

# MDHA TODAY NEWS

MICHIGAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

## President's Message

Dear Colleagues:

In these first several months as President, I am amazed at the positive direction and opportunities ahead for our profession. The Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association (MDHA) has had representation in discussions around Dental Therapist in our State, as well as alternative supervision options for Dental Hygienists in Michigan. Additionally, as a board, we have updated our State Strategic Plan to align with the American Dental Hygienists' Association to include Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. As I reflect on our theme this year of "Pulling Together for Our Success," I look forward to our growth as an association as we continue to develop, implement, and evaluate the impact of innovative programs, policies, and resources to enhance the experience of all registered dental hygienists in Michigan.

To be successful in our continued efforts, it is essential that we prioritize alignment, communication, and transparency. This upcoming year, several board members and I would like to attend one business meeting held by each component. My desire is to provide a brief update on what is happening with MDHA and take questions, comments, and suggestions from the attendees. Additionally, we hope to connect with the students from each dental hygiene program this upcoming year through an info session. We would love to share the importance of the association, our experiences, and the next set of goals MDHA has in store for our future leaders.

The MDHA is ONE association with many parts. As members of the MDHA, we all share the responsibility to function as ONE in unity. We all have different skills, interests, and passions with ONE common goal: to advance the profession of dental hygiene. The association structure has a purpose, and each role is significant. If one role is suffering, everything suffers. However, if one role is honored, we are all honored as ONE. I encourage you to participate at a level that you are comfortable with, share ideas, and volunteer your time and talents.

As we pull together for our success, please remember that this is a team effort and we each share in the responsibility to function as ONE in unity, with ONE common goal to advance the profession of dental hygiene.

Please know I am a call, an email, or a text message away should you have any questions, comments, or suggestions as we embark on this journey together.

I appreciate each of you and your contribution to making this association successful.

Kind Regards,  
Elizabeth I. Pitts, RDH, MS  
President, MDHA 2021 - 2022



# MDHA HOD Summary

The 2nd Virtual Michigan House of Delegates this past October, 2021 went as well as anyone could have hoped, especially in this time of Covid and its variants. As a body we were able to meet, some in groups at homes or hotels, and help guide our organization to build our bylaws. A few years ago, no one would have thought meeting virtually was possible. However, in today's environment we've seen what can really be accomplished when we work smarter, not necessarily harder. Friday, October 15th we were able to have a pre-HOD Continuing Education presentation on Implicit Bias. For those who are not aware, this has been a new addition to our required CE requirements. Over 100 RDHs attended, making it successful.

After a few "Dry run" and practice sessions earlier in the month, Saturday's HOD opening ceremonies began with its usual counting and confirming membership and honoring those hygienists who are no longer with us. I want to say a special thank you to all the students who attended, serving on behalf of their schools and components. This was only a taste of what the in-person HOD is like- meeting face to face would have been great, but this was the next best thing. Even though our President was stuck at home under quarantine with her family, she was still able to be with us virtually, carrying out her final meeting. Our hearts were with you, President Spencer!

Even with all of the Proposed Resolutions/Proposed Bylaws required to be emailed prior to the meeting, I feel that the discussions surrounding them were fruitful, while providing light and clarity to the meanings of what we wanted to convey in our Policy and Procedure Manual. The component and "House Floor" discussions were respectful and provided all of the delegates state-wide the opportunity to vote the way they saw as responsible.

I'm proud of how the delegates, alternates, student delegates, trustees, executive council and guests all worked together to put this House of Delegates in the books as a success. We are looking at the strong possibility of being live, in-person this coming year at Somerset in Troy. I'm hoping to see all of you as we celebrate President Pitts and all the things she has planned for this year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sandy Sutton RDH, BS  
MDHA Speaker of the House  
President, Greater Detroit Dental Hygienists' Association



# Michigan Dental Therapy Update

After years of promotion, lobbying, legislating, and rulemaking in Michigan, dental therapy is here! Dental professionals now have an additional pathway to advance their clinical careers, and this pathway will address many of the barriers to care that underserved communities experience. Dental therapy (DT) program development is underway, and soon Michigan's first cohort of students will begin its journey. Here, we will discuss Michigan's DT education and licensure requirements, practice settings, the general scope of practice, and current opportunities to pursue education.

To qualify for licensure in Michigan, a DT must have completed an academic program that meets CODA standards. The program must be three academic years in length (two calendar years if the program goes through the summer) and must include 500 hours of care delivery under the direct supervision of a dentist. There is no specific degree required of dental therapy programs in Michigan- the degree level will be decided by the institutions that provide education. Upon graduation, students must pass a comprehensive clinical board, apply for licensure, and maintain 35 CEUs for every two-year license cycle. By statute, DTs must provide care within underserved communities and populations, which could include dental health professional shortage areas (HPSAs), institutions such as federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), tribal health centers, and hospitals, or other health settings in which at least half of the DT's patient base is uninsured, publicly insured, or significantly medically compromised.

