

November/December 2025

the Nugget



Striving for Clinical Excellence
While Surviving Parenthood



Get Ready For Our UPCOMING EVENTS

TOOTHSTOCK PEACE, LOVE & CE THE 45TH ANNUAL MIDWINTER CONVENTION & EXPO

**Early Bird Price good thru
November 14**

**Register online or with form on back page
Visit sdds.org to view course offerings**



November 7, 2025

CPR-AHA BLS Blended Learning

Friday • 8–8:45am, 9–9:45am, 10–10:45am • SDDS Classroom
\$98 total; \$37 to AHA/\$61 to SDDS (ends 10/17)
\$118 total; \$37 to AHA/\$81 to SDDS (begins 10/18)

Non-Member Price: \$199 total; \$37 to AHA/\$162

Skills Testing, 3 Time Sessions (3 CEU, Core)

November 11, 2025

General Membership CE Meeting

Tuesday • 5:45–9pm

Hilton Sacramento Arden West

Member Price: \$89 early (ends 10/28)

\$99 regular (begins 10/29) / \$109 late (begins 11/9)

Non-Member Price: \$218

Tooth Be Told! Drilling Down on Office Based Anesthesia

(3 CEU, Core)

Presented by Samuel Seiden, MD, FAAP

** Does not qualify for AGD credit*

November 14, 2025

Licensure Renewal

Friday • 8:30am–12:30pm • SDDS Classroom

Member Price: \$199 early (ends 10/24) / \$219 regular (begins 10/25)

Non-Member Price: \$438

California Dental Practice Act and Infection Control (4 CEU, Core)

Presented by Joy Brack, RDA

December 4, 2025

Member Event - The Polar Express Train Ride

Thursday • 5:45–8pm • Central Pacific Passenger Station (Old Sac)

December 10, 2025

Harassment Prevention Training

Presented by California Employers Association (CEA - SDDS Vendor Member)

For Employees

Wednesday • 11am–12pm • Live Webinar* • 1 CEU, Core

Member Price: \$49 early (ends 11/19) / \$69 regular (begins 11/20)

For Supervisors

Wednesday • 11am–1pm • Live Webinar* • 2 CEU, Core

Member Price: \$69 early (ends 11/19) / \$89 regular (begins 11/20)

December 11, 2025

Member Event

The SDDS Annual Holiday Party & Silent Auction

Where Elegance Meets Holiday Cheer

Thursday • 6–9:30pm • Sutter Club • \$150 per person



**View all CE Courses & Events
online with this QR code.**

ARE YOU USING YOUR ADVERTISING BENEFIT?

SDDS MEMBERS RECEIVE A
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SDDS Members—General Practitioners and Specialists; Have you ever thought of advertising in *the Nugget*? What is your area of expertise? Want to let other colleagues know? Great way to announce a new associate or office move!

Sign a year advertising contract and get a 15% discount and an additional 5% if you pay in full

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Nugget Editorial Board

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Awards

International College of Dentists (ICD)

2025 • Special Citation Award
2025 • Humanitarian Service, honorable mention
2024 • Special Citation Award
2023 • Special Citation Award
2022 • Humanitarian Service Award
2022 • Special Citation Award
2022 • Overall Newsletter, honorable mention
2021 • Platinum Pencil, *honorable mention*
Outstanding use of graphics
2021 • Special Citation Award
2020 • Platinum Pencil
2020 • Golden Pen, *honorable mention*
Article / series of articles of interest to the profession
2020 • Special Citation Award
2019 • Special Citation Award
2019 • Golden Pen, *honorable mention*

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We Love Our Veterans!

**Thank you, SDDS Members,
for your service!**



U.S. Navy

William Black, DDS
Miriam Behpour, DDS
Carlos E. Bonilla, DMD
Don Campbell, DDS
Joseph Cullo, DDS
Ryan Grandpre, DDS
Mitchell A. Goodis, DDS
Greg Heise, DDS
Richard A. Mandelaris, DMD
David Marth, DDS
Erik Matson, DMD
James Musser, DDS
John C. Riach, DMD
Wendie Richards (Vendor Member)
Donald Rollofson, DMD
Dennis C. Romary, DDS
Sholi Rotblatt, DDS
Stephen Saffold, DDS
Dean Sands, DMD
William Sloan, DMD
Kevin Tanner, DDS
Lien Truong, DDS
Russ Webb, DDS

U.S. Marine Corps

Calvin L. Garland, DDS
Victor Hawkins, DDS
Mervin Nelson, DDS

U.S. Army

Charles Beach, DDS
Lawrence Bisauta, DDS
Bill Frey, DDS
Kerry Hanson, DDS
Nelson H. Johansen, DDS
Jacob D. Kelly, DDS
John Legakis, DDS
Donald Liberty, DDS
Blong Ly, DDS
Alexander Malick, DMD, FAGD
Michael Mikitka, DDS
Victoria Mosur, DDS
Khari Nelson, DDS
Charles Newens, DDS
Ifeatu Nnebe, DDS
Paul Raskin, DDS
James Robison, DMD
Ronald Rott, DDS
Colby Smith, DDS
Joel Whiteman, DDS
Keith Wood, DDS

U.S. Public Health Service

Richard Gere, DDS
Tim Mickiewicz, DDS
Dennis Wong, DDS
Peter Worth, DDS

U.S. Air Force

Guy Acheson, DDS
Kreston Anderson, DDS
Robin Berrin, DDS
Gary C. Borge, DDS
John Carson, DDS, MS
Monica Crooks, DDS
Jason Dorminey, DMD
James Elliot, DDS
Teje Ellis, DDS
Kenneth Frostad, DDS
Mitchell A. Goodis, DDS
Harvey S. Greer, DDS
Daniel Haberman, DDS
Dennis Hiramatsu, DDS
Richard Jackson, DDS
Craig H. Johnson, DDS
David Jolkovsky, DDS
H. David Kneppshield, DDS
Jeffrey Light, DDS
William L. Marble, DDS
Larry Masuoka, DMD
Daniel G. Mazza, DDS, MAGD
James McNerney, DMD
Michael Mikitka, DDS
Feroz M. Nawabi, DDS
Lawrence Nguyen, DDS
Richard O' Day, DDS, MS
Michael H. Payne, DDS
Jim Peck, DDS
Peter Rubenstein, DMD
Benton J. Runquist, DDS, MS
Timothy D. Scott, DDS
Walter Skinner, DDS
Eugene Spencer, DDS
R. Bruce Thomas, DDS
Robert L. Tilly, DDS
Cas Szymanowski, DDS
Kim Wallace, DDS
Michael Weideman, DDS
Lee Wiggins, DDS

Would you adopt a Veteran for dental care?

