), *please see the summary on page 40 of the Q4 PDT*. The AAPD is now represented by Dr. Bobby Thikkurissy on the ADA's Ad Hoc Workgroup on Pediatric Sedation and Anesthesia Guidelines. We were successful at the ADA House of Delegates meeting in October advocating for representation from the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Ad Hoc Workgroup is meeting on a monthly basis.



**The AAPD expresses sincere gratitude to the AAPD members who are ADA Delegates and Alternates for their leadership, courage, and resolve in being the voice of children at the ADA.** There was an extraordinary level of engagement with the Delegates and Alternates this past year, and we look forward to working more cohesively with them in a structured manner on other children's oral health matters at the ADA in the years to come.

# RPC COLLABORATIONS AND OUTREACH IN 2025-26

- **National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Legislative Summit** (Boston, Mass.): NCSL celebrated its 50th anniversary with the largest ever convening of state legislators and staffers, surpassing 9000 attendees. Drs. Keri Discepolo (CGA NE district representative, PAC Champion for Mass., and incoming CGA Chair) and Chelsea Fosse spoke with lawmakers and their staff about children's oral health, preventive services access, state Medicaid policy, and fluoride.

- **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Conference & Exhibition** (Denver, Colo.): Dr. Chelsea Fosse and Lauren Mann spoke with pediatricians and their teams in the exhibit hall. Most inquiries were regarding fluoride and difficulty finding pediatric dentists accepting new patients or other dentists accepting Medicaid in their local communities. The Section on Oral Health program featured Drs. Patty Braun (fluoride conversations) and Erica Brecher (CCA) (dental trauma).



- **American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo** (Washington, D.C.): Dr. Chelsea Fosse presented a poster on possible directions for advancing pediatric to adult transition services as part of the APHA Disability Section program.

- **Ensuring Last Smiles Act (ELSA) Advocacy Day** (Washington, D.C.): Dr. Chelsea Fosse joined family and physician advocates with the National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias (NFED) in D.C. to advocate for the passage of ELSA.

- **Dental Quality Alliance (DQA) Meeting** (Chicago, Ill.): Dr. Paul Casamassimo, Dr. Alex Sheen, Dr.



Chelsea Fosse, and Lauren Mann were in attendance. Dr. Sheen presented recent research on Medicaid's use of performance improvement plans involving dental measures, and Dr. Fosse shared updates and opportunities for additional work in quality measurement and improvement in children's oral health. The DQA also released a *User Guide for Evaluating Quality of Care for Special Populations Using DQA Program and Plan Level Measures* for stratifying dental measures for special populations, beginning with the population of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This is a result of numerous discussions on the importance of measures for the IDD's community (urged strongly by AAPD and Dr. Natalia Chalmers), as well as the nuances that make the measurement and interpretation of certain dental measures different than the general population.

- **American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSM) Consensus Conference** (Chicago, Ill.): AAPD was represented by Drs. Erica Caffrey and Scott Cashion. AADSM aims to create more alignment on dentists having authority in prescription, fabrication, and management of sleep devices given their knowledge of and experience of occlusion, TMJ, and dental facial growth. Dr. Caffrey strongly emphasized the need for medical-dental collaboration, which was well received by other attendees. Dr. Caffrey will remain in communication with the AAPD/AAO EBD Airway Workgroup as this work progresses.

- **American Student Dental Association (ASDA) National Leadership Conference** (Chicago, Ill.): The AAPD and AAPD Foundation had a blast with dental students at #ASDANLC. Many AAPD leaders shared their knowledge with this next generation of dentists, offering expertise in fluoride, professional wellbeing, pharmacology, minimally invasive dentistry, marketing, debt management, and the latest in dental research. Big thanks to Drs. Aaron Buban, Colleen Greene, Jessica Lee, Brianna Muñoz, Alex Otto, Scott Papineau, Cameron Randall, and Tim Wright and for their help making it a success!



Dr. Brianna Muñoz provided insights on establishing a private dental practice.

- **Association for Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Conference** (Washington, D.C.): Lauren Mann presented to maternal and child health state leaders on the importance of oral health and the promise of innovative resource allocation to improve home care practices.



- **ADA Lobby Day** (Washington, D.C.): Lauren Mann networked with other AAPD and ADA leaders and got up to speed on some of the latest legislative priorities for the ADA, including the Improving the Dental Administration (IDA) Act and the Resident Deferred Interest (REDI) Act.



- **International Association of Dental Research (IADR) & American Association of Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) General Session & Exhibition** (San Diego, Calif.): Dr. Chelsea Fosse was joined by many AAPD leaders involved in research and academia for this meeting. It offered excellent opportunities for connecting with international colleagues involved in improving the oral health of children across the globe.
- **National Oral Health Conference** (Oklahoma City, Okla.): Drs. Chelsea Fosse and Mark Veazie presented on transition from pediatric to adult dental care for people with disabilities, and Lauren Mann facilitated a roundtable session on Medicaid developments over the past year.
- **Medicaid/Medicare/CHIP Services Dental Association (MSDA) Corporate Round Table Meeting** (Washington, D.C.) – Drs. Scott Cashion and Chelsea Fosse attended and connected with colleagues in state Medicaid agencies, dental insurance, and industry.



- **Medicaid/Medicare/CHIP Services Dental Association (MSDA) Symposium** (Alexandria, Va.): Drs. Scott Cashion, Jessica Meeske, Colleen Greene, Brianna Muñoz, and Chelsea Fosse attended to learn the latest on fraud, waste, and abuse practices in Medicaid programs, and to voice the concerns of dentists who are committed to the care of people enrolled in Medicaid.
- **American Association of Dental Consultants (AADC) Spring Workshop** (Scottsdale, Ariz.): Dr. Jim Nickman, Chelsea Fosse, and Lauren Mann hosted a session to meet with dental insurance leaders and address any questions or discuss concerns pertaining to pediatric dentistry. This is an ongoing effort by the AAPD to communicate concerns and recommendations to the insurance industry, by promoting best practices and drawing attention to practices that harm both the patient and provider.
- **Association for Dental Safety (ADS) Annual Conference** (Salt Lake City, Utah): Dr. Jacob Lee, incoming President-Elect, will attend this meeting on behalf of AAPD. Dr. Lisa Rawle, the inaugural Safety & QI Fellow sponsored by HuFriedyGroup, will virtually present research on burnout, resilience, and wellbeing in pediatric dentistry.



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 VICE PRESIDENT **DR. CHELSEA FOSSE**  
 MANAGER **LAUREN MANN**  
 ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR **B VALEK**  
 CONSULTANT (EVIDENCE-BASED DENTISTRY COMMITTEE) **DR. MEGAN CLOIDT**  
 CONSULTANT (DENTAL INSURANCE AND CODING) **DR. JIM NICKMAN**

## FELLOWS

**SAMUEL D. HARRIS RESEARCH AND POLICY FELLOW**  
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**2026-27 Fellow—Dr. Azza Ahmed**  
**SAFETY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FELLOW**  
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**2025-26 Fellow- Dr. Lisa Ann Rawle**  
**2026-27 Fellow- Dr. Erinn Enany**

## SUMMER INTERNS

The RPC was pleased to host two pre-dental students interested in pediatric dentistry and oral health policy from The University of Chicago as part of the Metcalf/RBH Oral Health Fellowship program over Summer 2025. Reem Omar and Maya Garrett spent time helping us explore pediatric dentist presence on state dental boards, updates in school entry dental examination policies, the managed care landscape for dentistry across the U.S., and more. It was a pleasure having them here, and we are excited to hear about their next steps in dentistry! RPC will welcome two additional students from The University of Chicago in summer 2026, Gwendolyn Bye and Piper Megellas.



## THE RPC RUNDOWN

This e-newsletter is open to all – regardless of AAPD membership. We rely heavily on our relationships with other leaders in dentistry, oral health, children’s health, and health policy to do the work we do. We are always eager to grow our network of partners dedicated to advancing research and promoting policy to improve children’s oral health. **Please encourage your colleagues to sign up for The RPC Rundown.**



- February 2026
- January 2026
- December 2025
- October 2025
- August 2025
- June 2025

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to us at [RPC@aapd.org](mailto:RPC@aapd.org).

# AAPD® PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH

With the staff leadership of Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel Scott Litch, much support from Executive Coordinator, Governance Lisa Gunderson, Washington, D.C. representation by Powers (Julie Allen and team) and tremendous contributions of our Congressional Liaisons Drs. Warren Brill and Jade Miller, the AAPD continues to pursue advocacy activities consistent with AAPD's legislative and regulatory priorities developed by the Council on Government Affairs (CGA). As described earlier, the RPC also contributes significantly to important analysis and actions that are utilized in these advocacy initiatives.

## AAPD'S FEDERAL LOBBYIST MAKES THE HILL'S TOP LIST

Powers' Principal Julie Scott Allen was again been recognized on The Hill's Top Lobbyists 2025 list. Each year, The Hill highlights corporate lobbyists, advocacy strategists, association leaders, and grassroots organizers who have demonstrated exceptional influence in federal policymaking. As one of the nation's leading political news outlets, The Hill describes its honorees as the lobbyists who are "the industry's savviest, most influential and well-connected advocates across Capitol Hill."

## 2026 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRIORITIES

Based on recommendations from the Council on Government Affairs (CGA), 2026 priorities were adopted by the AAPD Board of Trustees on Jan. 23, 2026.

[VIEW THE PRIORITIES](#)

## FY 2026 FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS – \$13.5 MILLION FOR TITLE VII PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

On July 31, 2025, the Senate Appropriations Committee held a mark-up of the FY 2026 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. This is the first step in determination of funding levels for these programs for federal fiscal year (FY) 2026 which runs from Oct. 1, 2025, to Sept. 30, 2026. Included among such programs is the AAPD's top appropriations priority, Title VII health professions training funds for pediatric dentistry. Despite the Administration's proposed FY 2026 budget that would eliminate all HRSA oral health training programs, the Senate committee bill maintains them at level funding (same as FY 2025).

