

Fellow DDWA Member Dentists,

Fall is fast approaching. The colors are beginning to change, the harvest is gathered, and it is a natural time to pause, reflect, and look toward the season ahead.

I find myself doing much the same as I approach my final three years on the Washington Dental Service (WDS) Delta Dental of Washington (DDWA) Boards of Directors.

After more than 35 years as a practicing general dentist, I have learned that dentistry is about far more than the clinical work we do each day. It is about our patients, our teams, our practices, and the responsibility we carry to help shape the future of our profession.

That is why I am asking for your positive vote.

My reason for running for reelection is simple: I believe practicing dentists need a strong voice at the WDS/DDWA board table. We understand what is happening in our offices because we are living it every day—the pressures on our teams, the challenges of shrinking margins, the complexities of dental benefits, and the importance of preserving the relationship between doctor and patient.

During my seven years serving on the board, I have been fortunate to help advance work that support dentists, strengthens our workforce, and improves oral health across Washington. Among the work I am particularly proud of:

- **The Dental Career Discovery Program** has expanded to reach more than 9,000 youth and young adults, many from historically underrepresented communities, introducing them to careers in oral health and dentistry as a meaningful career path.
- **Dental workforce development** has continued through support for dental and dental hygiene education across Washington, including Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences (**PNWU**)’s dental school and dental hygiene programs at Shoreline and Peninsula College.
- **The Provider Reimbursement Model** continues to evolve, with input from Member Dentists helping shape criteria and annual reimbursement increases. Work is already underway for the 2028 plan year.
- **Improving the Oral Health of Washingtonians** remains central to DDWA’s mission through support for legislation, school-based oral health programs, and grants for community dental clinics. I am especially proud of this work because it reaches beyond our individual practices and helps bring care, education, and opportunity to people and communities who need it most.
- **Responsible AI adoption** is becoming an important part of our future, with opportunities to reduce administrative burdens, improve communication, and create a better experience for providers and subscribers.

In addition to serving on the DDWA Board, I currently serve on the Member Advisory Panel, Strategic Committee, Member Nominating Panel Committee, and Human Resources and Compensation Committee. These roles have deepened my appreciation for the value of having practicing dentists involved in the decisions that affect our patients, practices and profession.

I don't take that responsibility lightly.

The patient-doctor relationship remains at the heart of why most of us chose dentistry in the first place. If reelected, I will continue to advocate for practical decisions that support dentist and protect that doctor-patient relationship. By using my voice, I will continue to advocate for the thoughtful use of DDWA's resources to benefit you, our patients, and the oral and overall health of Washingtonians.

Your vote matters because it helps ensure practicing dentists continue to have a meaningful voice in DDWA's future. Together, we can keep the focus on patients, providers, access to care, and the long-term health of dentistry in Washington.

As autumn reminds us, what we harvest tomorrow depends in part on what we choose to cultivate today.

I would be honored to continue serving as your voice on the DDWA Board.

Please vote to reelect me to the DDWA Board so I can continue representing practicing dentists with experience, commitment, and a clear understanding of the issues facing our profession.

Thank you for your trust, your continued engagement, and most of all, for the care you provide to your patients and communities every day.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine M. Hakes DDS". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Katherine M Hakes, DDS