Contact sdds@sdds.org to say "yes!"

.....
Note: This list was compiled from responses to an email requesting the names of our veterans, and it is possible that some veterans' names are not listed.
We apologize in advance if this list is incomplete. Thank you to all veterans for sharing your stories!



By **Nima Aflatooni, DDS**
2025 SDDS President

LOOKING BACK ON 2025 WITH SO MUCH GRATITUDE

In looking back on this past year, I am struck by the organizational strength of SDDS. From its dedicated volunteer leaders to its tireless staff, SDDS is well-positioned to continue building on its many successes. The systems and procedures that underpin the organization's operations are thoughtful, robust, and effective. The financial health of the dental society is also remarkably strong, allowing it to serve the needs of its members for many years to come.

This has been a year of transition. When Cathy Levering announced her retirement, we were naturally concerned about the future of SDDS. Cathy was instrumental in guiding the society from the brink of financial ruin to the thriving, member-driven organization we know today. We took comfort in the fact that the systems and procedures Cathy and the previous Board of Directors put in place would ensure a smooth succession—and that is exactly what happened. A search committee was formed, many qualified candidates were rigorously interviewed, and in the end, we were fortunate and grateful to welcome Caroll Badgley. Caroll has assumed the role of Executive Director with both poise and purpose.

From hosting our most successful SDDS MidWinter Convention to date, to delivering high-quality continuing education, strong advocacy, and opportunities to connect with colleagues at happy hours and the ice-cream

social, I look back on this year with great pride in what we have accomplished—and excitement for what lies ahead.

None of this success would be possible without our incredible SDDS staff. They work tirelessly behind the scenes to make our events successful and to ensure that our members' needs are met. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Della Yee, Jessica Luther, Sofia Gutierrez, Anne Rogerson, and Jen Jackson.

To Cathy: You have been a monumental force in organized dentistry. Your skill, passion, and care have shaped SDDS into the respected organization it is today. You have taught generations of volunteers what true leadership means, and for that, we are forever grateful.

To Caroll: You are doing a phenomenal job taking the reins and leading SDDS with your own authentic style. You bring compassion and heart to your role, and I know you will be a resounding success as Executive Director.

To the Board: It has been an honor and a privilege to serve alongside you. I have learned so much from the diverse experiences and talents you each bring to the table, and I am confident that the future of SDDS is in capable hands.

To the Committee Chairs: Your leadership this year has been invaluable to the success of our organization. We look forward to

watching you continue to grow in leadership roles in the years ahead.

To our Board of Component Relations Representative, Volki Felahy: You inspire all of us to be our best. You are unafraid to speak up or take action for the good of the profession, and I am truly proud to have served in leadership with you.

To my Executive Committee, Jeff Sue and Craig Alpha: You are my colleagues, my co-leaders, and my friends. Your wisdom and guidance have been essential this year. Leadership is always a team effort, and I am forever grateful to you both.

To all our members: As we reflect on an accomplished past, we can also look forward to an incredibly bright future. Our emerging leaders understand the challenges facing dentistry and are uniquely equipped to advocate on your behalf—but we cannot do it alone. We need your support. Attend General Meetings and events, contribute to The Foundation, and most importantly, consider volunteering for leadership positions.

I am deeply grateful to SDDS for the support it has provided to me—and to all of us—as clinicians and practice owners. I know great things are yet to come. ■

Thank You
Dr. Nima Aflatooni!
It's been a pleasure having
you as our President this
past year!





A Year of Transition, Gratitude, and Growth

By Carol Badgley
SDDS Executive Director

As we bring this year to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect with gratitude. When I stepped into this position in April, following the retirement of longtime Executive Director Cathy Levering, I knew I had “big shoes to fill.” While my shoes may be different, every step I take is guided by the best interests of our members and the future of organized dentistry.

Since the founding of the Sacramento District Dental Society in 1893, there have been only five Executive Directors. I am honored to be the fifth and deeply grateful to have been entrusted with this role at such a remarkable organization.

Transitions are never easy, but thanks to the warm welcome of the Executive Committee, the steady encouragement of our Boards, the support of the incredible SDDS staff, and the many members I’ve had the pleasure of meeting, this journey has already been both rewarding and inspiring.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dr. Aflatooni for his leadership throughout this year of change and for his patience during the transition of Executive Directors. It has been a pleasure to work and collaborate with you. As we look ahead, we warmly welcome Dr. Sue as he begins his presidency and continues to guide SDDS forward.

We hope you can all join us on Thursday, December 11, for our Annual Holiday Party, where we will celebrate the season and the installation of our new officers.

As we step into a new year, I look forward to the opportunities ahead. With your continued support and engagement, I am confident we will strengthen our profession, our association, and our collective impact.

Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving as your Executive Director. I am excited for what we will accomplish together.

