

2023 Volume 3

SAN DIEGO COUNTY DENTAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

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welcome

New Members

Abigail Jumoc, DDS *Welcome Back!*
Indiana University, 2019

Micaela Zaverdinos, DDS
Case Western Reserve, 2019
Orthodontics University of Phoenix, 2021

Priya Patel, DMD *Welcome Back!*
University of Florida, 2006

Babak Shahrokh, DMD *Welcome Back!*
University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey, 2009

Celeste Kendrick, DDS
University of North Carolina, 2021

Raymond Wright, DDS
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2005

Paulo Cortes, DMD *Welcome Back!*
University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2015

Samantha Melzer, DMD *Welcome Back!*
Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, 2014

Lia Ortega, DDS *Welcome Back!*
National University of Cordoba Argentina, 1997

Jessica DeVera, DMD
Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine, 2023

Melvin Mansoor, DMD
Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine, 2023

Katelyn Quan, DMD
Boston University, 2019

Morteza Khatibzadeh, DDS *Welcome Back!*
University of Washington, 2006

Fibronia Georges, DMD *Transfer!*
Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine, 2022

Joshua Allen, DDS
Louisiana State University, 2021
Orthodontics at Louisiana State University, 2023

Kaitlin Maroon, DDS
International, 2023

Byron Amador, DMD
University of Florida, 2018
Endodontics at University of Washington, 2023

Jing Lee, DDS *Welcome Back!*
University of Los Angeles, 2008

Maysam Salehpour, DMD *Welcome Back!*
Temple University, 2012

Cheri Smiley, DMD
Temple University, 2003
Orthodontics at Wilford Hall, 2014

Waseem Alpatty, DDS *Welcome Back!*
Colorado College of Dentistry, 2015

Aldo Espinosa, DDS *Welcome Back!*
Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, 1998

Cesar Ayala Bernal, DDS
Universidad de la Salle, 2009

Ali Motanabbah, DMD *Welcome Back!*
Roseman University of Health Sciences, 2017

Lilian Dominguez, DDS *Welcome Back!*
Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, 1985

Kristina Caravelli, DMD
Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, 2021

Sanjukta Panigrihi, DDS *Transfer!*
University of Southern California, 2013

James Grant, DDS *Transfer!*
University of Los Angeles, 2020
Orthodontics at St. Louis University, 2023

Jose Guzman, DDS *Welcome Back!*
Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, 1999

Tyler McElroy, DMD
Roseman University of Health Sciences, 2022



SDCDS



COMMITTEES

SDCDS prides itself on the leadership and skills our members contribute that make us such a strong organization. Dedicating your time and skills to your local society is one the most important benefits of membership. By getting involved, you have an influence on the overall direction of the SDCDS.

Editorial Board

Provides oversight for Facets and e-newsletters, which deliver news, features, information, and updates on dental matters to meet the needs of our local dental society.

Communications Committee

Makes key decisions about technology, social media, and the ways we communicate with our members.

Recruitment & Retention

Undertakes activities intended to maximize the accessibility, usefulness and relevance of SDCDS's services, programs and membership benefits, which in turn will enhance membership recruitment and retention efforts.

Continuing Education

Offers dentists and their staff quality, affordable CE opportunities so that they may remain current on both their licensure requirements, the latest trends in dentistry, and enhance their professional knowledge and capabilities.

Ethics Committee

Investigates alleged violations, provide interpretations and educate members and the public regarding the CDA Code of Ethics. This committee can act either upon its own initiative or at the request of a patient, a dentist, an employee or an institution.

Well-Being Committee

Serves as a resource to the dental community in identifying individuals who may be impaired through the presence of obsessive compulsive disorders, specifically alcohol and chemical dependency.

All Members are welcome to attend or apply to join, no prior experience necessary!

If you are interested in getting involved please visit:
www.sdcds.org/leadership-volunteer-opportunities

president



Trends come and go, but movements alter the way we exist. As concern for the environment continues to rise, there is a green movement influencing business policies and practices. Just as other businesses are incorporating these changes, the dental industry should also be looking for ways to incorporate this growing movement into our clinical practices. Green dentistry does not require outrageous efforts to reduce environmental impact. There are simple measures we can all take to be more mindful of our planet while maintaining high-quality dental care for our patients.

One easy way dentistry can adopt sustainable practices is by decreasing electricity usage. The majority of our electricity is produced by burning fossil fuels, which releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Switching to energy-efficient lighting and equipment can help minimize carbon emissions. For example, LED lights can reduce energy usage by 75% compared to incandescent bulbs. Instead of traditional vacuum systems, low flow vacuum alternatives operate with a smaller motor and offer adjustable suction power to conserve energy. Other suggestions on how to reduce electricity usage include adjusting thermostat settings, or simply shutting off equipment when not in use. Some offices have installed occupancy sensors for lighting in restrooms. By applying these measures, dental offices can reduce their carbon footprint and save money on utility bills.

