



Excellence in Caring for Your Dental Health

Fellow Dentists,

As the weather cools, the leaves change, college football kicks off, and Thanksgiving menus are in the works, it's also time for the Annual WDS/DDWA Member Meeting. This year, there are no new positions to fill on the Board. However, after completing my first three-year term representing dentistry on the WDS/DDWA Board, I respectfully ask for your vote to continue serving for another term. It has been an honor to advocate for your needs and influence outcomes that improve the business of dentistry.

I want to highlight a few positive developments over the past 3-5 years that directly affect our practices and Delta Dental of Washington:

- **Provider Reimbursement:** The Provider Reimbursement Model continues to evolve, shaped by input from both Board Member Directors and the Member Advisory Panel.
 - Participation has now reached over 86%.
 - Since 2020, fees for the most-requested procedure codes have risen by an average of 17%, with additional increases for preventive and minimally invasive treatments such as silver diamine fluoride.
 - While these increases may not be as much as we would like, they represent a welcome shift compared to the previous decade.
- **Workforce Development:** Many contributors have helped expand training opportunities for dental hygienists, assistants, and dentists.
 - I'm proud to support Delta Dental's contribution to Pacific Northwest University's new School of Dental Medicine, which launched in Yakima and has started classes this fall. This is our state's first new dental school since 1954 and is the first dental school in the nation to offer three years of immersive training at community health centers serving rural and other medically underserved communities
 - Many options for expanding Dental Hygiene training are being pursued across the state, with expansion and some new programs about to kick off. This year, I supported the approval of a grant to launch a new associates-level dental hygienist program at Peninsula College in Port Angeles. In addition to the grant, Delta Dental will match dollars raised by the dental community and local businesses.
 - We have done this type of investment in the past – helping to save

Shoreline's hygienist program from closure by supporting its move to the UW campus, and helping Lake Washington Tech expand their hygienist program and launch a new DA program.

- Efforts continue to explore policy strategies – all aimed at providing high-quality care more efficiently and leveraging the strengths of our teams. Improving career advancement options for dental assistants presents a significant opportunity.
- Our Dental Careers Discovery Program remains dedicated to encouraging students from historically underserved backgrounds to consider dentistry as a rewarding career – reaching more than 2,000 youth annually.
- **Public Health Commitment:** DDWA remains a strong advocate for community water fluoridation – a proven public health benefit. Also:
 - As the funder of Arcora Foundation, we support a wide range of community programs in under-resourced areas across the state. One example is DentistLink, which helps uninsured and Medicaid insured individuals find dental care and also access services such as transportation, language, and more.
 - Also this year, DDWA collaborated with the Washington State Healthcare Authority (HCA) and the Department of Health (DOH) to draft revised state guidelines for school-based oral health programs.
- **Innovation & the Future:** With the creation of the TriForza technology division, WDS is exploring new ways to transform the oral-health industry and support the business of dentistry. Advancements in AI hold promise for efficiencies, cost savings, enhanced diagnostic capabilities, and more ease of access and predictable outcomes for our patients.

It has been a privilege to serve our profession these past three years. While it's important to acknowledge challenges we are working through, I'm confident that by working together we will achieve successful resolution for the benefit of our patients and for improving the oral health of all Washingtonians.

The future is bright – though complex – and I am excited for the opportunity to find more ways to collaborate toward an even more positive future for dentistry. It would be an honor to earn your continued support to represent you on the WDS/DDWA Board.

Sincerely,



Dennis L. Bradshaw, DDS, PS