Warm regards,



LEADERSHIP

President: Nima Aflatooni, DDS
President Elect/Treasurer: Jeffrey Sue, DDS
Secretary: Craig Alpha, DDS
SDDS BCR Rep: Volki Felahy, DDS
Editor-in-Chief: Carl Hillendahl, DDS
Executive Director: Carol Badgley

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Lisa Dobak, DDS
Diana Fat, DDS
Eric Grove, DDS
Michael Payne, DDS, MSD
Kart Raghuraman, DDS
Cherag Sarkari, DDS
Chirag Vaid, DDS
Guest of the Board: Rosemary Wu, DMD, MS
CNU Student Representative: Brandon Azali
UOP Student Representative: Resha Shah

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CPR: Margaret Delmore, MD, DDS/ Brad Archibald, DDS
Membership/Engagement:
Jeffrey Delgadillo, DDS/Aneel Nath, DDS
Nominating/Leadership Development:
Ash Vasanthan, DDS, MS

COMMITTEES STANDING

CSUS Pre-Dental:
Brian Orcutt, DDS/Jeremy A. Salvatierra, DMD
Budget & Finance Advisory: Jeffrey Sue, DDS
Bylaws Advisory: Ash Vasanthan, DDS, MS
CE Advisory: Ryan Wilgus, DDS
Strategic Planning Advisory:
Jeffrey Sue, DDS/Craig Alpha, DDS

TASK FORCES ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Foundation President: Carl Hillendahl, DDS

SDDF

Carol Badgley | Executive Director
Della Yee | Director of Operations
Sofia Gutierrez | Foundation Projects/CPR
Anne Rogerson | Office Manager
Jessica Luther | Graphic Designer
Jen Jackson | Member Liaison

SDDS STAFF

The Nugget is an opinion and discussion magazine for SDDS membership. Opinions expressed by authors are their own, and not necessarily those of SDDS or *The Nugget* Editorial Board. SDDS reserves the right to edit all contributions for clarity and length, as well as reject any material submitted. *The Nugget* is published bimonthly by the SDDS, 2035 Hurley Way, Ste 200, Sacramento, CA 95825 (916) 446-1211. Acceptance of advertising in *The Nugget* in no way constitutes approval or endorsement by Sacramento District Dental Society of products or services advertised. SDDS reserves the right to reject any advertisement.

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Mommy Brain:

When Cognitive Fog Feels Like Hannibal Lecter Has Taken a Bite



By Amanda Chen, DDS
Associate Editor

One of my favorite movies is *The Silence of the Lambs*. Its sequel where Dr. Hannibal Lecter removes the top of his victim's skull and delicately eats pieces of the brain—while the victim is still alive, seated at the table, seemingly functioning, but irreversibly diminished with every bite. It is grotesque, unsettling, and eerily resonant with my own lived experience of what we colloquially call “mommy brain.”

When I first became a mother, I did not expect that my mental clarity would feel under siege. As the months went on, I noticed that my once-sharp recall, quick reasoning, and ability to focus seemed to be consumed bit by bit. Not all at once—just like in Lecter's dinner scene—but in small, imperceptible slices, until I found myself wondering where my old brain had gone.

“Mommy brain” is an unscientific term, but emerging research suggests neurobiological changes occur in the postpartum brain of mothers. Hormonal shifts, chronic sleep deprivation, and the unrelenting demands of caregiving can alter cognitive performance, especially in memory and executive function. Yet, the cultural narrative too often reduces this to a joke, rather than acknowledging it as a legitimate subject of scientific inquiry.

My own experience became the catalyst for wanting to publish on this topic—not simply to validate what I felt, but to reframe it for other mothers who may be silently worrying

“Hormonal shifts, chronic sleep deprivation, and the unrelenting demands of caregiving can alter cognitive performance, especially in memory and executive function.”

about their cognitive decline. While Hannibal Lecter's victim was losing parts of his brain, mothers face a slower, subtler erosion—one that does not come from an external predator, but from the invisible tolls of biology, stress, and sleep loss. Ironically, during my research on this topic, I have come across a few recent scientific articles on new fathers' neurobiological and hormonal changes that accompanied fatherhood. This discovery only adds more weight to the evidence of neurological alterations of new mothers.

This is why it is worth examining “mommy brain” with the seriousness it deserves. It is not a punchline; it is a complex neurocognitive state that reflects the interplay of physical changes, environmental pressures, and societal expectations. If we can illuminate its mechanisms with more future scientific research, we can also find ways to protect and restore maternal mental health, so no mother feels like she is sitting at the table while her mind is quietly being served up, bite by bite.

In this issue, Drs. Sandretti and Rollofson wrote about their journeys through being a dental professional, business owner, mother and wife. Dr. Steinberg, a young practitioner, also share his juggling act of being a father to three young kids and a new business owner. Dr. Sajid who has gone through the earlier phase of motherhood wrote some helpful tips in managing symptoms of “mommy brain”. Lastly, I presented the neurobiological perspective of “mommy brain” and “daddy brain” to allow our readers to examine the latest scientific backings of this postpartum experience. ■

IN-PERSON LICENSURE COURSE

California Dental Practice Act and Infection Control 4 CEU, Core • \$199

Presented by Joy Brack, RDA

Friday, November 14, 2025

8:30am-12:30pm • SDDS Classroom

CDPA - This seminar reviews the DPA topics and regulations that are required for re-licensure including information and updates to the Dental Practice Act and other statutes.

Infection Control - This class outlines the essential components of your infection prevention and control program, combining Standard and Transmission-based precautions.



Where Elegance Meets Holiday Cheer

THE SDDS YEAR-END PREMIERE

Join us for SDDS' 2025 Holiday Party & Silent Auction

Thursday, December 11, 2025 | 6:00pm-9:30pm

Sutter Club, downtown Sacramento

\$150 per person | Visit www.sdds.org to learn more and register

Celebrate with us as we honor Dr. Nima Aflatooni's outstanding year as President and welcome Dr. Jeffrey Sue as our incoming President, along with the installation of the 2026 Board of Directors.

Your ticket includes a festive reception, delicious dinner, and an evening of fun!

HELP SUPPORT THE SDDS FOUNDATION

Please consider donating an auction item to help us create the most fabulous Silent Auction ever!

Your contributions make our silent auction unforgettable!