In addition to conserving energy, green dentistry involves minimizing waste and pollution generated in the office. Going paperless is an effective method that significantly reduces waste. A paperless system using electronic dental records, and encouraging patients to fill out forms online, helps to reduce waste compared to traditional paper forms. Most of us have moved away from traditional film-based x-rays which use chemicals to develop films and instead have transitioned to digital x-rays, which are better for the environment and reduce pollution. Dental offices can also switch to eco-friendly

materials such as bamboo, recycled plastic, and glass to reduce environmental impact. Instead of plastic, there are now biodegradable toothbrushes made from bamboo or cornstarch, materials that are renewable and easily broken down. Even dental floss produced from silk or plant-based fibers can be safely composted after use. Overall, incorporating eco-friendly products and materials is a step towards a planet-friendly approach to oral health care.

As dentists, we play a crucial role in advocating for public health and raising awareness about important issues. Our responsibilities extend beyond promoting oral health. We have an obligation to advance the green movement by incorporating eco-friendly practices, such as energy conservation and waste reduction, into our businesses. By exhibiting environmentally-conscious behavior, green dentistry will not only help preserve the planet for future generations but also inspire patients to make greener choices in their own lives.

-Tyler Johnson, DDS



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editor

My White Coat A Complicated Relationship

It was July 2002. I was well into my time at the University of the Pacific's School of Dentistry and was about to make my transition into seeing patients who weren't my classmates or family members. The San Francisco Opera house was booked for such a momentous occasion as the "White Coat Ceremony".

Dr. Arthur Dugoni, whose name adorns the walls of my dental school which now bears his name, was dean at the time. He and another of our faculty would grant me the honor of my white coat, carefully embroidered with the name Megan E. O'Neal, D.D.S. (my maiden name of course)

I don't need to remind you, dear reader, of what that white coat represents. I felt the gravity of the moment, important, worthy of the ceremonial nature of such a thing. We took the Hippocratic oath that day, and we would now be entrusted by the world to take care of patients, to do no harm. I do firmly believe in the responsibility we as dentists have toward our patients and am still grateful for the gravity of that ceremony.

As most dental students do, or least we did at Pacific, that white coat went straight into my closet, not to be used again until that first associateship. We donned the green, sometimes turquoise smocks, lest patient fluids splash onto our clothing. You see, Pacific had (still has?) a dress code: business casual. As a student, I was grateful to be able to spare my "fancy pants" that I bought at Express (this was the early 2000's) from getting soiled in the clinic.

After graduation, my first few jobs after dental school weren't "dentist" jobs, but temp-hygiene jobs. Like the other auxiliary staff at the offices in which I worked, I wore whatever color lab coat could be found in the closet. When I took my first dentistry job a few months later, I was given a white lab coat with someone else's name carefully embroidered on it, the former associate whom I had replaced. I was given a name tag to somewhat carelessly cover the name. Needless to say, it was not my white coat.

I wore other white coats over the years, saving that ceremonial white coat in my closet, wrapped in dry-cleaning plastic, where it remains to this day. When I eventually bought my own practice, I bought several new ones, embroidered with my *own* name. I had *arrived*.

It was when I became pregnant with my first child and as my belly grew that I eventually lost that white coat. The army-green lab coats that my hygienists and assistants wore became my new uniform. I wore

it after the pregnancy when it was eventually substituted for a more tapered jacket. In black.

What followed was as interesting as it, perhaps to those of you who have done the same, wasn't surprising. I found my patients talking to me more. Opening up. I don't know if it was my growing belly that humanized me to them, or the absence of that white coat. And maybe it was my growing pregnancy and all the hormonal changes that occur when becoming a mother that humanized my patients to me. I will not reinvent the wheel about the psychology of such a thing, both from my patients' end as well as my own.

It began to dawn on me that perhaps the white coat could be an impediment to caring for my patients instead of a benefit. White coat syndrome is real. The Cleveland Clinic defines White coat syndrome, or "white coat hypertension, (as) the term for when you get a high blood pressure reading in a doctor's office and a normal reading at home." (From the Cleveland Clinic website) One of the most important treatments of white coat hypertension as they call it, is *better communication with your doctor*.

Losing the white coat made me realize that my sense of purpose wasn't necessarily reflected in what I wore. The white coat had been a symbol for me, and at that point in my dental career, my inner confidence was apparent, regardless of what I wore. And in some ways, wearing a white coat had been serving as a barrier to my patients just when we as dentists need to be bringing our patients closer.

So, if you still wear the white, try out a different color for a day! See where it takes you. You just may find a different approach to patient care.

-Megan Clarke, DDS



A Special Thanks to..

Michael Metzger

Facets Graphic Designer,

San Diego County Dental Society and all its members want to extend our greatest appreciation to Michael Metzger, the lead graphic designer for Facets since the year 2006. Mike has dedicated 17 years to being the visual storyteller behind our members' many achievements, initiatives, get-togethers, and more. He has produced 160 issues, his favorite issue being one that featured mission volunteer dentists who traveled to underdeveloped countries and provided pro-bono dental care to children in need.