The following favorable report language was included:

"Training in Oral Health Care The Committee provides \$42,673,000 for Training in Oral Health Care Programs, which includes not less than \$13,000,000 for General Dentistry Programs and not less than \$13,000,000 for Pediatric Dentistry Programs and not less than \$15,000,000 for State Oral Health Workforce grants. This funding supports a competitive program in fiscal year 2026 for multi-year awards. The Committee directs HRSA to provide continuation funding for section 748 postdoctoral training grants, predoctoral dental grants, and dental faculty loan repayment program [DFLRP] grants. The Committee directs HRSA to initiate a new DFLRP grant cycle in fiscal year 2026 with a preference for pediatric dentistry faculty supervising dental students or residents and providing clinical services in dental clinics located in dental schools, hospitals, and community-based affiliated sites."

[VIEW REPORT](#)

In early September 2025 the House Appropriations Committee mark-up not only preserves funding but provided us a \$500,000 boost, as indicated below. Given the tremendous challenges of the Administration's proposal to restructure HRSA and eliminate the program, this is a major advocacy win! This successful outcome was due in large part to the great work of AAPD's Congressional Liaisons Drs. Warren Brill and Jade Miller, the Powers lobbying team in Washington, D.C. led by Julie Allen, advocacy by state teams during POHAC 2025, and a targeted grass roots campaign.

#### "Oral Health Training

The Committee includes \$43,673,000 for Oral Health Training. The Oral Health Training programs increase access to high-quality dental health services in rural and other underserved communities by increasing the number of oral health care providers working in underserved areas and improving training programs for these providers. Within the funds provided, the Committee includes no less than \$13,500,000 for general dentistry programs, no less than \$13,500,000 for pediatric dentistry programs, and no less than \$15,000,000 for State oral health workforce grants. The Committee directs HRSA to provide continuation funding for section 748 postdoctoral training grants, predoctoral dental grants, and dental faculty loan repayment grants. The Committee continues to support awards with a preference for pediatric dentistry faculty supervising dental students or residents and providing clinical services in dental schools, hospitals, and community-based affiliated sites."

[VIEW REPORT](#)

## NEW TITLE VII POSTDOCTORAL TRAINING GRANTS AWARDED

The AAPD was pleased that the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded 29 Title VII FY 2025 grants to enhance postdoctoral dental residency training programs. Title VII funding is the AAPD's top federal appropriations priority. **Over the past 25 years, Title VII has led to significant expansion of and quality improvement in pediatric dentistry residency programs.** Nine awards were directed solely to pediatric dentistry programs, and another seven include pediatric dentistry in collaboration with general dentistry and dental public health. HRSA awarded a total of \$10,451,899 with \$7,022,380 supporting pediatric dentistry. A full grantee listing is available on pages 66-67 of the Q1 2026 PDT:

[VIEW GRANTEE LIST](#)

## DENTAL FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM (DFLRP)

Another part of HRSA Title VII oral health training programs, DFLRP supported 28 institutions at an estimated total of over \$5 million in FY 2025. **This program has proven critical in the recruitment and retention of pediatric dentistry faculty.**

A promotional card for the AAPD Grassroots Network. The card features a background image of the U.S. Capitol building. At the top left is the AAPD logo with the text "AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth". Below the logo is the text "Want to be an even better Advocate for Children?". The main heading is "JOIN THE AAPD GRASS ROOTS NETWORK" in large, bold, blue letters. Below this is "Your Grassroots and Advocacy Network" and "Sign up today on the back of this card!". At the bottom is the AAPD PAC logo with the text "AAPD PAC THE BIG ADVOCATE for little teeth".

## GRASS ROOTS NETWORK

The AAPD routinely issues **Action Alerts** asking that Members of Congress be contacted on important legislative or regulatory priorities for pediatric dentistry. The AAPD uses a software program that is very simple and easy to use. If you wish to join over 2000 of your colleagues on the Grass Roots Network and receive all future alerts, you can sign up on the AAPD website at: Grassroots Network

# RECORD ATTENDANCE AT 2026 PEDIATRIC ORAL HEALTH ADVOCACY CONFERENCE (POHAC)

What a fantastic few days (March 7 – 10) in Washington, D.C., for the 2026 Pediatric Oral Health Advocacy Conference! This was the largest POHAC attendance in history, with over 400 pediatric dental residents, pediatric dental faculty, Public Policy Advocates, and other Academy leaders advocating on Capitol Hill for children’s oral health.



Across Capitol Hill, our members met with Congress to engage lawmakers on children’s oral health issues, including the **HRSA Pediatric Dentistry Training Program**, the **Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)**, and the **restoration of critical federal oral health infrastructure**. Check out our *fact sheet on these issues here*.

Regarding ELSA, legislation that would require health insurance coverage for medically necessary dental/oral surgical treatment for children born with craniofacial anomalies and birth defects, as of May 4, 2026, there were 47 Senate co-sponsors and 154 House co-sponsors. A number of House members became recent co-sponsors directly due to Congressional visits made during POHAC.

Residents and faculty from the West Virginia University program, along with AAPD leadership, hosted an exclusive “meet and greet” at the ADA’s D.C. HQ with Senator **Shelley Moore Capito** (R-W.Va.). Senator Capito chairs the Labor-Health-Education Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriation Committee, which has jurisdiction over funding of federal health agencies, including HRSA and the Title VII Pediatric Dentistry program.



West Virginia attendees with Senator Capito.

Thanks to a new initiative this year to achieve 100% AAPD PAC support by all state teams participating in POHAC, 70% of teams reached this goal and over \$44,491 was raised for the AAPD PAC during POHAC.

POHAC gives attendees the chance to connect, share experiences, and build lasting relationships that will help shape the future of pediatric oral health advocacy. **The momentum built this week will continue long after our time in Washington.** Stay tuned for additional opportunities to get involved in these efforts through our *Grassroots Network!*



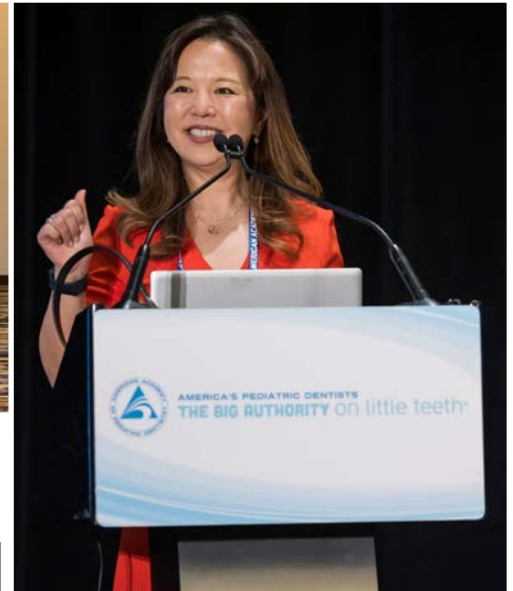
State teams were challenged to reach 100% PAC participation/contributions in 2026 before the close of POHAC. Attendees pinned the USA map at their home location as their PAC contributions were made.



(l-r) Drs. John L. Gibbons, PAC chair, and Jacob K. Lee, AAPD vice president.



State Public Policy Advocates (PPAs)



CEO-designate Dr. Jessica Y. Lee greets attendees.



(l-r) Californians Drs. Evelyne Vu-Tien, PPA, Mylinh Ngo, CSPD immediate past president, Natalie Vander Kam, CSPD president



Dr. Chelsea Fosse, vice president, Research and Policy Center, highlights trends in pediatric dentistry and children's oral health.

(l-r) Drs. Heber Simmons Jr., congressional liaison emeritus, Naila Farooq, North Central representative to the PAC Steering Committee, and John S. Rutkauskas, CEO.



Residents from Children's Hospital of Michigan.



Residents from Cohen Children's Medical Center of Northwell Health (N.Y.).



Team California



Team Pennsylvania



Team Virginia



Team Iowa with Dr. Thomas G. Ison, president.



Team Ohio



Team Maryland



Team New Jersey



Members of Team District of Columbia



(l-r) Members of Team Delaware from Nemours Children’s Hospital (l-r) Drs. Sandra Battista, resident, Maria Velaso, faculty, and Dai The Nguyen, resident.

Team Kentucky



Teams Oklahoma and Arkansas

Team Louisiana



Residents from Denver Health Medical Center / University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine.

Residents and faculty from programs across the country mixed and mingled!

# OPERATING ROOM ACCESS

## CMS HCPCS DENTAL FACILITY FEE CODE INITIATIVE



In 2019 the AAPD engaged Julie Allen of Powers, Pyles, Sutter, and Verville (aka Powers) to identify problems in reimbursement affecting access to hospital and ambulatory surgery center (ASC) operating rooms (ORs) for dental cases. Powers identified the lack of a specific dental facility fee code in the CMS HCPCS system as a major barrier. This resulted in facility fees for dental cases only being reimbursed at around \$200. After development of a strategy to seek a specific facility fee code for dental cases, the AAPD convened series of Zoom meetings with the CMS Hospital and Ambulatory Policy Group (HAPG) Director and then CMS Chief Dental Officer Dr. Natalia Chalmers (a pediatric dentist). **This was a joint advocacy initiative with ADA and AAOMS, who both contributed financially to the engagement of the Powers firm on this issue.** The three organizations have also submitted a series of regulatory comments to CMS on their annual calendar year (CY) Medicare HOPPS and ASC regulations and engaged support of key Members of Congress.