Here are some items that went for high bids in the past:

- Private chef dinner in your home
- Local artwork or hand-crafted items
- Jewelry from your favorite jeweler.
- Your favorite wines or make a wine basket.
- Sports tickets (i.e. your King's seats)
- Unique experiences

Anything you'd like to donate -
we appreciate the contributions

The best silent auctions are those where you're given the opportunity to bid on one-of-a-kind items and special experiences. If you have questions, email events@sdds.org or call SDDS at (916) 446-1227. Silent Auction donation deadline is November 21.

YOU SHOULD KNOW

MEMBER BENEFIT - HR HOTLINE AVAILABLE FOR SDDS MEMBERS

The SDDS HR Hotline is an exclusive benefit to SDDS Members. It's powered by the California Employers Association and they are ready for your call.

SDDS HR HOTLINE
FREE TO SDDS MEMBERS!
888.784.4031

2024 SALARY SURVEY
AVAILABLE - VISIT [SDDS.ORG](https://www.sdds.org)
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PAST WEBINARS AVAILABLE AS RECORDINGS

Email sdds@sdds.org to find out which courses are available as recordings.

NEW LOCATION & DATE FOR THE HOLIDAY PARTY THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2025 6:00PM-9:30PM SUTTER CLUB, DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO

The evening will be celebrating Dr. Nima Aflatooni's outstanding year as President and welcome Dr. Jeffrey Sue as our incoming President, along with the installation of the 2026 Board of Directors.

We're looking for auction items, please consider donating an auction item to help us create the most fabulous Silent Auction ever! Your contributions make our silent auction unforgettable! Here are some items that went for high bids in the past:

- Private chef dinner in your home
- Local artwork or hand-crafted items
- Jewelry from your favorite jeweler
- Your favorite wines or make a wine basket
- Sports tickets (i.e. your King's seats)
- Unique experiences

Anything you'd like to donate - we appreciate the contributions. See adjacent page for details.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS?
LET US KNOW SO WE CAN UPDATE OUR RECORDS!
EMAIL US AT SDDS@SDDS.ORG

**2026 MIDWINTER CONVENTION
& EXPO EARLY REGISTRATION**
DEADLINE: Register your team by
November 14 and save!

SFK SCREENERS NEEDED

Smiles for Kids (SFK) is looking for volunteers to screen kids at area schools in the Fall. Please contact the SDDS office at (916) 446-1227 or email smilesforkids@sdds.org if you are interested in volunteering.

MENTORING OPPORTUNITY!

We would like to invite you to consider mentoring or sponsoring a UOP or CNU student at an upcoming General Meeting. Students receive a discounted rate to attend GMs, and sponsorship is a great way to welcome them into our community and support their professional growth. If you are interested in sponsoring a dental student at any future General Meeting, please call or email the SDDS office - we'd be glad to help make the connection.

THE SDDS ONLINE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY IS ONLINE
VISIT [WWW.SDDS.ORG/CURRENT-MEMBERS/](https://www.sdds.org/current-members/)



Don't hesitate to ask.

When you need an advocate for your physical, mental or emotional health, 24/7 confidential assistance and peer-to-peer support is available.

When you don't know where to turn, there is help. CDA's Wellness Program exists to support and advocate for the mental, emotional, and physical wellness of dental professionals and their families.

Whether your wellness challenge is anxiety, depression, mental illness, physical illness, or substance dependence, we have volunteer members who can relate. They are available around the clock to offer confidential peer-to-peer support, assistance finding specialists or treatment facilities and guidance for your support network.

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confidential assistance.**

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310.487.5040

San Diego
619.275.7190





By Christy Rollofson Porrino, DDS
SDDS Member

Dr. Christy Rollofson Porrino, a Sacramento native, earned her DDS from USC in 2007 and completed a General Practice Residency at Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. She owns three family dental practices in the Sacramento area. A proud mom of two (ages 8 and 10), Christy stays active with organized dentistry as a CDA Board of Managers member and also serves Breakthrough T1D's Northern California Board.

Cavities, Calendars, and Carb Counting: *The Juggle Is Real*

Being a dentist and a mom was never going to be easy—but I definitely did not expect it to be quite this wild. My days are packed with crown preps, carb counting, PTO meetings, and making sure my daughter's insulin pump is working mid-procedure. I run two busy dental practices and have two amazing kids—now 8 and 10. Frankie, my daughter, was diagnosed with Type One Diabetes nearly five years ago, and that added a whole new layer of responsibility, fear, and sleep deprivation into our already full life.

The chaos may seem constant, but so are coffee refills and moments that make me laugh out loud and proud to be a busy mommy dentist.

The Ultimate Juggle

Dentistry is all about precision. You're working in millimeters, keeping patients comfortable, and solving problems quickly. Motherhood? That's precision too—just with way more emotions and a lot less predictability.

Then there is diabetes. Frankie's blood sugar doesn't care that I'm in the middle of a tough procedure. I check her continuous glucose monitor from my watch, even at work. Nights can mean alarms every couple of hours—juice, insulin adjustments, worry—all while knowing I have a full day of patients ahead. On those days, I stumble into work groggy and grateful for coffee, for my amazing dental team, and for muscle memory.

The Truth About Mommy Brain

"Mommy brain" gets laughed off sometimes, but it's real. The mental fog seems to be my constant companion— and there are days I truly wonder how I am doing it all. It is

not just forgetting why you walked into a room—it is carrying 1,000 mental tabs at once: the grocery list, that school project, a low glucose alert, an overdue email, staff time-off requests and someone's endodontist referral... all while trying to remember what you were saying mid-sentence.

Even after a decade of parenting, I still lose my train of thought or half-finish five things at once. Sometimes I even come back to the kitchen and find that I have left the fridge wide open. But the truth is, mommy brain is not a weakness. This kind of brain fog comes from caring deeply and doing a lot—for everyone. And honestly, I've learned to give myself grace.