Michael's creative journey started when he earned his B.S. in Marketing from Cornell University, though he quickly pivoted to product design. After he graduated from California College of the Arts, he worked for K.I.D. Studio, a toy design house in San Francisco. His colleagues there taught him graphic design skills so that they could better present product ideas to companies like Hasbro and Mattel.



Mike's creativity extends beyond his professional life. As an artist archetype, Mike enjoys the world of visual arts. From art, to color, to photography, to nature, to travel, to food, he is always excited at the idea of seeing something new! In his free time, Mike likes to be outdoors, riding his bike in Coronado, or exploring new SD neighborhoods, which help spark his creativity. Michael values family and kindness, which is no surprise as he hopes to one day publish a children's book.

Best of luck to our friend, Mike Metzger!



executive director

The word sustainability comes up a lot these days. It is sometimes used in conversations regarding how to manage global resources, or often to describe if a program will have long term success.

What about personal sustainability? What about our own internal resources that keep us functioning in a fast-paced world with seemingly increasing demands, both personally and professionally? I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that there never seems to be enough time. Regardless of how much we do, there will always be 24 hours in a day. By cramming more tasks into the day are we really being more effective? The pressure, stress and hustle caused by this race against time hinders enjoyment, gratification, and satisfaction, and it's not sustainable.

Becoming effective and efficient comes more naturally when we have space to evaluate where we are, and if the day-to-day grind is actually leading us in the right direction. This happens when we allow ourselves to slow down and make time our friend, not our enemy. This space to make conscious decisions gives us the power of perspective. It takes practice, and for those of you who know me, you're probably thinking the same thing I am; Angela could use some practice. We're on the same page! Join me in setting aside some time this month to evaluate your own personal sustainability. With time as our friend, we can use it to slow down, make

adjustments and chart a course that will prove to be more sustainable and successful.

I am applying my practice of sustainability to the work we are doing at the SDCDS. There are changes happening that I am confident will lead our organization into the future with a strong foundation. Our committees at the SDCDS are taking on new programs. As a member, your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you want to participate in thoughtful, constructive, and reflective discussions on how we can maintain an organization that will sustain the changing landscape of dentistry, please consider sharing your resources with us. Email director@sdcds.org with your suggestions.



-Angela Landsberg

SDCDS & SDCDF Executive Director

let me
introduce:



Dr. Bradley Eli

I first learned about Dr. Brad Eli from informational mailings regarding education on and treatment for orofacial pain, namely TMJ disorders. The postcards always piqued my interest because as a general dentist, I have had many patients who suffer from TMJ issues and didn't know where to refer them. Dr. Eli has been practicing for over 30 years. His extensive clinical experience at Loma Linda University and Medical Center, the UCSD Department of Anesthesiology, and the Scripps Memorial Hospital Pain Center has led him to be known and recognized as a national leader for his expertise in Orofacial Pain Management. In addition, he has invented several medical devices, for which he holds patents, to improve patient care. Please meet the remarkable and talented Dr. Brad Eli.

Interviewed by:
Malieka Johnson, DDS

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let me introduce...



So, tell us a little about yourself...

Where are you from originally?
Where did you grow up?

B: I was born and raised in Loma Linda, CA.

Are you from a big, medium-sized, or small family?

B: A small family. I have one sister.

What was one of your favorite childhood memories or activities?

B: Going on trips to Canada to visit our relatives. My mother's side is a very large family.

Where did you complete your undergraduate studies? What did you major in?

B: In Southern California at La Sierra College / Pacific Union College. I majored in Business Administration.

What was your "aha" coming to dentistry moment? How did you choose this fine profession?

B: My father was a dentist, and my mother was a surgical nurse. My sister became a dental hygienist.

Where did you attend dental school? What year did you graduate? Residency?

B: I attended Temple University School of Dentistry and graduated in 1987 with my DMD. I went to UCLA for pain residency and fellowship and earned my MS in oral biology.

What do you love most about dentistry?

B: Helping people with painful conditions.

Do you own your own practice?

B: Yes, and I am now the director of Facial Pain Specialists. This is a group practice with specialists in the new dental field of Orofacial Pain and the treatment of Sleep Disordered Breathing.

Are you married? Have kids?

B: I am divorced from a wonderful woman who is the mother of my two daughters.

What do you enjoy doing outside of dentistry? - Family, Hobbies, Talents, volunteers, etc.

B: I enjoy my young granddaughter and young grandson, Skiing, Flying, Golfing, Travel. I have no talents. I am also a Guide Chair of a Not-for-Profit education organization.

What is one thing on your life bucket list that you have fulfilled and one thing yet to be fulfilled?

B: One day at a time.

Do you volunteer in dentistry? Are you involved in the dental society or other form of organized dentistry or dental missions?

B: Not yet.