**Note that Medicare coding and payment policies for facility fees for hospital outpatient services and ASCs are often adopted by state Medicaid agencies (SMAs), as well as private insurers.**

There have been significant achievements and developments from these efforts:

- CMS established a new dental rehabilitation code (G0330) to report hospital facility fees for dental OR cases, effective Jan. 1, 2023. The new code was HCPCS code G0330, to describe facility services for dental rehabilitation procedure(s) furnished to patients who require monitored anesthesia (e.g., general, intravenous sedation (monitored anesthesia care)) and use of an operating room.
- CMS added the dental rehabilitation code (G0330) to the covered procedures list (CPL) for ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs), effective Jan. 1, 2024.
- CMS adopted the following rates under its Medicare HOPPS and ASC rules each calendar year (CY), increasing as noted:

- CY 2023-hospital facility payment rate of \$1722.42—substantially higher than where we started!
- CY 2024- hospital facility payment rate of \$3,070.81, and
- ASC payment rate for G0330 was \$1,318.93, the latter reflecting the inclusion of the code for ASCs.
- CY 2025- hospital facility fee payment rate of \$3,243.07 and ASC rate of \$1,394.45. Generally, the 2025 HOPPS and APC rates for other dental services feature some increases from the previous rates. CMS also added 16 new CDT codes to the ASC Covered Procedures List (CPL).
- CY 2026- hospital facility fee payment rate of **\$3402** and ASC payment rate of **\$1475. This can help hospitals and ASCs be further incentivized to schedule dental cases in the OR.**
- *The Hospital and ASC Coding and Payment for Dental Cases* toolkit was 4th edition was released in February 2025 by AAPD, ADA, and AAOMS. This is available on the AAPD website: <https://www.aapd.org/research/policy-center/rpc-publications/dental-rehabilitation-in-operating-rooms/>. **It now features updates for CY 2026.**
- AAPD tracks State Medicaid Agency Implementation of new coding policies. The AAPD state Public Policy Advocates (PPAs) network has been engaged to advocate for adoption/coverage of G0330 by state Medicaid agencies (SMAs). While there is a lot of variability by states and even among hospitals and ASCs in the same state, in terms of how SMAs reimburse for hospital outpatient and ASCs surgeries, **there have been increased facility fees for dental cases in a number of states.** AAPD is tracking state-by-state implementation efforts per a color-coded USA map and data maintained by the RPC.

### VIEW EFFORTS HERE

Ongoing technical assistance is provided to state PPAs and chapters, highlighting that SMAs have flexibility in how they implement and adopt Medicare coding and billing policies for HOPDs and ASCs.

# AAPD URGES CMS TO HIRE NEW CHIEF DENTAL OFFICER

Pediatric Dentist Dr. Natalia Chalmers in late 2025 announced her resignation as Chief Dental Officer (CDO) for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Dr. Chalmers, recipient of the 2025 AAPD *Pediatric Dentist of the Year* award, led several important initiatives since 2021 to improve dental services under Medicaid and Medicare—including:

- Adoption of the HCPCS G0330 dental rehabilitation facility fee code for dental OR cases;
- Coverage of medically necessary oral health procedures under Medicare (dental services inextricably linked to other covered medical services, such as dental exams and necessary treatments prior to organ transplants, cardiac valve replacements, and valvuloplasty procedures, and head and neck cancers);
- Implementation of an Oral Health Cross Cutting Initiative to improve access to dental services, promote preventive care and cultivate partnerships;
- Modernization to allow CMS to accept, process and pay dental claims electronically.

The AAPD and the Organized Dentistry Coalition (of which AAPD is a founding member) plus the American Academy of Pediatrics wrote a letter to the CMS Administrator on November 21, 2025 recommending that CMS:

1. “Move expeditiously to recruit and appoint a new Chief Dental Officer with a DDS/DMD degree and substantial clinical, policy, and leadership experience in dentistry and oral health;
2. Maintain the CDO as a senior, agency-wide position within the Office of the Administrator, with clear authority and responsibility to advise CMS leadership on all matters affecting oral health across centers and offices;
3. Provide the CDO with appropriate staff support and cross-center coordination mechanisms, so that oral health perspectives are systematically incorporated into rulemaking, guidance, demonstrations, oversight activities, and stakeholder engagement.”

[VIEW THE LETTER](#)

## STATE PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCATES (PPAS)

The AAPD through the Council on Government Affairs (CGA) initiated a state Public Policy Advocate initiative in 2012 to strengthen and coordinate state-level advocacy efforts by our state chapters. A PPA serves as the state pediatric dentistry chapter’s advocate for the oral health issues of infants, children, adolescents and patients with special health care and developmental needs. The PPA represents the chapter in promoting children’s oral health issues with the state legislature and other elected bodies, state regulatory agencies (including Medicaid and health departments), licensing bureaus, professional health and child welfare organizations, oral health coalitions, foundations, institutions of dental education, publicly-funded safety net programs, and the private sector benefits industry. The PPA closely coordinates their activities with those of the state dental association. PPAs serve as an advocacy liaison between the state pediatric dentistry chapter and the state dental association.

The AAPD continue to convene PPA quarterly Zoom meetings to share information and discuss strategy. Their activities are regularly featured in *PDT*. **There are PPAs in 47 states plus the District of Columbia.** If you want to get more involved with advocacy at the state level and help your state chapter, please contact your PPA.

Over the past year state PPAs have been influential and critical in state advocacy activities, especially protecting community water fluoridation.

Welcome to recently appointed new PPAs:

**Alabama: Dr. Carson M Cruise**

**California: Dr. Evelyne Vu-Tien**

**Delaware: Dr. Justin N. Josell**

**Florida: Dr. Michelle Thomas**

**Hawaii: Dr. Melissa “Mimi” Yee**

**Minnesota: Drs. Nathaniel Cook and Quentin Knutson**

**Wyoming: Dr. Matthew Wold**

The biennial Chapter Leadership Summit and PPA Workshop will take place in Chicago, Illinois on Sept. 25-26, 2026, as part of the Board of Trustees’ Ad Interim meeting. Invitations for registrations will be sent in early June. Presentations from the 2024 program are available in the members-only section of the AAPD website under member resources/chapter resources.

[VIEW PRESENTATIONS](#)

[VIEW PPA LISTING](#)

# AAPD JOINS COALITION ADDRESSING STUDENT LOAN PROVISIONS IN BUDGET RECONCILIATION BILL

On June 24, 2025 the AAPD joined **58 other dental and medical associations on a coalition letter** sent to the chair and ranking member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) concerning federal student loan issues in budget reconciliation legislation being considered by the Senate. The letter highlighted the following concerns:

- The proposed student loan limits in the Senate draft text, combined with the proposed elimination of the GradPLUS loan program, will present a significant barrier for students pursuing medical and dental school. Effective July 1, 2026, the Senate provision would establish a **\$257,500 lifetime cap on federal borrowing**, inclusive of undergraduate and graduate loans. The GradPLUS loan, which allows medical and dental students to borrow up to the cost of attendance, would be eliminated. These provisions will force many future medical and dental students to rely on high-interest private loans, significantly increasing their debt burden and influencing critical career decisions,
- The Senate draft text proposes to exclude physicians and dentists from **counting their residency training years** toward eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. This exclusion would represent a significant setback for early-career healthcare professionals who often rely on PSLF as a pathway to manage their substantial educational debt while serving in nonprofit, academic, or government settings.
- The Senate draft text removed House-passed language that would reinstate the ability for physicians and dentists to defer a portion of their federal student loans interest during residency training. That provision was similar to the bipartisan, bicameral **REDI Act** (S 942/HR 2028) that many medical and dental provider groups have advocated for in recent years. This language should be reinstated in the final budget reconciliation bill.

Subsequent to passage of the budget reconciliation law, on August 25, 2025 an Organized Dentistry Coalition letter was sent to the Department of Education per their request for stakeholder comments on implementation of the various student loan provisions:

“We write to express concern about the elimination of the Graduate PLUS Loan program and the imposition of new federal loan caps—particularly their impact on professional students in high-cost fields such as dentistry. The cost of dental education often exceeds \$400,000. While the goal of the loan changes made in the OBBB was to bring down the cost of education so that students are able to borrow less to fund their education, that will take time to occur, if at all. In the interim, federal loan caps and the elimination of the Grad PLUS loan program will force many students to rely on private loans, which typically carry higher, market-driven interest rates and fewer borrower protections, to finance a larger portion of their tuition and fees. This shift risks deterring qualified candidates from pursuing dental careers, exacerbating existing workforce shortages, particularly in underserved and rural areas, and influencing career decisions – potentially away from independent private practice, academic or public health settings.

The letter urged the department to monitor the actual impact of these two changes, especially as related to the cost of dental education:

“Tuition costs for dental education. A primary motivating factor behind the federal student loan program changes included in the OBBB was the belief that limiting borrower access to federal financing would lead to a reduction in the cost of tuition at higher education institutions, including dental schools. Notably, the average tuition and fees for first-year dental students during the 2023-2024 academic year was \$59,886 at public institutions and \$84,842 at private institutions.”

[VIEW THE LETTER](#)



# AAPD® PAC

## THE AAPD POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) HAD ANOTHER VERY PRODUCTIVE YEAR

Thanks for your support of the AAPD PAC. Be sure to stop by the PAC exhibit booth in Las Vegas in the Exhibit Hall, Booth 523. A complete list of 2025 contributors will be on display (and will also appear in the Q2 2026 PDT)

Onsite contributors not only received an AAPD PAC lapel pin, but will become eligible to win exciting raffle prizes.



AAPD Congressional Liaisons Drs. Warren Brill and Jade Miller utilized the AAPD PAC to attend various candidate fund-raising events in Washington, D.C. over the past year, along with staff from Powers. Look for more details in the 2026 PAC Annual Report that will be released on July 29, 2026.