The Guilt Is Real, Too

The guilt never totally goes away. If I'm late to a school event, I feel like a bad mom. If I have to reschedule a patient, I feel like I have let someone down. If I take a day off, I worry about the practice. If I don't, I worry about missing something special with my kids.

And with a child who has a chronic condition, I've had to be extra intentional about making sure my son, Nico, feels just as seen and important. It's easy for diabetes to steal the spotlight, even unintentionally. But Nico deserves my full attention too. I check in with myself constantly: Did I hear his stories today? Did I cheer him on at soccer? Does he know that his moments matter just as much?

What Helps Me Stay (Somewhat) Balanced

Balance is elusive, but I have found a few things that help me feel like I am keeping my head above water:

My Husband

I am incredibly lucky to have found a partner who gets it, and gets me. We are both self-employed, which is a huge help. He coaches soccer, handles afternoon practices, and we tag-team life as best we can. He shows up, every time—and that teamwork makes everything feel more manageable.

Our Amazing Nanny

She has been with us for 8 years, and I honestly don't know how I'd do it without her. From folding laundry to driving to practice, she is the glue that helps hold our days together—and has become a steady, loving presence in our kids' lives.

The Digital Skylight Calendar

It's our family's command center. Everyone's schedule lives there—school, work, sports practices, snacks to pack—you name it. It keeps us all (mostly) on the same page.

Outsourcing Without Guilt

I have learned to delegate. Groceries delivered? Yes, please. Housekeeper? Absolutely. My time and energy are a limited

resource, and I have learned to use it where it matters most and stopped feeling guilty for getting help where I can.

An Early Bedtime

I almost never stay up past 10:00 pm. Sleep is my sanity. I used to push through, but now I protect my rest because I'm a better mom, dentist, and human when I'm not running on empty.

Real Breaks and Real Vacations

Time off used to feel selfish. Now I know it's essential. Whether it's a staycation or a big trip, those breaks help me recharge—and my kids definitely notice when I'm actually present, not distracted and exhausted.

Still Hard, Still Worth It

Even with support, systems, and experience, this life is still hard. Some days I feel like I've got it all together. Other days, I wonder if I'm doing any of it right.

As my kids grow, so do the challenges—emotions get bigger, responsibilities shift, and the “hard” just changes shape. Meanwhile, I'm still running a business, managing my

team, taking care of patients, and trying to make it to the lacrosse practice.

Sure, I'm a little tired, occasionally forget why I walked into a room, and often eat dinner standing up—but my kids are watching. They see me juggling fillings and field trips, running on caffeine, quick reflexes, and love. Even when I'm winging it, they're learning that moms can be fierce, flexible, and full of heart. I am proud of that. I am proud of them. And even on the hardest days, I am proud of me, too.

The mom brain is real, the juggle is wild—but I'm still standing, still smiling, and somehow still making it all work. Call it chaos, call it magic... I just call it being Mom. ■



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your patients.
We look out for
your dental practice.

We're specialists, just like you. While you keep your patients healthy, we are here to help keep the financial side of your dental practice healthy. We offer fresh insight, intelligent advice, and innovative practice finance solutions:



Concierge Service



Practice Lending



Commercial Real Estate



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By Stephanie Sandretti, DDS
SDDS Member

Dr. Stephanie Sandretti graduated from UCLA School of Dentistry in 2013. She purchased her first practice in November of 2019. She now owns 4 practices in Northern California along with her husband, Dr. Matthew Sandretti, who is an orthodontist. She is a mom of two young children, an ADA Delegate, soccer coach, and mentor to aspiring pre-dental students. In her spare time, she enjoys learning to play golf and traveling with her family.

The Balancing Act: Navigating Life as a Dentist, Business Owner, and Mom

When I was asked to write this article, I figured that three months until the deadline would be more than enough time. Let's be completely honest...I'm over a week past the original deadline and just sat down to write the first draft.

As a mom to three-year-old Gianna and seven-year-old Luca, my brain is often in so many different places at once. Who is doing pick up and drop off? Did Luca take his allergy medication? Is it sharing day at school? Hopefully, the housekeepers are coming today...Oh, and that assistant called out sick at 6:00 am. Do we need a temp? What ledger did you want me to audit? I probably should do that hygiene check while I have 5 minutes, and the crown prep patient is getting numb... All these things flow through my head at the same time, all day, every day...it is absolutely exhausting.

Motherhood is a full-time job in itself. From meal planning and school runs to emotional support and bedtime stories, being a mom is about nurturing, guiding, and loving unconditionally. Enter "mom brain." "Mom brain" is a term often used to describe the forgetfulness, mental fatigue, and cognitive overload that many mothers experience. It's not just a myth—research suggests that the hormonal and neurological changes associated with motherhood, combined with chronic sleep deprivation and the constant mental juggling act, can impact memory and focus.

It happens to all moms, not just working moms. So, adding a full-time career and business ownership on top can be overwhelming. Forgetting small but important details, feeling mentally scattered when switching between professional and parental duties, and struggling to maintain the same level of sharpness and efficiency as before motherhood are just a few examples of a working mom's mental load. It is like a computer running all the time without a shutdown and a hundred windows open.

The modern world celebrates multitasking and achievement, but few roles demand as much from a single person as being a business owner, a clinical dentist, a wife, and a mom—all at once. Each of these hats, as I like to call them, carries its own weight, responsibilities, and expectations. The journey is not just about professional success; it's about managing "mom brain," juggling countless tasks, and finding fulfillment in both career and motherhood.

Wearing all the different hats requires good time management as well as emotional resilience and adaptability. The transition from dentist to business owner to mom can happen multiple times in a single day, often within the same hour. Having a good balance of all these roles means prioritizing "me" time and breaks. Here are some ways I have combated mom-brain and burnout:

1. Embrace Imperfection

Accept that you cannot do everything perfectly. Some days, the business will need more attention; on others, your children will come first. You will miss performances and soccer games and have to cancel patients when your kids are throwing up, but it'll all be OK. Give yourself permission to be human.