The scope of a dental therapist includes preventive (prophies, sealants, fluoride), evaluative (comprehensive charting, treatment planning), restorative (fillings, temporary crowns, stainless steel crowns on primary teeth), surgical (sutures and a limited scope of extractions), and other (emergency palliative care, managing referrals, fabrication of athletic guards) primary care services. This is not a complete list; the full scope can be found in our dental therapy bill<sup>1</sup>. Dental therapists work through written practice agreements with their supervising dentists, allowing DTs to work without a dentist present and without the need for routine authorization to provide services. This allows dental therapists to do what they are designed to do- improve access- by delivering care outside of the traditional business hours and office settings that create barriers for so many people. Additionally, by nature of their practice settings, they will increase the number of providers that care for Michigan's 2.5<sup>3</sup> million people on Medicaid and 1.5<sup>2</sup> million living in dental HPSAs.

Michigan colleges and universities are just starting to explore program development. Some aspiring DTs prefer not to wait for Michigan programs, and instead are exploring education out of state with plans to come back and provide care to their communities. There are currently four programs to choose from: one in Alaska and three in Minnesota, with a fifth in Washington accepting its first cohort in the Fall of 2022. Thanks to the development of CODA standards in 2015, the programs offer a very similar quality, range, and duration of coursework. However, there are notable differences among the programs: some result in associate's degrees and others in master's degrees. Some are standalone dental therapy programs with no dental hygiene component, others include coursework for both, and still, others require dental hygiene licensure before enrollment. Some provide clinical education on-campus and others do so in community health centers or Tribal health clinics. One college is CODA-accredited, and the others are pursuing CODA accreditation this year. Whichever program a candidate pursues, if it meets the educational criteria for licensure in Michigan, they will be welcomed back with open arms.

Michigan's residents have not been well served by the current oral healthcare system. Only about 26% of our population's needs are being met<sup>2</sup>, and dental therapy is one promising response to this disparity. Not only will dental therapy improve access to care for those who need it the most, but it will also provide a long-anticipated additional career ladder option for dental hygienists and assistants who wish to remain in clinical care. How exciting that we are here to witness this positive change for the dental field and much-needed progress toward oral health equity.

Misty M. Davis, RDH, BS  
Immediate Past President, Capital Region DHA  
Oral Health Program Manager at the Michigan Primary Care Association

For more information about dental therapy, please contact Misty Davis at [mdavis@mpca.org](mailto:mdavis@mpca.org).



1. Enrolled Senate Bill 541, 99th Legislature. Public Act 463 (2018). <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/publicact/pdf/2018-PA-0463.pdf>

2. Kaiser Family Foundation. (2021). Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), Michigan. Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) | KFF

3. Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan Oral Health Coalition. (2021). 2025 Michigan State Oral Health Plan.

# CHECK OUT WHAT CAPITAL REGION DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN UP TO...

Many healthcare providers gained recognition for their extra efforts to care for patients during the Covid Pandemic shutdown. Capital Region Dental Hygienists' Association wanted to recognize a few of our own who went above and beyond for their community. Dennis and Christine Engstrom are the dentists nominated by Jerri Jones for showing outstanding support for their patients and employees.

Engstrom Family Dental opened 2-3 days each week to care for patients to provide emergency care and deliver dentures and crowns. Rather than have their dental assistants come in and expose them to the virus, the doctors assisted one another during the Covid shutdown. They treated patients of record and patients whose regular office was not open to providing care.

Once it was clear that employees needed to file for unemployment, the doctors scheduled a Zoom meeting to inform their team and helped some to apply. They were very honest about the practice opening again, the status of PPE, and discussed the new protocol they planned to implement before reopening. The doctors helped ensure the team had the guidance and tools they needed to succeed. After the Covid vaccine became available to healthcare providers, the Engstrom's scheduled appointments for each employee to receive the first and second doses. If a team member experienced a reaction to the first or second vaccine and had to miss work, they paid them for the time missed. Dennis and Christine went above and beyond to care for their team and patients and deserve recognition! C-RDHA enjoyed presenting a modest gift and certificate to recognize them for their efforts.

Geri Brady also presented Dr Kate & Dr Ashley with awards for outstanding patient care during the Covid 19 pandemic. Their hard work and dedication to patient safety as well as staff safety have been a top priority. The staff at Grand Blanc Pediatric Dentistry has gone above and beyond to uphold safety standards so that we can continue to meet the needs of their pediatric community.