Do people ever tell you that you look like someone famous?

B: Donny Osmond.

Do you have a favorite or life quote?

B: Want what you have.

If a fellow dentist wants to reach out to you, can they email you?

B: Always. I can be reached at drbrad@facepaindocs.com.

Sustainable Suggestions

Looking to make the switch?

Are you looking for eco-friendly oral care products to recommend to patients?

The Humble Co.

This Swedish health and wellness company offers a variety of innovative oral care products that are good for you and kind to the planet.

Dr. Tung's

This company participates in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in their packaging and product development.

Beesure

Beesure designs products with 100% recycled plastic materials to reduce the use of virgin plastic resins.

BooHeads

This company produces bamboo electric toothbrush heads that are biodegradable and sustainable.

Bite

Bite is a certified B-corp that creates plastic free personal care items, like these toothpaste bites.

Cocofloss

Every spool of Cocofloss uses 85% recycled polyester from ocean-bound plastics.



CDA Benefits

The existence of the tripartite (National/State/Local) dental societies has been an integral part of the success of our dental profession throughout the last century. Organized dentistry continues to be at the forefront of advocacy and member support through the evolutions of our industry—from private practices, group practices, public health, and to large dental service organizations. California Dental Association (CDA) has a myriad of benefits that are below the surface. I am here to lift the veil and help dentists maximize their membership dues.

In this issue, I'd like to highlight a new outreach arm of CDA: **Early Career Dentist Engagement**. Dentists who have practiced for less than 10 years are often categorized as New Dentists. The reason being is there's lots of career development that occurs in the first 10 years of practice—whether it be clinically or professionally. Many milestones occur, such as transitioning from an associate to private practice owner, student loans and to growing families, and even a first encounter with difficult patients or managing new staff.

No matter when each of these new chapters occurs, it can be jarring when you are left to figure this out on your own. This outreach arm was created to bridge the gap and help guide dentists to the right resources that CDA can offer.

CDA has launched its first series of "Now + Next in Dentistry." This new meetup is designed to be more than a meeting, but an opportunity to bring dentists together for learning, support, and conversation in a casual environment. The goal of this format is to touch on hot topic points such as current state of dentistry, future trends and its affect on your decision of your chosen career path, and how to navigate the financial implications of debt. The first of these meetup's occurred here in San Diego on March 25th at Stone Brewing.

I had the wonderful opportunity of interviewing CDA staff, Katie Fornelli, who organized the event. She was able to provide some insight on how this event is really meant to be a launch point for more in-depth conversation. You can never truly gain all the insight from a single meeting. But through networking with CDA staff and colleagues, you begin to build a vision of what you hope to see in your career path. Where Katie and

her support team will be able to assist is— if upon leaving these events, you are left with specific questions on next steps, you can schedule a session with her to dive deeper into a particular topic. She is a wealth of information from her 10+ years of experience as a dental practice consultant and she stated that her biggest fear is, "for dentists who have gone through years of rigorous training and not be happy with where they are."

Katie mentioned a prime example of a missed opportunity in membership benefit is when a new practice owner pays a third party organization to help them with developing an employee handbook, pre-ownership guidance, or human resource questions on state law. There's a huge member support team at CDA, at your finger tips, to answer these exact questions. The barrier is— simply knowing where to look and how to tap into this knowledge bank.

If you have questions on how to schedule a discovery session with Katie Fornelli, please email her Katie.fornelli@cda.org.

Written by:
Diana Heineken, DDS



San Diego County Dental Foundation

In this magazine, we often share information about the patients who are cared for at the Geis Clinic – but who are the highly skilled people responsible for providing this life-changing work? In this issue, let's discover the faces behind the smiles produced at the Geis Clinic.

Since Spring 2022, the Geis Clinic has had two part-time paid staff members: Dr. James Witcher, the Clinic Director, and Marta Pacheco, the Clinic Administrator and RDA.

Dr. Witcher completed his undergraduate degree at USC with a Bachelors in Biological Sciences and received a Navy Scholarship to further his USC education in Dental School. While attending Dental School, Dr. Witcher met his wife and was married in June 1980, just before he began his duty in the Navy.

For 5 years, Dr. Witcher served as a Naval Dentist and was stationed in places such as Puerto Rico, Spain, and California, specifically Camp Pendleton, Naval CBC Port Hueneme, and the Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey. After completing active duty, Dr. Witcher and his wife opened a private practice in Camarillo, CA.

The two of them ran their practice as a Doctor and Hygienist power-duo for 33 years and sold their practice to a young dentist, who was also a veteran. They retired together and moved to North San Diego to be closer to their family. Together, they love being involved grandparents to five beautiful grandchildren.

While he was always very interested in biological sciences, his interest in dentistry piqued when he received orthodontic treatment as a teenager. Being curious about the field, his orthodontist kindly answered all his questions about the profession, which convinced him that dentistry was his calling. Initially, he wanted to specialize in ortho, but later decided to switch to general dentistry, as there was more of a variety of treatments.