2. Prioritize Ruthlessly

Identify what truly matters each day. Use lists, calendars, and digital reminders to keep track of essential tasks. Delegate whenever possible—both at work and at home. Hire a nanny, hire a housekeeper, get an electronic calendar to keep track of everyone's schedules, promote someone to office manager, and train them to do tasks you don't have to do. Block your schedule to show up for your children when it matters the most.

3. Build a Support Network

Surround yourself with people who understand and support your journey. This

can include family, friends, mentors, or professional networks. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Attend professional meetings and courses. Embrace learning new skills and keep the dentistry interesting and exciting. Don't stay isolated in your practice.

4. Practice Self-Care and Relationship Care

Schedule time for yourself, even if it's just a few minutes a day. Self-care is not selfish—it's essential for long-term resilience. Do something every week for yourself. Don't forget to schedule time with your significant other, away from your kids. Do not let mom guilt set in!

5. Set Boundaries

Protect your time and energy by setting clear boundaries. Learn to say no to commitments that do not align with your priorities. This

is tough, but to be honest, saying no is so empowering. Be selfish with your time and your family time.

6. Celebrate Small Wins

Acknowledge your achievements, no matter how small. Celebrate milestones with your team and your family. Recognizing progress boosts morale and motivation. Have a friend or family member that you can call and brag to. It's OK to be proud of what you're doing and be acknowledged for it.

Amidst the chaos, there are profound joys. Being a mom and a professional is not just about surviving—it's about thriving and showing your children what's possible. Being a good role model and embodying resilience for your children is so important. Your children see firsthand what hard work, dedication, and passion look like. They learn that women can be leaders, innovators,

and caregivers all at once. They see that overcoming daily challenges teaches you the value of perseverance and adaptability. It's so fun when my kids ask me, "Mom, are you a boss?" Yes, I am, in so many different ways.

This balancing act is not for the faint of heart. It requires courage, flexibility, and an unwavering commitment to both your family and your profession. It requires a village supporting the dreams. It requires surviving each day through small wins at work and big smiles and hugs when you get home. With the right strategies and support, it is possible not just to manage, but to flourish. In the end, the greatest reward is knowing that you are paving the way for your children—not just by telling them they can achieve anything, but by showing them every single day. Our children will learn that success is not defined by perfection, but by passion, perseverance, and love. ■

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By David Steinberg, DDS
SDDS Member

Dr. David Steinberg is a children's dentist and father of three. He and his wife, Dr. Colleen Buehler Steinberg, met on the first day of dental school. David is starting his own practice, Good Tooth Kids Dental, set to open soon in the Arden area. He enjoys golfing, wrestling with his kids, and never misses a day of the NYT crossword.

The Ups and Downs of My "Daddy Brain"

When my first child was born, I didn't expect just how much it would affect my focus and memory. I'd walk into a room and forget why I was there, mix up patients' names, or stare blankly at my schedule, wondering what I was supposed to be doing next. I had heard of "mom brain," but I hadn't realized "dad brain" was a real thing, too. It may not be as commonly discussed, as dads aren't typically bearing the brunt of the early responsibilities. But we still endure the sleepless nights, shifting priorities, and an entirely new emotional load. When you're a dentist, that fog can follow you throughout your working day.

I'm a father of three: a five-year-old, a four-year-old, and a very active toddler. I'm also a children's dentist, and as of this year, I'm opening my own dental practice. There's a lot on my plate, and some might call that a recipe for burnout. While I've experienced the fog, I've also learned how to navigate it with humility and a sense of humor. I'm fortunate to have the greatest partner in the world as my wife (Dr. Colleen Buehler!), who alleviates the load tremendously for me. More importantly, Colleen has helped me see these years for what they truly are—chaotic, exhausting, and beautiful.

The job of a children's dentist is demanding, both physically and emotionally. You're working with tiny patients who often come in afraid, anxious, or just plain unwilling. You're managing the nervous energy of their parents, which can be even more intense. You're trying to create a positive experience for families in a place that many people dread. It takes patience, focus, and empathy.

By the end of a long clinical day, I'm often running out the door, racing to pick up my kids from school or daycare, hustling

to sports practice, or trying to get dinner on the table. Sometimes, I find myself with very little left in the tank. I will admit, my patience can be worn thin. After spending all day calming anxious kids and answering worried parents' questions, I don't always have the same calm energy at home. I've caught myself snapping too quickly, zoning out during bedtime stories, or staring at my phone during moments with my kids.

**Working full-time
with three young kids
at home feels like
madness, and on some
days, it is.**

But I've learned that recognizing this is the first step. Being honest with yourself about your mental and emotional state is critical. It's okay to admit that you're tired. It's okay to admit that you're overwhelmed.

I've tried to draw a clearer boundary between work and home, something like the separation of "church and state." When I'm home, I strive to be present. That means putting the phone away and mentally clocking out from work so I can show up for my family. Of course, it's not always perfect. But having that boundary in mind helps me refocus.

Working full-time with three young kids at home feels like madness, and on some days, it is. I've found that the only way to make it work is by carving out intentional time to focus on my career. That means setting my alarm a little earlier to get things

done before the house wakes up, using nap times and lunch breaks for admin tasks, and staying up after bedtime when needed. I've learned that if you don't schedule time for it, it won't happen.