# AWARDS 2021

## Frances Shook Award 2021



This award is presented to a professional who emulates the qualities and attributes of Frances Shook who has contributed significantly to the dental hygiene profession. Kathi has certainly done this! Shepherd is an exceptional educator, leader, and role model for dental hygiene educators and her students. Kathi has remained active in professional associations, including the American Dental Hygienists Association, Michigan Dental Hygienists Association and Detroit District Dental Hygienists Society and Greater Detroit District Dental Hygienists' Society as leader, facilitator and advocate. She continues to be a sought-after continuing education speaker because of her knowledge and expertise, benefiting clinicians throughout the state and region. Her passion and dedication to her students, colleagues, alumni and peers made her deserving of the recognition as a recipient of the Frances Shook Award.

## Outstanding Dental Hygienist of the Year 2021

Each component bestows this award in recognition of the service given to the association. The Outstanding Dental Hygienist of the Year for 2021 include the following members:

Capital Region	Cheryl Doyle
East Shore	Angela Blan
Grand Shores	Valerie Nieto
Great Lakes Bay	Virginia Przygocki
Greater Detroit	Autum Drew (Schoenherr)
Northland	Erica Smith
South Central	Brittney Barnett
Superior Sunrise	Emily Bushong

## Lifetime Member Award 2021

Each year we recognize members who have reached the lifetime member criteria: Paid dues for a total of thirty (30) consecutive or thirty-five (35) cumulative years. Served as president of MDHA and paid dues for a total of twenty-five (25) cumulative years. We are lucky to have members like this in our association and in 2021 we honored:

Connie Tenkle

# MDHA COUNCIL UPDATES!

## Communication Council

This council is working very diligently to re-build our website to better attract and serve our members. They have also been in contact with different companies and are getting quotes to proceed with a redesign of the MDHAToday.com website. Some of our fundraising events are earmarked to help fund this redesign. Two main goals of the council this year are to post weekly on our social media accounts and publish two Newswires to better keep our members informed. So follow us on Instagram and Facebook and be on the lookout for a new website this year!

Any questions/concerns/ideas, reach out to Michelle Spencer, Meech.Spencer@gmail.com or Ashe Vincent, ashe.m.vincent@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 10, 2022, at 7:30 PM

## Education Council

CE's coming up for Spring 2022 will be Pain Management with Jennifer Cullen. As of now, there will not be a CE attached with our Golf Outing due to separate contracts with the facility. We have another awesome opportunity for a CE on PA 161 provided by Erin Suddeth in May. If you have any thoughts or ideas on CE's you would like MDHA to host, send an email with topics, or speakers you may know that would like to speak for us. See page 8 of this Newswire for more information on upcoming CE opportunities. Any other questions/concerns/ideas, reach out to Iwonka Eagle, ilenda@umich.edu or Lorene Kline, Klinelrg@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 9, 2022, at 7:00 PM

## Finance Council

Tamara Fisher has been working very hard on the Golf Outing which will be August 26, 2022, at Bay Valley Resort & Golf in Bay City. If you have any ideas for sponsorship, email Tamara and she can send you a sponsor letter. We have many different levels for sponsors to choose from. Other Fundraising ideas will be much appreciated. We will be having another Online Silent Auction on Facebook again this year as last year's Silent Auction event went really well. We found this increased our profits and allowed others to help our association, so it wasn't coming only from our members. The auction will be taking place Sometime between September and October. Dates will be posted soon. Please see page 9 of this Newswire for our ongoing fundraisers. If you have any other questions/concerns/ideas, reach out to Tamara Fisher at ttfish@charter.net.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 7:00 PM

## Legislative Council

The 2022 Legislative Luncheon is on the books for April 12th, 2022 from 10 am to 2 pm. Sarah Hubbard from Acuitas will provide a 1 CE Legislative Update during the first hour and then we will begin meeting with legislators. If you would like to attend, you can RSVP to Spencer Cook at Scook@acuitas. Please provide your name, email, phone number, and home address in the RSVP. We hope to see many of our members there.