Dr. Witcher's "twilight tour" is working at the John Geis DDS Dental Clinic, which shares a lot of similarities to his days as a Naval Dentist. As a young man he served both active-duty soldiers and vets. Now as an older and wiser man, he serves some of those older vets, who had a harder time reintegrating with civilian life. He calls this a "full circle moment".

His favorite part about working at the John Geis DDS Dental Clinic is the gratifying work of restoring veterans' smiles. The great reaction he witnesses from patients who regain their smiles is unlike anything else. He finds great satisfaction in turning dire dental health situations into smiles people can be proud of.

The hope for the future of the John Geis DDS Clinic is to continue the great work Dr. Witcher and Marta Pacheco currently do, and maybe even add more days that the clinic is open. They also hope to continue their partnership with UCLA dental school students, who rotate as externs at the Geis clinic.

Visit www.sdcds.org/sdcdf to learn more about the John Geis DDS Dental Clinic

Written by:
Stephanie Legault, M.S.

Flying Samaritans: Offering Ways of Reusing Equipment

“All of that plastic is just for instruments?!”

I found myself in Tijuana, Mexico in a tiny and cramped shared space, bagging soiled dental instruments into sterilization pouches as quickly as possible. As a pre-dental student, I was happy to help and give my time to dentistry, but also to the underserved.

I took a pause when another volunteer expressed total shock after seeing the piles of sterilization pouches that held our instruments. I felt it too. There was so much disposable material used to keep the dental clinic up and running.

These moments got me thinking...

Dentistry is one of the largest consumers of single-use plastic products. This includes: a staggering number of plastic barriers, multiple pairs of gloves, and of course, instrument pouches.

Adding to that, dental instruments and equipment that are no longer in use might go into a landfill or junkyard. But they don't have to.

Rather than disposing of old instruments and equipment, dentists should consider donating to non-profit organizations to repurpose them. This will not only minimize landfill waste, but it will contribute to underserved communities. Dentists might not always have the time and resources to volunteer, so this is a great way to give back and make a major impact.

An example where dentists can donate is to one local organization: Flying Samaritans of San Diego State University.

Flying Samaritans SDSU is a non-profit that aims to provide quality free healthcare to the underserved community of La Morita in Tijuana, MX, in collaboration with medical professionals from San Diego and Tijuana. As student leaders, we act as the foundation for the clinic. We are in charge of everything, from patient registration to prescription filling. In our dental clinic, patients are seen by a dental provider and are given dental care treatment, which includes an oral examination, cleaning, restorative procedures, and extractions. Dental volunteers have the opportunity to shadow the providers, chairside assist, interpret based on their Spanish-speaking capabilities, and much more.

Interested in donating equipment? Email fsdentalsdsu@gmail.com

Written by:
Victoria Vongkayson, B.A.



"Attention all passengers! We are now boarding!"

You are now at the gate and ready to board your flight. You are eager, at least I am, for the next adventure. The flight!

First things first, check with the counter. You may ask, why? I always check with the counter to see if there are any last-minute upgrades that can be done. My philosophy is that it never hurts to ask. 'Free upgrades' - that is where it gets tricky. Unless, you have status or milage, rarely do they upgrade you. You never know...that's why I ask.

Dr. Frey's Must Have Carry-on Items

- 1 Noise Cancelling Headphones**
This is a must! Where have you been if you don't have a pair of these?! This will help drain out all that noise that we encounter during our flight and make it much more pleasant.
- 2 A Facial Wipe, mask, or Moisturizer**
Airplanes are desiccating! They dry out my skin and my skin is super sensitive. I always pack a moisturizer so that I can keep my skin supple throughout the flight. Look for ingredients like ceramide and hyaluronic acid to help with creating a moisture barrier.
- 3 Anti-bacterial Wipes**
Airplanes are a cesspool of bacteria - always bring a packet of wipes so that you can wipe down anywhere you touch. This will help prevent you from getting sick during your flight.
- 4 Phone/iPad/Laptop**
If the flight doesn't have any television, I download all my shows onto my device so that I can watch them during the flight.
- 5 Small Pill Box**
It never hurts to have some Advil, Tylenol, Benadryl, etc. on your flights. You never know when they can come in handy.
- 6 Snacks!**
Domestic flights are the worst at this - they offer a beverage and a cracker or peanuts...come on! Pack your favorite snack on your flight so you never get hangry!
- 7 Toothbrush**
This is really essential for long flights. Do I need to say more?!

Pro tip:

This really is a pro tip, don't miss out on this - give a gift to your flight attendant. WHAT?!

Yes! Give them a bag of chocolate or candy. I do this for every international flight, and it has always paid off. Flight attendants, especially those who fly international, work non-stop catering to us during our flight. This is just a little gesture to say, 'thank you'. You never know what you may get in return.