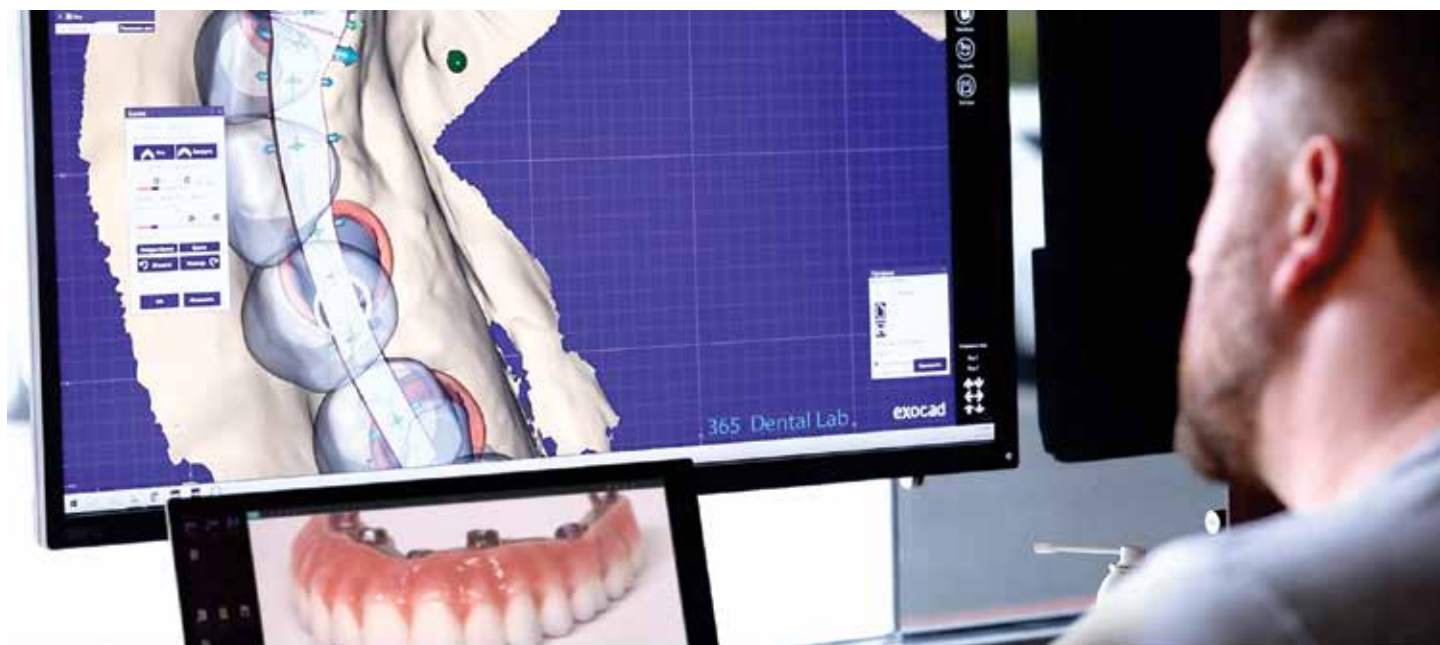
Equally important is working with my partner to create space for each other. Colleen and I have learned to give each other breaks. Whether it's an hour to go for a run, a solo grocery trip, or even a night out with friends. Parenting is a team sport, and having open communication about our needs has helped us stay sane and support each other through the chaos.

There's also the need to carve out time for yourself. As dentists, we're wired to serve others. As parents, we're conditioned to

“...while I want to build a successful career, I also want to be the kind of dad who shows up, both physically and emotionally.”

put our children first. But we can't pour from an empty cup. Whether it's reading a book, getting a workout in, or treating yourself to a massage, those little moments matter and are equally important for your energy. They refuel you so you can give your best at work and at home.

I don't have it all figured out. I still forget appointments, still rely too heavily on coffee, and still have days where the fog rolls in and everything feels overwhelming. The comedian Jim Gaffigan has a great joke about being a parent: “If you want to know what it's like to have a fourth kid, imagine you're drowning and then someone throws you a baby.” Although many of us don't have four kids, I feel like all parents can relate. But I've come to accept that this era of life is fleeting. My kids won't be this little and love me unconditionally forever. And while I want to build a successful career, I also want to be the kind of dad who shows up, both physically and emotionally. ■



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By Amanda Chen, DDS
SDDS Member

Dr. Amanda Chen graduated from Columbia Dental School and orthodontic residency in 2002. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Orthodontics. She grew up in New York City but has made California her home. She has her private practice in Gold River, Ca. In her spare time, she volunteers on various committees at SDDS and as an unofficial assistant golf coach to her teenage daughter.

Rebranding “Mommy Brain” Through the Lens of Neuroscience

While it is unclear who coined the term “Mommy Brain,” it began appearing in popular culture around the 1960s. The term describes the perceived memory lapses, forgetfulness, brain fog, and difficulty concentrating that some pregnant women or first-time mothers report experiencing. In the past 50 years, fathers’ time investment in child-rearing has tripled in the US. In European countries where an extended paid paternity leave policy is available to families, fathers’ participation in child-rearing has increased even more dramatically¹. Not until recent years, first-time fathers’ neurobiological changes have not been widely studied. However, fatherhood affects men’s brains as well.

Neuroplasticity in Women Over the Course of Pregnancy and Postpartum

Pregnancy marks a unique phase of a woman’s life where many organ systems undergo remarkable physiological adaptation to support the growth of the fetus. The maternal brain has been recognized as another organ system that displays neuroanatomic and functional changes during gestation². In a study published in the 2024 Journal of Nature Neuroscience, Paternina-Die et.al demonstrated the human brain’s neuroplasticity from late pregnancy to early postpartum. They utilized MRI scanning of 110 first-time mothers before and after pregnancy, showing reductions in cortical volume (Gray Matter Volume) and cortical thickness during gestation but increases postpartum compared to nulliparous women. Although cortical volume and thickness reduction attenuated during the postpartum period of first-time mothers, their cortical volume and thickness were still lower than control subjects. When

Paternina-Die et.al examined the seven large-scale functional neural networks in these mothers, they found lower cortical volume across all functional networks in late pregnancy. Functional networks are regions of the human cerebral cortex that are categorized based on functional connectivity⁴.

Among all the functional networks that displayed neuroanatomic changes during gestation, cortical gray matter volume reduction affected the default mode network the most³. The default mode network is one of the seven large-scale functional networks. It is an important system that regulates higher-order cognitive functions like self-perception and social cognition. This network is activated during times of introspection and deactivated during external goal-directed tasks. Pregnancy-induced changes in default mode network are thought to sustain parents’ ability to empathize with their infants⁵.

