

Eighth Letter from the ADA Second District to the NYSDA Components
Trustee's Corner

Spring is here and it is even warming up in my hometown of Buffalo. I hope all of you and your families have made it through the winter in good order and are looking forward to an enjoyable summer. There have been several changes at the American Dental Association, and I will try to get you up to speed with my correspondence to you. To begin with, we are officially in our new headquarters on the top four floors of a 35-floor building at 401 North Michigan Avenue in Chicago. We have a very agreeable long-term lease and just completed the leasehold improvements in February. If you make a trip to Chicago any time soon, please stop by for a tour. The view is spectacular, and the location is second to none.

There has been a change at the top of the ADA administration. Our previous Executive Director, Dr. Ray Cohlma, stepped down from the position in early February this year. The decision was reached amicably, and the ADA Board is extremely proud of Dr. Cohlma's service to our organization. We continue to follow his vision for the ADA and hope to see many of the projects he and the ADA Board agreed upon over the past four years come to fruition and/or be completed. Dr. Cohlma worked incredibly hard during his tenure at the ADA, and we are extremely grateful for his service. In the meantime, Dr. Betsy Shapiro was unanimously approved by the Board as Interim Executive Director. Dr. Shapiro previously served as Chief of Governance and Strategy Management. She originally graduated from dental school at the University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry and was in private practice for several years. She has a Juris Doctor from Northern Illinois University. Dr. Shapiro began her career at the ADA as a Hillenbrand Fellowship scholar and ended up staying at the ADA working in many different areas of the organization. The ADA Board is very pleased to have Dr. Shapiro as our interim Executive Director as we conduct a national search for a permanent director.

I would like to apologize to all our members due to the delay of the implementation of the Salesforce Fonteva IT program. Unfortunately, there have been many technical challenges. The ADA has received the help of an external consulting firm, Datazuum, to assist us with a health check of the system and implementation. It considered the overall system health rating "at risk" and recommended targeted remediation to stabilize and standardize the program over the next several months. Remediation will be discussed with the states and the Strategic Forecasting Committee during that time. Although this will take some time, the American Dental Association believes we are making progress and taking the proper corrective measures to get our organization on the right path.

The ADA credit union will be scheduled to launch at the end of Q3 or early Q4 of this year. As many of you know, this has required much background work and due diligence over the past year. The ADA is finishing the final touches on a contract with an established credit union with extensive experience in this area to provide financial services to all ADA members and their families. You will be receiving information on this exciting venture in the very near future.

I know that I talked to you in my last Trustee's Corner about water fluoridation, but the landscape has changed even more since our last correspondence. The entire state of Utah has passed a law to eliminate water fluoridation in their state. Approximately fifteen other states are discussing it at various levels of their legislative process. Countless other municipalities nationwide have it under review. Not all the news is bad though. New Hampshire just reaffirmed its commitment to water fluoridation as did North Dakota. It is a state by state and municipality by municipality battle, depending on your location in the country. Albion, New York, located between Buffalo and Rochester, has had a hearing about it and will have another one later in the spring. The most unfortunate factor is the rhetoric of our HHS Secretary in Washington, DC, Robert Kennedy Jr. He has called water fluoridation a toxic process and should be eliminated nationally. Although there is a plethora of well-done evidence-based studies over the past 80 years, he and the anti-fluoridation folks point to poorly controlled dubious international studies that have faulty conclusions. It is sad we have reached this point in our country where some of our national leaders do not understand settled science.

The ADA will not lay down due to this national trend. We have started an ADA Fluoride Ambassador program to sign up an army of dentists, hygienists, physicians, nurses, and community leaders to be ready to testify, be interviewed or provide information as needed all around the country as these hearings are announced. Currently, we have 72% of the communities in this country with properly titrated fluoridated water at .7 parts per million. The goal is to keep it at that level or increase the percentage,

along with keeping a running tab of the outcomes to keep practicing dentists apprised of what is going on. The purpose is to keep our members informed to treat their patients properly as things change.

Thank you for letting me continue to serve you as your ADA Trustee and please email me at dowdb@ada.org or call me at 716-510-3217 if you have any questions. Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Brendan Dowd DDS

ADA Trustee, Second District