### PAC STEERING COMMITTEE FOR 2026–27

CHAIR (2027)\* **DR. JOHN GIBBONS**

VICE CHAIR (2027)\*\* **DR. BRIANNA MUÑOZ**

TREASURER **DR. JESSICA Y. LEE**

ASSISTANT TREASURER (2027)\*\* **DR. CHAD S. ESLINGER**

SECRETARY **MR. C. SCOTT LITCH**

**DR. HAKAN KOYMEN** (NE) (2031)

**DR. ANTHEA D. MAZZAWI** (SE) (2032)

**DR. NAILA FAROOQ** (NC) (2031)

**DR. PAUL A. KENNEDY III** (SW) (2030)

**DR. EMILY WHIPPLE** (W) (2030)

BOARD LIAISON **DR. DON SCHMITT**

*\*eligible for one additional two-year term*

*\*\*completing an unexpired term of predecessor then eligible for two additional two-year terms*

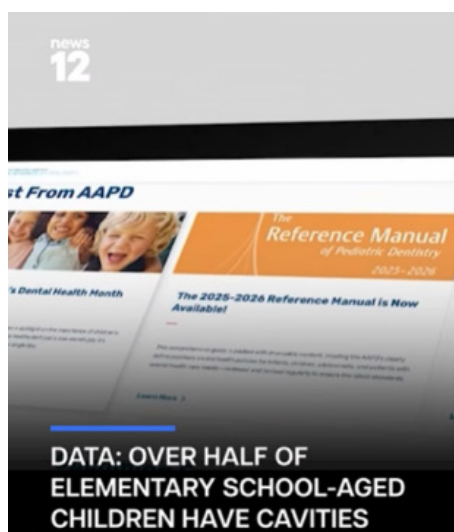
### **AAPD STAFF CONTACTS FOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PAC INQUIRIES:**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND GENERAL COUNSEL **C. SCOTT LITCH, ESQ, CAE**

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR, GOVERNANCE **LISA GUNDERSON, CERTIFIED CHIEF OF STAFF**

# AAPD® PUBLIC RELATIONS

Over the last year, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry has continued to showcase its position as the BIG authority on little teeth through various public relations efforts and initiatives reaching consumer audiences in targeted demographics. Through these initiatives AAPD members were featured as industry experts and thought leaders on children’s oral health topics. In the 2025-26 fiscal year, AAPD experts and the Academy’s guidelines and best practices were utilized in over 3,400 earned media items. Featured topics ranged from the safety of fluoride to daily tips for healthy teeth.



**598 Total Placements**

**129 Markets Across the US**

**An audience of 17.2M**

**SPECTRUM NEWS**



The AAPD’s most concentrated effort each year is the **National Children’s Dental Health Month satellite media tour**. This year, the tour took place on Friday, Jan. 30, 2026, with AAPD President Dr. Tom Ison participating in **22 interviews** across national and major market media outlets. Interviews were both live and taped, with some re-running throughout the month of February, wrapping up with an audience of over **17 million and 598 total interview placements**.

Dr. Ison put a strong focus on fluoride usage amid a tumultuous news cycle, while successfully providing overall oral health guidance and updates to optimize children’s oral care.

## KEY MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

- *JAMA Health Forum* – Sept. 5, 2025  
**Removing Fluoride From Water? An Oral Health Crisis Unfolds**  
Immediate Past President of the AAPD, Scott D. Smith, D.D.S., and ADA President Brett Kessler, D.D.S, issued a warning against efforts to eliminate community water fluoridation in a September 5 editorial, stating such decisions could unravel decades of progress in public oral health.
- *WFLD-FOX Chicago* – Oct.31, 2025  
**Halloween candy and your child’s teeth: A dentist’s advice**  
AAPD Member Spokesperson Dr. Mira Albert shared tips for keeping teeth healthy while still having fun during the trick or treating season. This interview was part of a recurring segment with Dr. Albert with the station’s midmorning show, ChicagoNOW.
- *The New York Times* – Nov. 12, 2025  
**Why the F.D.A.’s Latest Fluoride Move Has Doctors Worried**  
AAPD Chief Policy Officer Dr. Paul Casamassimo shared information relating to fluoride supplements, why they would be prescribed, and the benefits.
- *CNN* – Jan. 16, 2026  
**After sowing distrust in fluoridated water, Kennedy and skeptics turn to obstructing other fluoride sources**  
This piece references the AAPD’s comments to the EPA regarding fluoride supplements, as well as an interview with retired AAPD member Dr. Johnny Johnson, reiterating the safety of prescribed usage.
- *KFF Health News* – March 10, 2026  
**More Kids Are in ERs for Tooth Pain. Trump Cuts and RFK Jr.’s Anti-Fluoride Fight Aren’t Helping**  
AAPD Southwestern Trustee Dr. Katherine Chin along with Drs. Donald Chi and Chaitanya Prakash Puranik shared their experiences with fluoride hesitancy in this piece that delved into how misinformation relating to the safety of fluoride factored into an increase in urgent concerns in the pediatric patient population.

## 2025 MEDIA TRAINING PROGRAM

In July 2025, AAPD leaders met in Chicago for the annual Media Training program. The AAPD strives to equip its leaders to educate families, consumers, and the media on techniques and best practices for children’s oral health that may not be widely understood by those outside of the profession. And it feels like there’s never been a more important time for the expertise of pediatric dentists to be prevalent in public discourse. During this interactive one-and-a-half-day program facilitated by past AAPD president Dr. Joel Berg and Caitlin Kepple, attendees received expert advice for interviews and working with the media, discussed talking points and FAQs based on AAPD guidelines and the Reference Manual, and taped mock interviews on topics of interest to the media and public – because practice makes perfect!



### AAPD STAFF CONTACT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS INQUIRIES

MANAGER, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS **CAITLIN KEPPLER**

# AAPD® PUBLICATIONS

AAPD publications had another exceptional year keeping members up-to-date on information with appealing content and design.

## AAPD JOURNALS

### *PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY AND JDC*

Our journals continue to promote the practice, education, and research related to the specialty of pediatric dentistry through its peer-reviewed articles. *Pediatric Dentistry (PD)*, published bi-monthly, has an impact of 1.7, with a 5-year impact factor of 2.2. The *Journal of Dentistry for Children (JDC)*, published three times a year, has an impact factor of 0.5, with a 5-year impact factor of 0.6. Members and nonmembers have access to the on-line *PD* and *JDC*. The full article text is available free of charge to members through Ingenta Connect and can be reached through the Members-only section of the website. Non-members and the public can read article abstracts or purchase content online in the form of individual articles or full issues.

## READ THE JOURNALS

Our online journal publication partner, Ingenta Connect, recently analyzed data for all the titles, and reports that AAPD's journals rank in the top 100 out of more than 11,000 titles for number of full-text downloads. For the period from Jan. 1 to May 1, 2026:

### **PD 15,814 had full-text downloads.**

- 84,029 abstract views
- 74,142 table of content views
- 13,803 open access article views

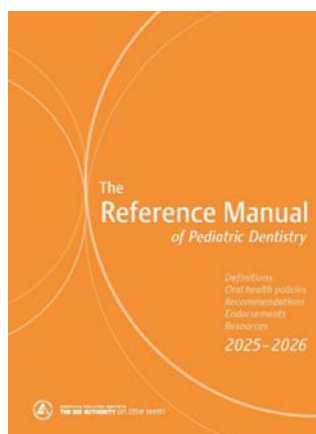
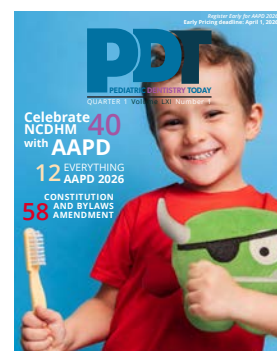
### **JDC had 1,303 full-text downloads.**

- 34,223 abstract views
- 45,757 table of content views
- 337 open access article views

## *PDT*

### *PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY TODAY*

Now more than a year into its quarterly format, *PDT* has hit its stride. The shift has allowed us to deliver more intentional, high-impact content in every issue—paired with a cleaner, more modern design that's easier to navigate and more enjoyable to read. Our newer recurring features have found their footing, helping to drive stronger engagement across both print and digital platforms. It's a format that's working—for our readers and for the Academy—and one that continues to reflect our commitment to editorial excellence and smart, efficient operations.



## REFERENCE MANUAL

The 2025-26 *Reference Manual* was mailed to members in December. The *Reference Manual* App is up-to-date and easily downloadable on any mobile device.

## AAPD WEBSITE

The AAPD website continues to serve as a central hub for members, health care professionals, residents, and stakeholders, providing streamlined access to pediatric dentistry research, clinical resources, and continuing education opportunities.

From June 2025 through May 2026, the site reached more than **342,000 users**, underscoring its continued role as a trusted and widely used resource within the pediatric dental community.

This year's efforts prioritized keeping content current, improving usability, and strengthening navigation across key resource areas. The implementation of a generative **AI-powered search tool** has further enhanced the user experience by delivering concise, relevant summaries that help users quickly locate and understand information.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The AAPD actively engages with members, parents/caregivers, and healthcare professionals through four dynamic social media channels, keeping them informed about the latest pediatric dental news, tips, and resources .

As of May 2026, the AAPD's *Instagram* community has grown to over **25,000 followers**, reflecting **over 30% growth** compared to the prior year.

*Facebook* remains the Academy's largest platform with more than **58,000 followers**, while *X* (formerly *Twitter*) maintains a steady presence with over **22,000 followers**. AAPD also supports a members-only AAPD *Facebook* group that facilitates peer engagement and shares updates on Academy initiatives. This year also marked a renewed focus on *LinkedIn*, where the AAPD re-engaged with professional audiences and grew its presence to approximately **3,000 followers**.

These social media platforms serve as a hub for consumer educational content, AAPD event announcements, CE course details, member achievements, and more!

## MYCHILDRENSTEETH

*MyChildrensTeeth.org* is AAPD's dedicated resource for parents and caregivers, delivering expert advice from pediatric dentists in an accessible and engaging way. From preventive care tips to everyday oral health guidance, the site empowers families to keep children's smiles healthy and "mouth monster" free.



### AAPD STAFF CONTACTS FOR PUBLICATIONS INQUIRIES

VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLICATIONS **CINDY HANSEN**

DIRECTOR, PUBLICATIONS **ADRIANA LOAIZA**

SENIOR COORDINATOR, PUBLICATIONS **KENNETH BERRY**

SENIOR COORDINATOR, WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA **CAMRYN SCHREINER**

AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS  
THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth®

REGISTRATION OPEN  
FOR AAPD SUMMER CE

September 10-13, 2026 | Atlanta, GA

<b>Oral Clinical Exam Review</b> And Mock Interviews	<b>Comprehensive Review</b> And Mock Interviews
8 CE Credits   September 10 This course provides strategies and techniques needed to succeed in the ABPD Oral Clinical Examination.	22 CE Credits   September 11-13 This course provides a deep dive into the latest in evidence-based pediatric dentistry.

