



SCRANTON DISTRICT DENTAL SOCIETY

April 2007

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Urgent: Help Preserve The Dentist's Role In Dental Care

Dear Senator Mellow and Representative Jim Wansacz (fill in your legislators' names):

I strongly urge you to oppose Senate Bill 455 and its companion bill, House Bill 914.

These bills allows dental hygienists to provide independent care in public and private institutions, outside of the traditional dental office without any supervision or examination by a dentist. Patient protection would be seriously eroded under this bill, as it would make hygienists the gatekeepers responsible for referring dental care to a dentist because it is outside of their scope of hygienists training and education.

Unlike hygienists, dentists are uniquely qualified to lead the dental team. Dentists have received education and training beyond that afforded to dental hygienists. At a minimum, dentists spend four years in college and an additional four years in dental school, while the majority of hygienists usually only have to complete two years of dental hygiene school. Moreover, dental hygienists are NOT trained to diagnose oral pathology.

Dentists are therefore qualified to make diagnosis and formulate treatment plans. Patients who only encounter a dental hygienist are at an increased exposure to health risks, as the unsupervised hygienist is less likely to diagnose oral pathology.

The issue of access to care is best addressed throughout the entire dental profession. In fact, the Pennsylvania State Board of Dentistry has recently expanded the standing orders between the time of first exam and the providing of the hygiene service from 90 days to one year. This should be more than adequate time for any oral health standing orders to be addressed.

Although Senate Bill 455 and House Bill 914 appear to address access to care, they will only succeed in driving up Medicaid costs, in a state that is already 2 billion dollars over budget, and compromising these patients' oral health. Dentists are educated to make a diagnosis and develop treatment plans - something hygienists cannot and should not do. Patients deserve to be helped and not exposed to unnecessary risk.

While I speak on behalf of my profession and in the interest of the citizens of Pennsylvania in opposition to this bill, this legislation is being proposed by the Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists Association, which represents less than 10% of their profession. I urge you to vote against Senate Bill 455 and House Bill 914.

Sincerely, Your Name

Legislation has been introduced in Pennsylvania that could have a drastic impact on the way you practice dentistry in your office.

Senate Bill 455 and House Bill 914 have been introduced to allow dental hygienists to practice independently in private and public settings in Pennsylvania.

Dentists need to act immediately to oppose this legislation.

The SDDS urges you to contact your state senator and representative now and explain why it is imperative that he or she oppose this effort to diminish dental care in Pennsylvania.

This letter (*shown left*) is provided at www.scrantondental.org (under *In the News*) in PDF format. Or, for a Word document, e-mail Dr. Joseph Kelly, Jr. at jtkellydmd@comcast.net.

Please do not hesitate to use the talking points provided and add your own input as to why your legislator should vote NO on Senate Bill 455 and the companion House Bill 914.

SDDS to Attend Health Fairs

As a means to show our community support, the SDDS has decided to participate in two, upcoming health fairs.

The first, held May 12th at the Steamtown Mall, is a fair designed with seniors in mind. Called Prime Time Health, it will be aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles in people aged 55 and over.

The second will be held June 9th at Nay Aug Park. Sponsored by the Lackawanna Medical Society, this fair is designed to "showcase the excellent locally available medical care."

We are in need of volunteers to "man" our booth. Both fairs run 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Please contact President O'Malley with your availability. We need your help!

Ben Shair Award Recipient to be Featured at April's Meeting

On April 17th at 6:30 p.m. at the Hilton, the SDDS will present the annual Ben Shair award to a soon-to-be college graduate attending dental school.

Please make every effort to attend and show your support.

As always, dinner is complimentary and so is parking. To register, please contact Dr. Chris Kotchick at 346-7301.



Your Photo Is Needed

In our continuing effort to provide additional benefits to our members, the SDDS board has decided to feature member dentists on our website.

We are planning on listing all members, complete with practice name and specialty.

We will even provide a link to your website (if you have one) and your

photo. That way, potential patients can find you!

If you are interested in having your photo and/or website included, or if you do not wish to be listed, please contact Dr. Miriam O'Malley (586-5300 or info@scrantondental.org) as soon as possible.

It's Tee Time

Dr. Joseph Perotti has announced that the 7th annual golf outing will be Wednesday, June 20, 2007 at the Scranton Country Club.

As always, we plan on having a great time on the golf course. More details to follow as the date gets closer.



Don't Forget...

We have created our website (www.scrantondental.org) for your benefit. If you need to check the date of an upcoming CE course, want to see what's happening in dental news, or have a special request, simply go to www.scrantondental.org.

The Survey Results Are In

Thank you to those doctors who completed our brief survey during our last general meeting. We wanted to know what days of the week and times work best for you for upcoming meetings and seminars. Here's what you said:

- Most of you prefer dinner meetings to luncheons, although some would like to see both.
- The most popular day of the week to have a general meeting is Tuesday.

- Future topics for speakers range from staff management to local/state politicians to the changes in the area/demographics.

- You were split on whether or not to meet at differing venues.

If you haven't participated in the survey, but would like to, go to our website (www.scrantondental.org), print out the form, and send it to Dr. O'Malley.

Due to the space required for the legislative update, the minutes from March's board meeting will be in next month's bulletin.

From The President

Spring is finally upon us. We have our baseball and golf outings coming soon. A separate flyer will be mailed with those dates. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

There are two health fairs which our society will be present:

- 1) May 12th at the Steamtown Mall called the Prime Time Health fair *and*
- 2) June 9th at Nay Aug park. This is the health fair sponsored by the Medical Society.

They both are from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and provide good PR and community

service for the society. Volunteers are needed. Please donate one to two hours of your time. If you're interested, call my office.

April 17th is our last Tuesday evening meeting. The Ben Shair award will be presented. We look forward to your attendance.

Finally, Dr. Chris Kotchick will confirm the May date for the cancelled continuing education course in February. We will hold a general meeting at lunch as planned.

Sincerely,
Miriam O'Malley



Dr. Miriam C. O'Malley

Upcoming Events

CE Course: <i>Restoration of the Dental Implant</i>	Inn at Nichols Village	April 4, 2007
Ben Shair Award/General Meeting	Hilton	April 17, 2007
Third District Meeting	East Mountain Inn	April 18, 2007
PDA Annual Session	Hotel Hershey	April 26-29, 2007
Board Meeting	La Trattoria	April 30, 2007
CE Course: <i>Rescheduled from February</i>	Inn at Nichols Village	Early May
Yankees Game	PNC Stadium	May 30, 2007
Golf Outing	Scranton Country Club	June 20, 2007
ADA Annual Session	San Francisco	Sept. 27-30, 2007
General Meeting featuring Dean Tansy of Temple University	To be announced	October 2007
Third District Meeting	Woodlands	Nov. 9, 2007

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