



The ORACLE

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President's Message

I want to thank everyone for attending our first ever Virtual Monthly Membership meeting with Dr. Ginsberg on pediatric behavioral management during COVID-19. We received many compliments on the presentation and we had over 145 members registered. We are working on more timely distribution of CE and are always working on being more proficient at using the Zoom application for future virtual meetings. Dr. Horng and his committee are doing a great job at hosting the Zoom meetings and we welcome any feedback on improving the experience moving forward. We are looking forward to a program by Dr. Robert Foss of Johns Hopkins Medicine on Oral and Maxillofacial pathology on November 2, 2020. Be on the lookout for email invitations from Valerie Fridley, our executive director. Please make sure we have your cell phone and email information on file.



By the time you read this the first virtual ADA Annual Conference schedule for October 15 to October 17 will likely have concluded. The ADA House of Delegates will have likely passed a modest dues increase to offset budgetary shortfalls as a result of the pandemic and hopefully our own Tom a' Becket's campaign for ADA Vice President will have been successful. The ADA continues to lobby FEMA for increased availability of personal protective equipment and is advocating for you, the members, to be among the first eligible recipients of a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

As I write this I have just finished attending the first virtual annual meeting of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons where I listened to a feature presentation from Dr. Anthony Fauci. As you were advised at the last membership meeting by Dr. Doring, our Trustee, this pandemic is not ending anytime soon and we need to continue being vigilant with our infection control measures. According to Dr. Fauci we probably won't see a vaccine ready for safe delivery before the beginning of 2021. He also reported as to why the United States has been more affected by this virus than other countries. Basically, the United States did not totally shut down the economy to arrest transmission in the early days of the pandemic.

Important Links

[ADA Coronavirus Center for Dentist](#)

[ADA Testing Dental Employee for Antibodies and Antigens](#)

[CDC Guidance on Providing Dental Care during COVID-19](#)

[Maryland State Dental Association: COVID-19 Updates](#)

[Maryland Department of Health](#)

President's Message continued

As a result we never lowered the infection rate in this country to that which the European nations were able to attain. Largely this lack of response to the efforts made in the United States was due to the lack of national mandates on social distancing, behavioral modification and mask wearing. The assignment of public health policies to the states has caused tremendous variance in the rate of transmission throughout the country due to variability in state to state public health measures. To its credit the federal government has been strong on the funding of equipment, research and the development of therapeutics. And, a safe and efficacious vaccine is being formulated at warp speed. However, the country has fallen very short on the basics of preventing transmission. In my opinion politics has become too much of a factor in developing federal mandates regarding public health. It seems Congress and the Executive Branch have had a "tug of war" over the financial cost of keeping the economy shut down and the human cost of opening it up. Also, therapeutics such as monoclonal antibody therapy and antiviral therapy while effective are in very short supply unless development is stepped up by pharmaceutical companies. These therapeutics are constantly emerging and the ramping up of development in response to a public health need will require tabling production of non-COVID-19 related therapeutics and repurposing production to pandemic related medicines. Of course, funding these efforts is a big obstacle as well.

According to a recent ADA survey of practices, dentists are plateaued at about 75% of pre-pandemic levels of business. Obviously, this fact is a significant issue for our bottom lines and the increase cost of providing enhanced personal protective equipment has caused a further financial burden to practicing dentistry. Unfortunately, as we head into the winter months and outdoor activities which allow distancing are no longer possible we are going to see a resurgence of pandemic cases. We are already seeing resurgence in the upper Midwest of the country and Maryland cases have started to rise in incidence as well. And, the issue of asymptomatic infected individuals is complicating tracing efforts. Compounding this resurgence with the beginning of the flu season is making the task ahead of us in keeping our patients, ourselves and our families safe more challenging than ever.

As I mention these concerns, I think you see the value of having the advocacy of your dental association to support your day to day practice. I encourage you to maintain your membership as the MSDA will be rolling out renewal notices for membership in late October. The leadership of the Southern Maryland Dental Society and its dedicated staff will continue to enhance product offering through providing quality scientific programming, maintaining open lines of communication and increasing membership development through inclusion and diversity efforts. Our strength as a society is only as great as the strength of its membership. We have a new Maryland General Assembly convening in January and we will look forward to attending Dentist Day on February 17th 2021 hopefully in person at that time. The legislators always appreciate input from its constituents and our yearly efforts in Annapolis are always welcome in influencing the dynamics of legislation involving health care and dentistry moving forward. I hope to see everyone register for our November 2nd General Membership Meeting. In the meantime, stay safe, use personal protective equipment appropriately, and screen your patients and employees for COVID-19 symptoms. Most importantly, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently and consider strongly getting a flu shot.

Sincerely,

Richard Williams, DDS

President



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Editors Letter

Dear friends,

Welcome to the October edition of the Oracle. I'm glad that many of you were able to attend the SMDS general meeting last week! It certainly isn't ideal being on zoom but I encourage everyone to continue staying connected.



This month we have special article written by Nina Parikh, a student at Southern County High school. She founded the South County Smiles club back in 2017 due her passion for dentistry. To gain a broader perspective for oral health care she took the initiative and shadowed Dr. Namita K. Thapar-Dua, a fellow member of the SMDS.