Secure your spot at [AAPD.org](https://AAPD.org)!

AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS  
THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth®

### CHOOSING A TOOTHBRUSH FOR YOUR CHILD

With so many toothbrushes on the market, it's easy to think the best ones are the most popular or expensive.

In reality, good oral care just comes down to three simple things: **soft bristles**, **fluoride toothpaste**, and **consistency**.

AMERICA'S PEDIATRIC DENTISTS  
THE BIG AUTHORITY on little teeth®

### FLUORIDE IS THE #1 MOST COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREVENT TOOTH DECAY

One of the best ways to prevent cavities in little teeth is to ensure children receive fluoride. Fluoride encourages "remineralization," or strengthening of teeth to prevent cavities.

Explore trusted resources at [MyChildrensTeeth.org](https://MyChildrensTeeth.org)

# AAPD® EDUCATIONAL/ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUPPORT (RESIDENCY/POSTDOCTORAL AND PREDOCTORAL)

## ACADEMY FOR ADVANCING LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS



In response to the ongoing need for more clinical and dental school faculty, the AAPD launched the Master Clinician

Scholarship in 2008, which has since evolved into the Leadership in Education and Administration Program (LEAP). Now in its 18th year (2025), the AAPD continues to offer scholarships to members for two courses through the Academy for Advancing Leadership:

- **The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL)** – designed to help participants improve student outcomes by refining teaching skills and enhancing interactions with learners.
- **The Chairs and Academic Administrators Management Program (CAAMP)** – an interactive program addressing the unique challenges faced by new, current, and aspiring academic administrators.

In addition, scholarship recipients receive complimentary registration to the Comprehensive Review of Pediatric Dentistry. The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) helps participants improve student outcomes by refining teaching skills and strengthening learner interactions, while the Chairs and Academic Administrators Management Program (CAAMP) is an interactive program designed to address the unique challenges faced by new, current, and aspiring academic administrators. Learn more at <https://aalgroup.org/>.

Congratulations to our 2025 Recipients:

**CAAMP**—Drs. Chaitanya Puranik and Jacy Stauffer

**ITL**—Drs. Timothy Followell, Meagan Inclan and Alexandra Makara



CAAMP: (l-r) Drs. Jacy Stauffer, OHSU School of Dentistry, Chaitanya Puranik, University of Colorado's School of Dental Medicine



ITL: (l-r) Drs. Timothy Followell, University of Louisville School of Dentistry, Meagan Inclan, Lyon College School of Dental Medicine, Alexandra Makara, Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine

## AAPD VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

### CHARTING YOUR PATH TO PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY RESIDENCY

On Feb. 3, 2026, AAPD hosted our first-ever Virtual Open House for prospective pediatric dentistry residents, presented by the Council on Pre-Doctoral Education. This event was created to provide essential information for those exploring a career in our specialty. The event was a resounding success, with **528 individuals** registering and enthusiastic participation from attendees eager to learn more about the pathway to residency.

The session offered attendees:

- An overview of building a strong application and preparing for interviews.
- Practical advice on key components, including CVs, personal statements, letters of recommendation, and interview etiquette.

Given the strong turnout and positive feedback, **the AAPD Virtual Open House will become an annual event** to ensure a pipeline of well-informed, motivated candidates for years to come.

## 2026 AAPD RESIDENT RESEARCH AWARD (RRA) COMPETITION

Established in 1989, the AAPD Resident Research Award (formerly known as the Graduate Student Research Award, or GSRA) recognizes current and recent pediatric dentistry residents and students. Each year, eight finalists are selected to present their research during the AAPD Annual Session. Finalists receive complimentary flight and hotel stay for the Annual Session, a cash award, and a plaque. Their training programs also receive a matching cash award. Congratulations to the following finalists:

### DR. KAITRIA ABBATEMATTEO

University of Florida – Gainesville

*National Trends of Pediatric Dental Procedures under General Anesthesia*

### DR. ANG HUI JAN

National University of Singapore

*How Dental Rehabilitation under General Anesthesia Influences Parental Oral Care Practices and Treatment Decisions for Subsequent Children: A Qualitative Study*

### DR. BILYANA DASKALOVA

University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL

*Microhardness Effects of Non-Invasive Caries Treatments*

### DR. EUNICE HO

National University of Singapore

*Spatial Distribution of Bacteria in Inflamed Primary Teeth Pulp Tissues using Fluorescence in situ Hybridization*

### DR. GABRIELLE LE

University of Maryland Baltimore

*Long-Term Success of IPT vs. Calcium-Silicate Pulpotomy: A 3-Year RCT*

### DR. SHAWNA RIEUX

Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, MA

*Traumatic Avulsion: Survival and Risk Factors of Reimplanted Permanent Teeth*

### DR. ROBERT SCHWARTZ

University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)

*Color Stability Following Sterilization and Staining of BioFlex Crowns*

### DR. NIKITA TCHOUMAK

University of Maryland School of Dentistry

*Can Photobiomodulation Replace Topical Benzocaine in Reducing Dental Injection Pain?*

## AAPD IN-SERVICE EXAMINATION

The AAPD continues its relationship with the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) that now includes computerization of the In-Service Examination. Since 2008, the AAPD has contracted with NBOME for psychometric services and test construction. The In-Service Examination Committee has divided itself into two smaller groups; one concentrates on item writing and the other develops the exam and blueprint. The exams continue to be administered in two phases: outgoing and incoming residents are examined at different times. This allows programs to receive and share scores with the residents. **A total of 1,004 (up from 955 in 2024) exams were administered in 2025.** This accounted for \$140,827 (increase of \$1,957 from 2024) in non-dues revenue. We continue to have a 98% participation rate of the CODA-approved pediatric dentistry residency training programs.

## PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY RESIDENT SEMINAR SERIES

The AAPD Resident Seminar Series has featured a wide variety of topics designed to enhance the educational experience of dental residents. Each session aims to supplement the regular curriculum with diverse and engaging content. Our previous presentations, going back to 2020, have covered numerous areas of interest, providing valuable insights and learning opportunities for students, residents and the larger membership. **If you're curious about the types of topics we've explored, you can check out our past seminar listings.** The Resident Seminar Series is open to **all members**, offering a chance to gain additional knowledge and stay informed about the latest in dental education.



# PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY RESIDENCY POSITIONS REMAIN HIGHLY COVETED

Pediatric dentistry continues to be a popular specialty with dental school graduates, as evident by the continued growth in positions offered and filled.

## RESULTS OF THE MATCH FOR 2026–2027 POSITIONS

Program	Applicants Participating in the Match	Positions Offered	Matches/ Positions Filled	Unfilled Positions
<b>Pediatric Dentistry</b>	<b>693 (+30)</b>	<b>480 (+6)</b>	<b>444 (-1)</b>	<b>36 (+7)</b>
Orthodontics	722 (+32)	362 (+3)	341 (-9)	21 (+12)
Adv. Education in General Dentistry	398 (-9)	216 (-48)	141 (-13)	75 (-35)
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	440 (+48)	260 (+1)	243 (+5)	17 (-4)
Periodontics	296 (-6)	132 (+6)	129 (+3)	3 (+3)
Prosthodontics	234 (-27)	130 (+3)	116 (+5)	14 (-2)
Dental Anesthesiology	65 (+6)	34 (0)	34 (0)	0 (0)

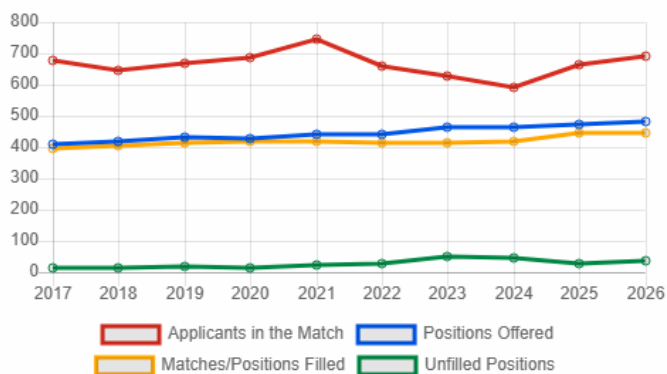
*Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the change from the 2025 Match results to 2026. A positive number (+X) represents an increase; a negative number (-X) represents a decrease.*

## KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE 2026–2027 DENTAL MATCH

- **Pediatric Dentistry saw rising unfilled positions despite strong applicant interest.** Applicants increased to 693 (+30), but unfilled positions grew from 29 to 36 (+7). This suggests possible geographic mismatches or program-level competitiveness issues.
- **Total unmatched applicants increased, even as unfilled positions declined.** Overall, unmatched applicants rose by 102 (to 1,231), while unfilled positions dropped by 57 (to 290). The applicant pool is growing faster than available positions.
- **AEGD and GPR programs continued to contract significantly.** AEGD positions dropped by 48 (to 216); GPR dropped by 41 (to 588). However, unfilled positions fell sharply in both, indicating better alignment between applicants and remaining programs.
- **Orthodontics experienced a surprising increase in unfilled positions.** Despite 32 more applicants, matches fell by 9, and unfilled positions nearly doubled from 9 to 21 (+12). This may signal shifting student interest or geographic program challenges.
- **Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery saw a large applicant surge with minimal position growth.** Applicants jumped by 48 (to 440), while positions increased by only 1. Unfilled positions dropped to 17, reinforcing OMS as a highly competitive specialty.
- **Periodontics and Prosthodontics showed modest volatility.** Perio moved from 0 to 3 unfilled positions; Pros saw a sharp drop in applicants (-27) but slightly fewer unfilled slots.
- **Dental Anesthesiology remained perfectly balanced.** For the fifth consecutive year, all 34 positions filled with zero unfilled slots.