A Greener Practice of Dentistry

Let's walk through a typical dental hygiene appointment together. Our room has multiple infection control barriers set up, instruments are in their sterilized pouches, and our disposables are ready for use. Our patient is seated, and their bib placed. Once the appointment is completed, the patient is dismissed with clean, polished teeth and a goody bag. Soon after, disposables are discarded, instruments cleaned and sterilized, and our room is set up for the next patient. Rinse and repeat 8 times during the day and 5 times per week. For just one hygienist. In one dental office.

Let's ask ourselves; how many prophylaxis cups, prophylaxis paste holders, fluoride varnish packets, suction tips, air water syringes, bibs, barriers, and sterilization pouches did we use and throw away at the end of the day, or month, or year?



Next let's move into a restorative doctor's procedure room and do the same exercise with dental treatment that includes the same infection control barriers, but add impression trays, tips that fit other tips of impression materials, tips for bonding procedures and cement tips, just to list a few of the items to fabricate an indirect restoration.

Now let's consider our chemical disinfectants, our chemical evacuation cleaners, and finally, our water and electricity use through our equipment, all used in one given day in one dental office. If we were to imagine the waste and energy generated by dental offices in our county, city, state then country, we get a sense for the enormity of the issue. When we are in our homes, many of us are methodical about recycling trash, minimizing plastic use, having solar panels on our roofs and being mindful of energy and water use. But how many dental offices apply that same attention to eco-friendly practices that are followed in our homes? The reality is likely lower than it should be.



If any of us drove to our offices in an electric car to reduce fossil fuel use, then it behooves us to understand how our daily practice of dentistry can also have a long term detrimental impact on our environment, climate, and ultimately our health. According to the Eco Dentistry Association, about 1.7 billion sterilization pouches and 680 billion patient barriers are thrown away by dental practices every year. Other contaminated but non-biohazard single use disposable sundries, plastic packages, tips, and plastic trays also are thrown away in our general trash. That means, they will either end up in landfills or in our oceans if they

aren't incinerated. Landfills can be sources of groundwater or soil pollutants and can adversely affect our wildlife if not regulated sufficiently. So, recycling our dental plastic waste may seem like a reasonable solution to throwing away dental disposables into our common trash. Unfortunately, they will likely not get recycled either.

In fact, only 5% of all plastics are actually recycled in the US, and a recent global study found that only 10% of plastics are recycled worldwide, while the remaining 90% are incinerated or end up in landfills or ecosystems. That's because plastics cost a lot more to melt and repurpose than to make from scratch using oil and gas. So just because a company tells us that their packaging or tubes are recyclable, they may not be, or they may require specialized methods of sorting, cleaning, and recycling. For instance, an instrument cassette wrap with a number 5 recycling symbol will have a different fate than a plastic impression tray with a number 4 on it, or a bone graft plastic vial with no recyclable symbol on it.

Therefore, assuming they are not contaminated with patient fluids, simply putting technically "recyclable" items into the blue recycle bin may be no different than putting them in general trash. The good news is that there are companies specifically focused on collecting plastics or other non-recyclable waste while avoiding incineration. Terracycle



and ACTenviro are examples of companies that dental offices can use to have their plastic waste or trash that is not recyclable by municipalities, collected and reformatted into reusable end products or converted into energy used in power grids.

On the sundries side of things, using 2-ply patient bibs instead of 1-ply has been estimated to result in almost 100,000 pieces of paper and plastic discarded into landfills over a 30-year dental career for just one dental office seeing an average of 16 patients per day. Using infection control disposables such as saliva ejectors or air water syringes that are not made from virgin plastics (those made from scratch) or that are biodegradable can be one way to minimize our fossil fuel need and reduce landfill waste. Asking our dental manufacturers to create plastic-free alternatives to their packaging or products is a crucial way to lower plastic waste.

For instance, we could ask dental companies that manufacture fluoride varnishes which measure a centimeter of space in a plastic tray with a plastic brush handle, to create an alternative dispensary to reduce the amount of plastic in





the varnish holder. Finally, converting to digital dentistry has a profound impact on reducing the use of single use plastic items in analog impressions by eliminating tips, trays, and impression material.

Returning to our example at the start of this article, we know that disinfecting our rooms and sterilization are the last tasks of an appointment. Making sure we are aware of which sterilization fluids or disinfectants we can safely pour down our drains and which ones we should not, helps prevent toxic chemicals from contaminating our local environment and our water sources. Amalgam separators, as required by the EPA, ensure that the mercury in amalgam can be captured and ultimately recycled to avoid its drainage into public sewer systems.

Lastly, eco-friendly practices also promote energy and water conservation. While beneficial, our shift to digital dentistry increases the number of electronically powered machines in our dental offices. These consume a significant amount of energy which in turn produces heat and greenhouse gases. Compressors, computers, milling machines,

air conditioning and lighting are all energy sapping. Using lower watt LED lighting, timed thermostats or simply turning off idle equipment overnight can reduce overall energy use and costs. Patterson Dental has taken positive steps with their “floss-ophy” by urging dentists to consider consolidating their orders to minimize packaging and transportation emissions. In our offices, using foot or hip controls can reduce water waste at sinks and rather than throwing out leftover water from drinking bottles, watering office plants (which help clean the air in our offices naturally) is another water saving method.