Dr. Thapar founded Senior Smile, a traveling dental team that provides dental care at nursing home locations in the DMV area. It's an honor to showcase Nina's article in the following page. Please take the time to read her experience!

Nina, thank you for sharing your indelible summer experience with us and we hope that you'll continue to pursue dentistry. Dr. Thapar, thank you for providing a wonderful service for those with poor access to dental care!

Let's be reminded to serve those around us. See y'all next month!

Best,

H. Iwin Chu, D.M.D.

Dentists are heroes too!

The squeaking noise of a wheelchair came closer and closer. Dr. Thapar walked over to the woman in the chair, pulling on her gloves past her wrists. “We’re here to make your teeth feel better and clean them!” No response back. Her assistant, Vanessa, unbrakes the wheelchair and rolls the elderly woman over to a boxlike machine that holds a high and low speed suction, an air water syringe, and a cavitron. “Open as wide as you can! I’m just going to take a look inside your mouth!” Thinking the patient would instantly open her mouth at her suggestion, just like the patients do during her normal clinic rotation. Not really. The woman’s face was fearful, her eyes watered. Afraid of the instrument, she began to thrash around in the chair and push away the doctor as she leaned toward her. Dr. Thapar quickly reached for her hand and repeated, “Don’t be scared. I am here to help. I am not going to hurt you.” The woman finally relented and Dr. Thapar was able to begin her examination.

With patience and a comforting voice, Dr. Thapar started her day’s journey. Dr. Thapar has owned Senior Smile since 2005. Never stopping operations through the COVID-19 Pandemic, Dr. Thapar spends every week being a hero. She regularly provides senior center residents with an examination to ensure that they receive proper dental hygiene. With safety precautions in place, Dr. Thapar provides urgent and necessary care at these centers similar to the care a patient receives at her regular dental office.



Left to right: **Vanessa Monterrosa** (Dental Assistant/Office Administrator), **Namita K. Thapar-Dua, DDS** (Dentist/Owner of Senior Smile), **Nina Parikh**, South County High School, Prospective Dental Student

From cleanings to extractions, the mobile Clinic makes it easier for senior citizens to get their dental procedures done. The unexpected COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for elderly patients to find dental care, as many senior living communities have reduced staff, limited visiting hours, and restricted resident mobility outside the community. Senior Smile visits these elderly residents, so they are able to stay safe within their own environment. This decreases the risk to their health and allows them to cooperate more with the doctor.

Dentists are heroes too! (continued)

Senior Smile enables Dr. Thapar to provide the best service to her patients. All procedures performed are in correlation with the health and the safety of the senior citizens. Most of the elderly are unable to handle long procedures, so the mobile service provides quick procedures while ensuring proper hygiene. Also, Senior Smile takes it a step further when caring for their patients. Some senior citizens are unable to handle their own dental care due to health reasons or mobility issues, so Senior Smile contacts the patient's family and consults with them prior to any procedures.



Left to right: **Vanessa Monterrosa** (Dental Assistant/Office Administrator), **Namita K. Thapar-Dua, DDS** (Dentist/Owner of Senior Smile), **Nina Parikh**, South County High School, Prospective Dental Student

In addition to providing care to seniors with restricted access to care, Senior Smile also offers services to those with progressive diseases such as Alzheimer's and Dementia. These diseases can cause patients to unexpectedly act out, be rude, or forbid the doctor from examining them. Despite this, Senior Smile continues to bring their A-game to each patient and properly performs each procedure. They use everyday social skills (and a few tricks) to calm the patients and make them feel as comfortable as possible. Patience, comfort, and casual conversation are the key elements of their successful bedside manner.

Written by Nina Parikh (South County High School student)

Webinars

ADA– Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Dental Care Sector

(Updated Sept 4, 2020)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piGo-3jkhMw>

CDC– COCA Call Guidance for Dental Setting During the COVID Response

(update 2020-2021 Influenza Vaccination Recommendations and Clinical Guidance during COVID-19 Pandemic)

https://emergency.cdc.gov/coca/calls/2020/callinfo_060320.asp

The SMDS is committed to providing continuing education through Zoom. Please watch your email, follow the DMV Dentists Facebook page and keep an eye out for texts about these webinars.



The SMDS promises to provide you with the most information as quickly as we can. If you haven't done so already, please email Valerie at valerie@smdsdentists.org to sign up for text messaging.



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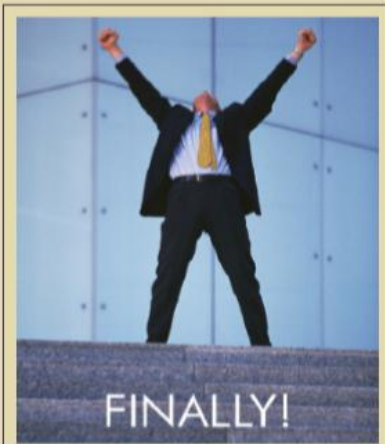
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The Classifieds

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For Sale! Digital Panoramic PC-4000 in excellent condition; images are great. Can send image or demonstrate as I am still using it now. (2) Kavo Diagnodent units with tips. Best offer takes it. Adam Schneider DDS. 301-948-3111



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Other references available upon request

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Stuart Gordon, DDS

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