## DENTAL MATCH STATISTICS

Postdoctoral Dental Matching for positions from 2026 back to 2017.



For complete results, please visit the National Matching Service website at [www.natmatch.com/dentres](http://www.natmatch.com/dentres).

## TRENDS IN DENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Annual data on accredited programs and enrollment (Survey of Advanced Dental Education) is gathered and maintained by the Health Policy Institute of the American Dental Association (ADA). Data from the 2024–25 academic year is available. At that time, there were 87 (0) pediatric dentistry residency programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), enrolling a total of 1,011 (-7) postdoctoral students. There were 479 (0) graduates in 2024, and 492 (-5) first-year enrollees in 2024.

For the latest annual reports on accredited predoctoral, advanced and allied dental education programs in the U.S., please visit <https://www.ada.org/en/science-research/health-policy-institute/data-center/dental-education>.

In terms of practicing dentists in the U.S., pediatric dentistry continues to be the second largest dental specialty, following orthodontics: {American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, Supply of dentists in the U.S.: 2001-2024} <https://www.ada.org/resources/research/health-policy-institute/dentist-workforce>.

### Supply of Dentists in the U.S. by Practice, Research, or Administration Area, Dentists Working in Dentistry

Specialty	2023	2024	Change	% Change
General Practice	159,265	159,562	+297	+0.19%
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery	7,440	7,424	-16	-0.22%
Endodontics	5,759	5,685	-74	-1.29%
Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics	10,904	10,830	-74	-0.68%
<b>Pediatric Dentistry</b>	<b>9,183</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>+129</b>	<b>+1.40%</b>
Periodontics	5,542	5,471	-71	-1.28%
Prosthodontics	3,584	3,540	-44	-1.23%
Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology	428	428	0	0.00%
Public Health Dentistry	782	734	-48	-6.14%
Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology	204	213	+9	+4.41%
Dental Anesthesiology	141	156	+15	+10.64%
Oral Medicine	30	38	+8	+26.67%
Orofacial Pain	53	72	+19	+35.85%

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- Pediatric Dentistry saw one of the largest absolute increases (+129 practitioners) and a solid growth rate of +1.40%, outpacing most other specialties.
- Dental Anesthesiology, Oral Medicine, and Orofacial Pain showed the highest percentage growth, though from small base numbers.
- General Practice remained stable with modest growth (+0.19%).
- Most surgical and specialty fields (OMS, Endo, Ortho, Perio, Pros) experienced slight declines of 0.2%–1.3%.
- Public Health Dentistry had the largest percentage decline (-6.14%).

Note: Numbers indicate the change from the previous year. A positive number (+X) represents an increase; a negative number (-X) represents a decrease.

# COLLABORATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL, ORAL, AND CRANIOFACIAL RESEARCH (IADR)/AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL, ORAL, AND CRANIOFACIAL RESEARCH (AADOCR)

Leola Royston continues to support the IADR/AADOR Pediatric Oral Health Research (POHR) Group as its Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. The POHR Group has grown since its inception and has increased its international membership. The POHR Group offered six awards to be awarded this year:

## IADR AAPD Research Award

### ALINE CASTILHO

Indiana University School of Dentistry, USA

#### *Light effect on SDF's ability to prevent further enamel demineralization*

The Pediatric Oral Health Research Group of IADR has established this award for the purpose of promoting the interest of pediatric dentists, clinicians, and academicians in research focused on the oral health of children and adolescents, and to acknowledge excellence of the research conducted by these individuals. The winner receives a Certificate of Recognition and \$1,000 USD.

## IADR POHR Pediatric Dentistry Working Group Travel Award

### ENAS ABDELLATIF

University of Alexandria, Egypt

#### *Minimally Invasive Management of Posterior Proximal Carious Lesions in Children*

The IADR invites applications from IADR members from Africa who have submitted an abstract for a travel award to support their attendance at the IADR General Session. The objective of this award program is to encourage African investigators to undertake research in any area related to pediatric oral health and present their findings at the IADR General Session & Exhibition. The award is sponsored by PDWG and consists of \$1,000 to attend the IADR General Session.

## IADR Pediatric Oral Health Research Group Faculty Award

### CLAUDIA MAZZITELLI

University of Bologna, Italy

#### *Molar-Incisor Hypomineralization: Insights Into Etiology and Enamel Structure*

The Pediatric Oral Health Research Group of IADR has established this award for the purpose of promoting the interest of junior faculties or scientists in research focused on the oral health of children and adolescents, and to acknowledge excellence of the research conducted by junior faculties. (completed their last degree / fellowship /training program within the last 5 years). The winner receives a Certificate of Recognition and \$1,500 USD.

## IADR Pediatric Oral Health Research Group Young Investigator Award

### WEI BO NG

National University of Singapore, Singapore

#### *Epithelial Barrier Susceptibility Links Atopic Dermatitis And Early Childhood Caries*

The Pediatric Oral Health Research Group of IADR established this award for the purpose of promoting and recognizing excellence in research relating to the oral health of children and adolescents by young investigators. (PhD Students or Postdoctoral Fellows). The winner receives a Certificate of Recognition and \$1,000 USD.

## IADR Pediatric Oral Health Research Group Student Award

### RAKSHA BASKAR

University of Melbourne, Australia

#### *Screening For Sleep Disordered Breathing In Children By Dentists*

The Pediatric Oral Health Research Group of IADR established this award to support and recognize excellence in research focused on the oral health of children and adolescents by young scientists and students (DDS or Bachelor degree dental students, Postgraduate students or resident/registrar in specialty training postgraduate/certificate programs). The winner receives a Certificate of Recognition and \$1,000 USD.

## IADR Pediatric Oral Health Research SEA Award

### *No awardee this year*

The IADR Pediatric Oral Health Research Group and The Taiwan Academy of Pediatric Dentistry established this award for the purpose of promoting and acknowledging excellence of research focused on the oral health of children and adolescents, conducted by junior scientists in the IADR Southeast Asian Division. The Award is given on the basis of general excellence in research related to pediatric oral health as demonstrated by the abstract and in person presentation.

## AAPD STAFF CONTACT FOR EDUCATIONAL/ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUPPORT

SENIOR MANAGER, EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT **LEOLA ROYSTON, MPH, CAE**

# AAPD® CONTINUING EDUCATION



**Continuing EDge** is distributed monthly. The click rate remains high, showing that membership actively receives and reads communication about CE opportunities.

## FALL 2025 CE

### ORAL EXAMINATION REVIEW COURSE

Aug. 21, 2025 • San Diego, Calif.  
Final Attendance was 90.

*Sponsored by College of Diplomates*



### MOCK ORAL EXAM INTERVIEWS

Aug. 22-23, 2025 • San Diego, Calif.  
78 interviews were conducted.

*Sponsored by College of Diplomates*



### NEW COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW: ADVANCES IN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Aug. 22-24, 2025 • San Diego, Calif.  
Final Attendance was 114.

*Sponsored by Sprig*



### SAFE & EFFECTIVE SEDATION FOR THE PEDIATRIC DENTAL PATIENT

October 17-18, 2025 • Chicago, Ill.  
Final Attendance was 81.

*Sponsored by Sedation Resource*



### ADVANCED TRAINING IN SAFE PROCEDURAL SEDATION IN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY FOR FACULTY AND RESIDENTS

October 17-18, 2025 • Chicago, Ill.  
Final Attendance was 110.  
*This was a brand new offering!*

### MANAGEMENT OF PEDIATRIC SEDATION EMERGENCIES: SIMULATION COURSE

October 19, 2025 • Chicago, Ill.

**FINAL ATTENDANCE WAS 28.**

## SPRING 2026 CE

### QUALIFYING EXAMINATION PREP COURSE

Feb. 13-15, 2026 • Orlando, Fla.  
Final attendance was 168

## FALL 2026 CE

### ORAL EXAMINATION REVIEW COURSE

Sept. 10, 2026 • Atlanta, Ga.

### MOCK ORAL EXAM INTERVIEWS

Sept. 11-12, 2026 • Atlanta, Ga.

### COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW COURSE

Sept. 11- 13, 2026 • Atlanta, Ga.

### SAFE & EFFECTIVE SEDATION FOR THE PEDIATRIC DENTAL PATIENT

Oct. 23-24, 2026

### ASSISTANT SEDATION COURSE: YOUR ROLE IN THE SAFE SEDATION OF CHILDREN

Oct. 23-24, 2026

### ADVANCED TRAINING IN SAFE PROCEDURAL SEDATION IN PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY FOR FACULTY AND RESIDENTS

Oct. 23-24, 2026

### MANAGEMENT OF PEDIATRIC SEDATION EMERGENCIES: SIMULATION

Oct. 25, 2026

All AAPD Sedation Courses will take place in Los Angeles, Calif.



Education Passport is the AAPD’s digital learning portal created to provide access for member and non-members to our high-quality education. Users can purchase content from previous continuing education courses, Annual Sessions, webinars and more. **Once purchased, content is available to the user for 5 years, and the user can claim CE from the content for 3 years.**

- Total users: 12,447 total accounts; **7,218 are AAPD Member accounts**
- Number of products open for registration: 128
- Number of registrations in 2025: 6,247

**AAPD MEETINGS STAFF THAT MAKE THE ANNUAL SESSION ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES RUN SMOOTHLY**

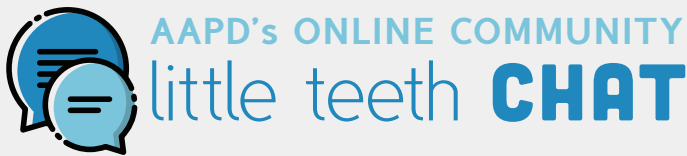
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, MEETINGS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION **KRISTI CASALE, CMP**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MEETINGS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION **COLLEEN SHENNAN, CMP**

SENIOR MANAGER, MEETING SERVICES **RACHAEL HAAVE, DES**

MEETINGS SERVICES ASSOCIATE **EMMA SIEMSEN**

## LITTLE TEETH CHAT: AAPD’S ONLINE COMMUNITY



Little Teeth Chat (LTC) promotes member communication by providing AAPD members an online community forum via the AAPD website to connect, engage and share critical information and best practices in real time. Members continue to utilize Little Teeth Chat to share ideas and network. LTC currently has 12 Shared Interest Groups (SIG) with an AAPD expert to help guide discussion and targeted focus ensures that discussions and shared resources are relevant to your practice.