For those more ambitious dental offices who wish to transition officially into eco-friendly practices, the Eco-Dentistry Association addresses how to convert dental offices to practice green dentistry with the good of the environment in mind. It provides structured guidance to offices who wish to align their practices with green dentistry and want to become certified as “green” offices.

We could alter our behavior one small habit at a time. Rather than hand out plastic bags with

plastic toothbrushes to every hygiene patient, we could be selective and ask them if they truly need them. Consider providing bamboo toothbrushes or brush heads and using paper bags instead.

In our break rooms, we could encourage dental team members to bring their own cutlery rather than using and discarding plastic versions each day. We could also ensure that our water faucets aren't turned on to the maximum each time we wash our hands. We could cut our mask straps before throwing them out or separate our sterilization pouches before discarding them. Just like flossing or brushing, habits that promote environmental wellness start small and slowly but become second nature over time.

The state of our climate and oceans because of our plastic production and disposal are beyond the scope of this article. But it behooves us to understand the impact our daily protocols in our dental offices can have on our collective efforts to reduce pollution and environmental harm in our local county and state.

While it might be encouraging that companies are helping us reduce waste with recycled products, the scale of the environmental footprint is only getting bigger. Plastic production is anticipated to "quadruple by 2050", according to the World Economic Forum and our plastics are manufactured from fossil fuels which directly contribute to our current climate problems. At the time this article is being written the world is getting prepared for Earth Day, when trees will be planted and trash in our communities collected. Let's extend that same concern to our daily practice of dentistry with not only clinical stewardship but environmental stewardship. Manufacturers of our dental products play a large role in our efforts to protect our earth, water, and air. We ought to be as passionate about our beloved planet as we are about our patients and practices.

Written by:
Zeynep Barakat, DDS

TIM MILLER

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San Diego County Dental Society hosted its 8th Annual Afternoon Tea | Women in Leadership Seminar on April 30th at Admiral Baker Golf Clubhouse. Keynote speaker Idara Ogunsaju, founder of The Antorge Group, LLC spoke about creating and sustaining confidence in the workplace. Thank you to our generous sponsors for their support in creating a great event: US Bank, Fortune Management, TotalPC and TDIC.

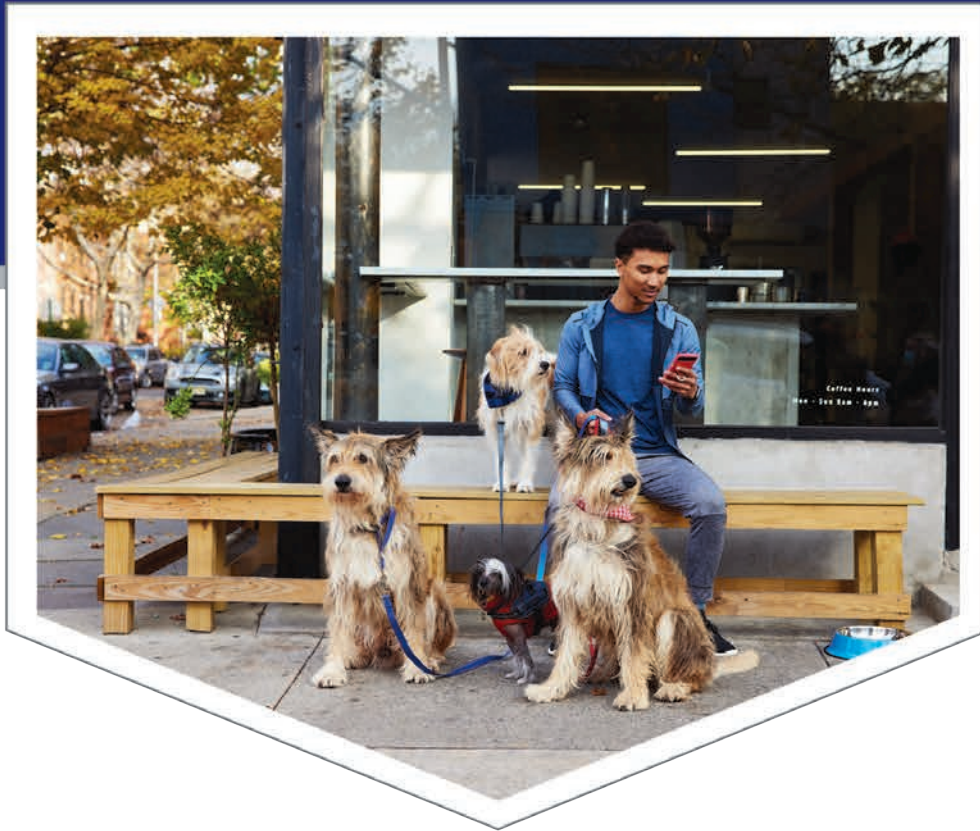


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Victory Fund Brunch
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Beach Bonfire
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IT'S ELECTRIC

There's a certain *frustration* when driving behind a Toyota Prius. The drivers always seem to have endless reserves of time, with no intention of punching the gas or going over the speed limit.