Any questions/concerns/ideas reach out to Danielle Rauch, daniellerauch@me.com or Michelle Spencer, Meech.spencer@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 7, 2022, at 7:00 PM

## Membership Council

Brittney Barnett did a great job with student recognition last year during the student slides contest. This event was a huge success and we will be doing the student slides again this year. We will be posting on our MDHA Facebook page sometime between March/April. When shared with the public we ask for you to vote for your favorite slide and share it with friends and family. Whoever has the most likes will move on to the next day until we end up with three top winners and the winners will receive prizes and be announced online. Our first, "Hygienist Highlights," was shared with you in January where we recognized Valerie Nieto! We plan on this becoming a monthly event, so do you know a hygienist who deserves a Highlight? Contact the Membership Council to recommend someone. Any questions/concerns/ideas, reach out to Brittney Barnett at bbarnettmdha@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 8:00 PM

## Public Health Council

Sandy is working very hard to get into the public areas this February to educate our children for National Children's Dental Health Month. However, due to COVID, there have been many challenges making this happen in the last couple of years. This year we are reaching out to hygiene schools to create posters that we can put up in our local libraries. If you can take some time and participate with a local school for some educational teachings (Video or in-person if allowed) or even, make a poster for your local libraries, we would love to see the work posted on our social media pages. Please send us the information and pictures of what you may be doing in your community. For any further information contact Sandy Sutton at sandyksutton@yahoo.com.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 7, 2022, at 7:30 PM

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to share with you that the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force has been working over the last several months on the mission, objectives, and initiatives the DEI Council plans to focus on once established, following voting at House of Delegates 2022.

## MDHA DEI Council

### Mission:

Create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive community within MDHA that celebrates and draws strength from its diversity

### Objectives:

- Promote programs, workshops, continuing education, and initiatives to support efforts regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, including programs for MDHA leadership, members, and students
- Identify and disseminate educational resources to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the dental and dental hygiene profession to ensure an inclusive work environment and equitable patient care.

### Initiatives:

- Professional Development & Training
- Workshops/Continuing Education
- Outreach
- Recruitment
- Grant-Funded Initiatives & Partnerships

Please feel free to contact me directly for any questions at [eiester1@gmail.com](mailto:eiester1@gmail.com)

Thank you for your service and commitment!

Warm regards,

Elizabeth I. Pitts, RDH, MS  
President, Michigan Dental Hygienists' Association





# CONTINUING EDUCATION

Pain Management - Medical Cannabis and the Dental Patient - 2.0 CEs,

Friday, April 1st, 12:00 – 2:00 pm via ZOOM

Jennifer Cullen, RDH, BSDH, MPH

Clinical Lecturer, Director, Dental Hygiene Degree Completion Program, University of Michigan School of Dentistry, Division of Dental Hygiene

PA 161 Informative Series

Tuesdays: May 3rd, 10th, and 17th 6:30-8:30 pm via ZOOM

Erin Suddeth, RDH, BS, MPA

Oral Health Workforce Development Consultant

Division of Child and Adolescent Health

MI Dept of Health and Human Services

Dental Therapy Update

Wednesday, July 20th, 6:30 pm via ZOOM \*Free\*

Misty Davis, RDH, BS

Michigan Primary Care Association

Oral Health Program Manager

House of Delegates

Friday, October 14th \*\*In Person or via ZOOM

AM Session - Leadership Development with Krish Anil

PM Session - The Education Council is working hard to find the best speakers.

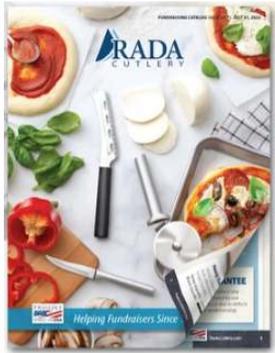
More information to come!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram or visit our website for updates.

# MDHA FUNDRAISERS



Get some swag and support the MDHA.  
<https://www.bonfire.com/store/mdha/>



Need to upgrade some of your cookware?  
Need a gift for BBQ season?  
Support the MDHA by purchasing from RADA Cutlery at the following link:  
<https://radafundraising.com/?rfsn=4290307.11c98e>



Need something to look forward to? The MDHA's first golf outing is sure to be a lot of fun! August 26th, 2022 at Bay Valley Golf Club.

Be on the lookout for registration information and more details on our website and social media. Don't forget, the golf outing is open for all to attend, so you can have friends and/or family join your team.

Tamara Fisher is chairing this event with a team of go-getters. If you are interested in sponsoring the event in any way, please contact us.

Tamara Fisher - [ftfish@charter.net](mailto:ftfish@charter.net)



# CONNECT WITH US



You can find us on Facebook and Instagram @MDHAToday or check our website for updates at [www.MDHAToday.org](http://www.MDHAToday.org).



## IMPORTANT DATES

**ADHA Leadership Summit Registration is open!**

- Virtual is March 4th - 5th, 2022
- Live is June 22nd - 23rd, 2022 in Louisville KY

**MDHA Legislative Luncheon - April 12th, 2022**

**MDA annual session is April 27th - 30th, 2022 in Novi Michigan**

**ADHA annual session is June 24th - 26th, 2022 in Louisville KY**

**MDHA Golf Outing is August 26th in Bay City Michigan**

**MDHA HOD October 14th - 16th, 2022 in Troy Michigan**