- |  |                                 |  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Caries risk                             | 7. Oral Pathology/Oral Medicine | d. Patient and family dynamics   |
| 2. Behavior guidance                       | 8. Hospital-based practice      | e. Staffing (officer managers, dental hygienists, dental assistants, etc.) |
| 3. Fluoride therapy (including SDF)        | 9. Practice management:         | f. Associates and partnerships   |
| 4. Restorative techniques                  | a. Coding                       | 10. Residency program management   |
| 5. Sedation/anesthesia                     | b. Finances                     | 11. Sports Dentistry   |
| 6. Children with special health care needs | c. Marketing                    | 12. Safety   |

## PODCASTS

The very popular **Little Teeth, BIG SMILES** (formerly Pedo Teeth Talk) is released the first Tuesday of each month. This podcast is sponsored by HuFriedy Group. At AAPD26 in Las Vegas, our podcast leader Dr. Joel Berg will host on-site podcast interviews at the Media Hub with: Drs. Jessica Lee, Incoming AAPD CEO; Chelsea Fosse, Vice President, RPC; Thomas Paumier, ADA President-Elect; and Bobby Elliott (on Practice Management).



Below is a list of topics from May 2025 through the first few months of 2026:

- **May 2025:** The Science of Literacy
- **June 2025:** The Power of Steady Leadership
- **July 2025:** Shining a Spotlight on Minimally Invasive Care
- **August 2025:** Protecting the Water-line for Infection Control
- **September 2025:** Get to Know the Research and Policy Center
- **October 2025:** What Makes the Next Big Cover Story
- **November 2025:** A Conversation with Dr. Richard Rosato, President of the ADA
- **December 2025:** How Innovation Can Support Prioritizing Early Oral Healthcare
- **January 2026:** Pediatric Dentists, Orthodontists, and the Benefits of Co-Location
- **February 2026:** International Trends in Pediatric Dentistry
- **March 2026:** Building Lasting Trust with Pediatric Patients
- **April 2026:** The Impact of a Global Education
- **May 2026:** A Conversation with Dr. John S. Rutkauskas

**Total number of downloads for calendar year 2025: 18,988**



Sponsored by Elevate

**Newly Erupted**, aimed at early career pediatric dentists, is released the second Thursday of each month. Elevate Oral Care is the sponsor for this podcast.



Below is a list of topics from May 2025 through the first few months of 2026:

- **May 2025:** The Science of Cariology
- **June 2025:** Integrating Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Well-Being as Professional Women
- **July 2025:** Finding the Fun in Your Passion
- **August 2025:** The Business of Dentistry
- **September 2025:** Doing It All as a Pediatric Dentist
- **October 2025:** Put Your Best Foot Forward: Tips for the Pediatric Dentistry Residency Application Process
- **November 2025:** Connecting the Global Pediatric Dentistry Community
- **December 2025:** Transitioning to Academia
- **January 2026:** The One Barrel Challenge: Support the AAPD Foundation
- **February 2026:** Charting Your Own Path and Staying Authentic
- **March 2026:** Identifying Oral Lesions
- **April 2026:** Residency Programs: Finding the Right Fit

**Total number of downloads for calendar year 2025: 6,462**

[CLICK HERE ACCESS AND LISTEN TO BOTH PODCASTS AT YOUR CONVENIENCE](#)

# Thank You to Our Volunteer Leaders

AAPD's work is powered by the dedication and expertise of our volunteer leaders—members who give their time, insight, and passion to advance pediatric oral health and support the profession.

- **23 Councils and Committees** advancing the mission and strategic priorities of AAPD
- **350+ volunteer leaders** contributing their time and expertise across governance, education, and advocacy
- Development of **clinical guidelines and best practices** that shape care for children nationwide
- Advancement of **federal and state advocacy priorities**, amplifying AAPD's voice on Capitol Hill and across the country
- Leadership of **signature programs**, including the Annual Session, Pediatric Oral Health Advocacy Conference (POHAC), and continuing education initiatives
- Collaboration with the **Research & Policy Center** to support evidence-based dentistry, workforce initiatives, and access to care
- Strengthening **membership engagement, leadership development, and resident involvement**, helping build the future of pediatric dentistry
- Supporting **interdisciplinary partnerships and national coalitions**, expanding AAPD's impact beyond dentistry

EXPLORE AAPD'S FULL LEADERSHIP ROSTER AND VOLUNTEER NETWORK

**Together, these efforts strengthen AAPD's role as the leading voice for pediatric oral health, advancing our mission to promote optimal oral health for all children.**

## COUNCIL & COMMITTEE IMPACT OVERVIEW

### COUNCIL ON ANNUAL SESSION

- Provided oversight and coordination for all aspects of the AAPD Annual Session to ensure successful planning and execution.
- Sourced engaging venues for all special events related to AAPD Annual Session.

### SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Developed and delivered a comprehensive, high-quality scientific program for the AAPD Annual Session aligned with the Strategic Plan and member needs.
- Incorporated member feedback and evaluation data to continuously improve program content and guide planning for future Annual Sessions.

### COUNCIL ON CLINICAL AFFAIRS (CCA)

- The AAPD Reference Manual update includes 20 revised or reaffirmed Policies and Best Practices for publication in 2026.
- A new Policy on Recognition and Management of Child Abuse and Neglect in a Dental Setting was written.
- New consult forms are under development for the 2026 cycle, including Oncology and Endocrinology.

### COMMITTEE ON SEDATION AND ANESTHESIA

- Reference work was done in combination with the AAP Section on Pain and Anesthesia to reaffirm the Joint guideline document Guidelines for Monitoring and Management of Pediatric Patients Before, During, and After Sedation for Diagnostic and Therapeutic Procedures. References were updated in line with current literature.

- The committee was represented at the ADA SmileCon25 where technical expertise and advice was offered related to the HOD proposal to create a separate ADA Pediatric Sedation guideline, and remove reference to the AAP/AAPD joint document.
- In October 2025, the Academy offered the CE course Advanced Training in Safe Procedural Sedation in Pediatric Dentistry for Faculty and Residents for the first time. Over 100 residents/faculty attended. The new course has a focus on literature review, as well as entry-level learner information on operational safety protocols.

## COMMITTEE ON SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

- Assumed leadership of the Special Health Care Needs SIG on Little Teeth Chat, strengthening engagement and peer connection.
- Educated membership with monthly updates via the Special Health Care Needs SIG.
- Represented the committee at the Special Care Dental Association Conference, sharing AAPD's disability curriculum and expanding external visibility.

## COUNCIL ON CONTINUING EDUCATION (CCE)

- Expanded and diversified AAPD continuing education offerings, both in-person and digital, based on member needs assessments, enhancing clinical expertise and engagement across the pediatric dental community.
- Provided strategic recommendations to the Board and identified expert faculty to deliver high-quality, relevant programming aligned with evolving workforce and practice trends.

## JOURNAL-BASED CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- The committee consistently provided Journal-Based CE articles on a bimonthly basis with accompanying assessment questions to the subscribers.
- Posted all CE articles and questions on schedule to ensure continuous member access and participation.
- Monitored program implementation and utilization to ensure alignment with committee charges.
- Sustained Journal-Based CE membership subscriptions, generating continued revenue for the Academy.
- Expanded committee membership by welcoming two new members for the 2026 term.

## SPEAKERS BUREAU COMMITTEE

- Recruited and maintained a diverse, high-quality Speakers Bureau of subject matter experts to support AAPD and its chapters in delivering exceptional continuing education programs.
- Established and continuously improved processes for speaker evaluation, selection, and directory management to ensure accessible, up-to-date, and relevant expertise across pediatric dentistry topics.

## COUNCIL ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS (CGA)

- Developed 2026 legislative and regulatory priorities.
- Oversaw continued growth and refinement of the successful annual Pediatric Oral Health Advocacy Conference (POHAC) in Washington, D.C.
- Supported the state Public Policy Advocates (PPA) network.
- Continued AAPD's progress in addressing operating room access via HCPCS code G0330 and resulting significant increases in facility fees for dental cases in hospitals and ASCs.
- Worked closely with Congressional Liaisons and D.C. lobbying firm (Powers) to preserve funding for the Title VII pediatric dentistry program

## PEDIATRIC DENTAL MEDICAID AND CHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Drs. Cashion, Greene, Meeske, Munoz, Ramos-Gomez, and Fosse represented AAPD at the 2026 Medicaid/Medicare/CHIP Services Dental Association (MSDA) Symposium, where they learned about and offered a provider perspective on current practices in fraud, waste, and abuse prevention.
- Working with the RPC team, Council on Government Affairs, Public Policy Advocates, and external partners, PDMCAC leadership continues to monitor changes to state Medicaid programs due to federal actions (such as HR 1) and educate members on these issues (e.g., Oct 31 webinar, numerous Annual Session presentations).
- Given AAPD's priority of restoring federal oral health infrastructure, PDMCAC has been a key partner in discussions related to maintaining the CMS Chief Dental Officer role and filling that position.

## COMMITTEE ON DENTAL INSURANCE AND CODING

- Hosted a webinar in December for members on G0330 codes and new CDT updates for 2026.
- Reviewed CMC CDT code submissions and represented the AAPD at the March CDT-2027 Code Maintenance Committee Meeting.
- Convened an ad hoc meeting at POHAC to discuss strategy and voting plans for the CMC meeting.
- Assisted with technical support, as needed, for the Council on Scientific Affairs, AAPD members, and the ADA's SNODENT project.