After driving "Soy-Milk," my 2013 Honda civic, for almost ten years, it was time to give her up. At the tail-end (if there was an end) of the global pandemic, the resale value of used cars was very high compared to pre-apocalyptic times. I could not justify paying hundreds of dollars per month in gas and thousands per year on maintenance for a "low maintenance car." Tired of increasing expenses including gas, maintenance, insurance - not to mention that one time that the curb came out of nowhere and attacked Soy-milk's tires and front bumper - I took advantage of a \$10,000 offer on the car "as is," managing to recoup over half the purchase price 10 years later.

After years of sacrifice, I felt I could do what all financial consultants advise against, and I made the decision to buy my dream car – Bradley (Cooper). Bradley was a full electric Mini Cooper sporting a range of a measly

90 miles per charge. Considering that I wouldn't have the range to get anywhere BUT from home to work and back, it would be easy to prove to the IRS that Bradley was a business expense. Although the tax benefits were nice and I felt better emotionally now that I wasn't burning dinosaurs to fuel Soy-milk. And yet Bradley hasn't been a perfect child either. The lack of range can be limiting when I need to travel to other cities within SoCal. Not to mention the three flats I've managed to get on my supposed run-flat tires... and the rubber supply chain shortage because shipping from Asia has been bottlenecked and now there's a 90 day wait period for new tires.

Anyway, I've realized I need to drive like a grandma to preserve battery and avoid flats. While Bradley looks sporty and has a flashy paint job... if you spot him on the short commute ... you'll find him directly behind a Prius.



Written by:
Yvette Carrillo, DDS

upcoming

JUN 10

Dental Practice Act and Infection Control

This all-in-one course meets the requirements set forth by the Dental Board of California to renew a professional dental license. This class outlines the essential components of your infection prevention and control program, combining Standard and Transmission-based precautions.

Speaker: Nancy Andrews Dewhirst
8:00am - 12:30pm
CE Units: 4

JUN 15

BLS Renewal for Healthcare Providers

Review and stay up to date on new basic life support practices and techniques. All office personnel is welcome to participate and receive their AHA CPR Card.

5:30 - 9:30pm
CE: 4 Units



JULY 9

Day at the Park

Join San Diego County Dental Society and its members for some fun in the sun! Bring the whole family out to Hilltop Park in Rancho Peñasquitos for BBQ, fun and games.

1:00pm - 6:00pm
Hilltop Park
9711 Oviedo Way



AUG 17

BLS Renewal for Healthcare Providers

Review and stay up to date on new basic life support practices and techniques. All office personnel is welcome to participate and receive their AHA CPR Card.

5:30 - 9:30pm
CE: 4 Units



events

JUN 24

New DDS Social: Foodie Tour



Join San Diego County Dental Society's New DDS Group for a walking food tour through various restaurants around Oceanside. Meet us at Banana Dang Coffee to start the tour.

1:30pm - 4:30pm
Oceanside, CA



JUN 29

New DDS Seminar

Case Acceptance | 5 Mistakes You are Making that is Losing you Money

Through my experience as an owner, and now consultant, I have seen many different ways of failing. Find out what 5 mistakes people are regularly making and what you can do to prevent those mistakes from happening.

Speaker: Megan Shelton, DMD

5:30pm - 8:30pm

CE Units: 2.5



AUG 20

New DDS Social: Social Cycle

Grab your new DDS friends and join us for this members only afternoon group biking (+drinking) experience touring through North Park and South Park. Space is limited so be sure to sign up ASAP!

12:30 - 5:00pm
North Park / South Park



AUG 26

Shred-A-Thon North County

Join us for this exclusive members-only event while we lighten your office load! We will accept up to 10 boxes per member. Certified destruction will occur offsite.

9:00am - 12:00pm
at Encinitas Pediatric Dentistry





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Where:

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When:

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6:00pm

Tickets Coming Soon

VVSD Stand-Down Volunteers Needed

July 20-22 | Pechanga Arena

VVSD STAND DOWN is a 3-day encampment hosted each summer designed to guide homeless veterans, and those at risk of homelessness, to services that rapidly remove barriers caused by medical, legal, mental health, and substance use concerns. San Diego County Dental Foundation is partnering with Healing California to provide a mobile dental van, but we need your help!

Volunteers Dentists and Dental Assistants are needed Thursday, July 20th and Friday, July 21st. Morning, afternoon, or all-day shifts are available.

Contact support@sdcds.org for
volunteer sign-up instructions.