## COUNCIL ON MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP SERVICES (CMMS)

- Developed targeted strategies to attract new members and retain existing ones, ensuring the continued growth and vitality of the Academy.
- Identified and promoted meaningful benefits, programs, and services that support professional development and foster a strong sense of community.
- Created initiatives and resources tailored to residents and early-career professionals, helping them transition successfully into practice and long-term membership.

## COMMITTEE ON EARLY CAREER PEDIATRIC DENTISTS

- Launched the Early Career “Under 10” Award to recognize the outstanding achievements and commitment of emerging leaders in pediatric dentistry.
- Developed a practice management course for early-career members at the 2026 AAPD Annual Session.
- Secured funding for an in-person ECPD meeting aligned with the 2026 AAPD Chapter Leadership Summit to advance early-career engagement initiatives.

## PEDIATRIC DENTAL RESIDENT COMMITTEE

- Selected three geographically diverse judges and coordinated the selection and notification process for the Resident Recognition Award.
- Promoted resident engagement within the Academy by encouraging applicants not selected for the resident committee to contribute meaningful articles to the PDT Resident’s Corner.
- Initiated early-stage planning meetings for a resident-focused Business Symposium.
- Revitalized in-person engagement by reestablishing a resident meeting at the Annual Session.
- Developed and proposed a board action request to allow residents to engage with additional AAPD committee and council meetings, fostering leadership development and meaningful engagement within the Academy.

## COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

- Committee Members created updated content for [www.mychildrensteeth.org](http://www.mychildrensteeth.org), ranging in topics from The First Visit, to Emergency Care, and What to Anticipate as Your Child Grows
- The Committee as a whole facilitated a review of a proposed AAPD member “influencer” program that staff is piloting on a small scale for AAPD 2026 to encourage Academy membership and program engagement.
- Committee Members created/shared content for use on the AAPD social media platforms.

## AFFILIATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Helped strengthen and maintain robust general dentist and pediatric dentist relationships.
- Enhanced treatment continuity for patients with special needs/IDD.
- Advocate for appropriate and adequate Medicaid patient coverage and provider reimbursement.
- Encourage Affiliate members to be trained and become resources in treating patients in hospital environments.
- Continue to promote benefits of AAPD and Affiliate membership.

## COUNCIL ON PRE-DOCTORAL EDUCATION

- Planned and hosted a “Road to Residency” virtual open house for prospective applicants to postgraduate training programs in pediatric dentistry; 528 students attended.
- IRB was submitted and approved for assessing nutrition education within the pediatric predoctoral curriculum nationwide; survey distributed to postdoctoral and predoctoral program directors on April 2, 2026.
- Represented our specialty at the ADEA PASS applicant event on April 22, 2026. This was an opportunity for us to engage directly with applicants, answer questions about our specialty, and help shape their understanding as they explore advanced education pathways. We had two representatives participate in the live chat, Dr. Mark Veazie and Leola Royston.

## COUNCIL ON POST-DOCTORAL EDUCATION

- Joint Academic Day 2026 Planning  
Assisted with the planning of Joint Academic Day 2026, including the selection of presentation topics and speakers for the joint morning session and the postdoctoral afternoon breakout session.
- AAPD Faculty Seminar Series (New Initiative)  
Conceptualized and proposed the AAPD Faculty Seminar Series, approved by the Board; collaborating with the Education Development and Academic Support Manager to plan and implement the series in 2026.

## POST-DOCTORAL IN-SERVICE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

- Secured exam integrity and reduced compromised content: all proven exposed items removed; “red-flag” items decreased AAPD25X-26X-27X (52 of 20 of 18 as of 4/13/2026) with a target to eliminate remaining items by Sep 2026; AAPD27X has no compromised anchor items.
- Restored and expanded item supply: new-item production rose to over 260 (May 2025–May 2026) from 238 prior year; Board-Action submitted this working year and approved to increase in pretest capacity doubled pretest items to 100 for the next In-service Exam, substantially replenishing usable-item inventory and avoiding the bottle-neck effect on number of new items produced vs. number of items pretested for future use.
- Hardened equating and security processes: instituted a 3-year anchor rotation (replace 1/3 of anchors yearly; 36 anchors/exam) now in year 2 to reduce long-term exposure risk.
- Improved committee capacity and output quality: membership increased and rebalanced by expertise and geography; writers organized into spring, fall, and floating groups; established minimum in-person participation with a virtual option at no additional cost to AAPD; implemented a formal onboarding process and Chair transition—resulting in fewer post-exam items requiring validation and stronger overall item performance.
- Advanced evidence generation and partnerships: Board action request submitted last year and approved for an AAPD ISE IRB-approved AI research on pediatric-dentistry item performance launched with Univ. of Colorado; NBOME/AAPD agreements were developed and put in place during this year and data collection/early analysis underway. Virtual meetings held throughout the year with the parties involved.

## COUNCIL ON SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS (CSA)

- Council members volunteered significant time and expertise to support the CCA in the development of the Reference Manual.
- Council members planned and served as panelists in the newly created Research Track at Joint Academic Day, providing a venue for academic pediatric dental research colleagues to share resources, opportunities, and support.
- Council members served as judges for the Resident Research Award, including evaluating abstracts, reviewing finalist manuscripts, and judging oral presentations at Annual Session.
- Council members provided expertise, as needed, to other AAPD councils and committees, including the Safety and Quality Improvement Committee, Committee on Dental Insurance and Coding, and the Consumer Review Committee.

## CONSUMER REVIEW COMMITTEE

- Creation of a detailed and structured protocol for providing AAPD membership with evidence-based information on new products and services.
- At the Board's request, our committee tested the new protocol with an informational article on hydroxyapatite toothpaste submitted by an AAPD member.

## EVIDENCE-BASED DENTISTRY COMMITTEE

- The permanent tooth vital pulp systematic review and guideline were completed and published.
- The tethered tissues systematic review and guideline were completed and accepted for publication.
- The Airway Guideline workgroup was developed in collaboration with the American Orthodontic Association, and all members have been meeting to move this project forward.
- Updated literature searches are underway to assess the potential need to update the sealant and SDF guidelines.
- Our Fellows program has been quite successful, and we have selected our second fellow!
- Safety & Quality Improvement Committee
- Continued development and editing of the Clinical Practice Safety Guide, with final publication planned online by Annual Session and presentation during the Safety Soundbite on May 22.
- Supported the work of the Sedation and Anesthesia Committee in October; volunteers are planning to pilot a new In-Office Sedation and General Anesthesia course for members.
- Began incorporating "Quality Improvement" activities through participation in the Dental Quality Alliance.
- Advanced implementation of a new CODA safety training standard for pediatric dental residents.

# IN MEMORIAM

Dr. J. Thomas Atkinson	Greenville, S.C.
Dr. William K. Duncan	Jackson, Miss.
Dr. Sashi M. Kapur	Phoenix, Ariz.
Dr. Michael F. McIlwain	Tampa, Fla.
Dr. David K. Priebe	Anacortes, Wash.
Dr. Lee R. Weisberg	Beachwood, Ohio
Dr. Robert C. Wenger	Hilliard, Ohio
Dr. Larry N. Zimmerman	Cincinnati, Ohio

# WHAT'S NEW WITH THE HEADQUARTERS OFFICE?

AAPD staff looks forward to seeing you in Las Vegas!

[VIEW THE STAFF DIRECTORY](#)

## PROMOTIONS

(AS OF JULY 1, 2025)

- **Leola Royston, CAE** – Senior Manager, Education Development and Academic Support. Leola also passed the examination to become a **Certified Association Executive (CAE)**. This is a certification program offered by the American Society of Association Executives. Leola joins the ranks of several other AAPD staff who are CAEs: Paul Amundsen, Scott Litch, Suzanne Wester, and Dr. Rutkauskas.
- **Rachael Haave, DES** – Senior Manager, Meetings Services
- **Lisa Gunderson** – Executive Coordinator, Governance
- **Sierra Smith** – Accounting Coordinator
- **Lee Gonzalez** – Senior Coordinator, Membership and Marketing

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Kristi Casale** was the 2025 recipient of the **Robert J. “Bob” Donovan Award** from the Greater Midwest Chapter of the Professional Convention and Management Association (GMC PCMA). This award is presented to an outstanding meeting professional who leads by example, inspires volunteerism, and is committed to the growth of the industry. The award was presented in Chicago on March 11, 2026.

[SEE THE DETAILS](#)

- **Lisa Gunderson** obtained certification as a **Certified Chief of Staff®, Level 1**. Lisa completed a training program offered through The Chief of Staff Association, a global network that offers world-class education, including executive education at Harvard Business School and the University of Oxford, through leadership, research, and a commitment to lasting organizational impact.

[SEE THE DETAILS](#)

- **Kyle Malone** secured his Certified Fundraising Executive credential (CFRE). Kyle completed more than 80 hours of CE during a three-year period, document specific professional practice and performance metrics, and demonstrate mastery of the content, passing a 200-question exam.

# LITCH AND ASSOCIATES LAW LOG



This column continues to address current legal matters impacting the practice of pediatric dentistry and appears regularly in *Pediatric Dentistry Today (PDT)*, with the addition of two expert co-authors joining AAPD's COO & General Counsel C. Scott Litch:

**Cheryl A. Cameron, Ph.D., J.D.**, Professor, Oral Health Sciences, School of Dentistry Virginia and Prentice Bloedel University Professor, and Vice Provost Emeritus, University of Washington.

**Cheryl H. DeVore, M.S., J.D.**, senior partner at Thomas Law Group, and Faculty Emeritus of Ohio State University's College of Dentistry (where she retired as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs).

Over the past year these topics were addressed:

Quarter 1 *PDT* 2026

*DSO Affiliations: Considerations for a Selling Pediatric Dentist - Part 1*

Quarter 4 *PDT* 2025

*FTC Non-Compete Off the Table...For Now*

Quarter 3 *PDT* 2025

*Informed Consent for the Pediatric Dental Patient: Obligations, Risks, Challenges, and Benefits*

Quarter 2 *PDT* 2025

*Obtaining OR Access for Pediatric Dental Procedures*