Another neural network that displays neuroanatomic modification during pregnancy is the ventral striatum (VStr) in the subcortex. The ventral striatum contains the core component of the brain’s reward system, the nucleus accumbens. A study following twenty-five first-time mothers from pre-pregnancy to postpartum found a significant right VStr volume reduction in mothers than control subjects⁶. This structural change during pregnancy is strongly associated with mothers’ responsiveness to her infants postpartum. The bigger the right VStr volume reduction, the stronger functional activation of this neural network in mothers in response to her infant’s cues. This research finding demonstrated that pregnancy hormones primed the maternal brain in preparation for motherhood.

Long-lasting Effect of Pregnancy-Induced Neuroanatomic Changes

Although the journey to motherhood entails dynamic neuroanatomic adaptations that started with cortical gray matter volume reduction and ended with an increase of cortical volume and thickness after childbirth, the question of whether gray matter volume returns to pre-pregnancy levels remains to be answered. Current literature has shown gray matter volume reduction in mothers persists between 2 to 6 years postpartum^{7,8}. What factor extends these neuroanatomic changes after waning pregnancy hormones in mothers? A neuroimaging study of twenty-five first-time mothers conducted by Martinez-Garcia et.al has provided some clues. Longitudinal MRI study of these mothers shows the typical neuroanatomic decrease and then increase in GM volume from pre-conception to postpartum as compared to nulliparous women. At the 6-year postpartum time point, most of the pregnancy-induced GM volume reductions remained. These sustained brain changes were strongly associated with measures of infant to mother attachment (maternal postnatal attachment scale- MPAS). This finding provided evidence that pregnancy-induced neuroplasticity has a long-term effect on maternal brains.

Neuroplasticity in First-time Fathers

Childcare has been a role played by mothers across all species. In mammalian species, only 5% of males demonstrated paternal involvement in their pups⁹. In humans, paternal behavior is highly variable and dependent on a few factors such as socio-cultural, individual, and historical difference^{10,11}. Many previous studies have focused on women's adaptation to motherhood, yet men have hormonal and neuroanatomic changes during the transition into fatherhood as well.

A longitudinal study of 624 single male subjects (never had a child) conducted by Gettler et.al reveals an interesting testosterone profile. Subjects with higher waking testosterone levels were more likely to become fathers than single males with lower levels. Most importantly, out of all male subjects who became fathers, those who had the most paternal involvement in childcare had lower testosterone levels than fathers who did not participate in childcare.

Among the few published studies on first-time fathers' transition into fatherhood, two articles published by Paternina-Die et.al in 2020 and 2023 demonstrated experience-driven neuroplasticity in fathers. A structural MRI study of forty first-time fathers tracking from their partners' preconception to 9 months postpartum showed significant cortical volume and thickness reductions specifically in the default mode network and visual networks when compared to childless male controls. Like first-time mothers, functional MRI studies showed that fathers activate the default mode network in response to their infant cues. This functional neural activation of the default mode network is proportionally related to the amount of time spent by fathers with their infants.

Although we need more research to reveal how fatherhood affects men, current published studies provide evidence that parenthood is a life stage that affects adults physiologically. Information from these studies can serve as a foundation for public policy on parental leave in the future.

Birth of a New Name

The term "mommy brain" has long been the sole right of mothers, regardless of the number of childbirth experiences. Current neuroimaging studies have proven that fathers also have rights to claim the term "daddy brain." While mothers' brains change during transition into motherhood is hormonally driven, the fathers' journey into fatherhood is experience-driven. Both parents' neuroplasticity in response to the birth of their infants shares more similarities than differences. In the view of neurobiology, the term parental brain will be more fitting to describe this amazing life journey of parenthood. ■

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By **Asma Sajid, DDS**
SDDS Member

Dr. Asma Sajid is a general dentist who graduated from the University of Minnesota in 2014. She runs her own private practice in Sacramento, California. A mother of two, she believes in balancing professional passion with personal joy, she brings warmth, humor, and real-life perspective to everything she does. Outside the operator, she enjoys running trails, exploring new places, and getting lost in a good book.

How to Prevent Mommy Brain

A Dentist's Guide to Navigating Postpartum Brain Fog—With Humor and Science

“Wait...Why Did I Come in Here?”

If I had a dollar for every time I opened a drawer in the lab or walked up to the patient care coordinator and immediately forgot why I was there, I'd finally be able to afford that fancy Solea I've been eyeing.

I had just started a new job after taking a long maternity break. I found myself staring blankly at a patient's chart, completely unsure why I had opened it in the first place, and that was not the only incident that happened. Sometimes I would find myself questioning if I took the cord out after the preparation was done, or was the shade an 1m1 or 1m2? And no, it wasn't because I missed my morning coffee (okay, maybe it was that too) or that we did not have a systemized process down for these procedures. It was my full-blown initiation into the foggy, fuzzy, and frustrating world of “mommy brain.”

So, What Is Mommy Brain?

“Mommy brain,” isn't just a cutesy nickname for forgetfulness—it's backed by science. In a groundbreaking 2016 study published in *Nature Neuroscience*, researchers used MRI scans to demonstrate that pregnancy can lead to significant changes in the brain's structure, particularly a reduction in gray matter in areas associated with social cognition (Hoekzema et al., 2016). This is not brain function loss but more of an optimization. Your brain diverts resources to allow for caregiving, intuition, empathy, emotional bonding, and being able to hear your child cry from three rooms away. You are essentially subconsciously always alert to your baby's needs. So, yes, while you might forget your favorite instrument's name mid-sentence, you'll definitely remember which pacifier, bottle, and blanket your baby likes.

The Fixes That Can Actually Help

Let's get one thing out of the way - there is no miracle cure for mommy brain. But there are small things that can help you clear the fog.

Sleep (Or Whatever's Left of It): I know, I know—it's tough. Between your baby's sleep schedule and your desperate need for a little “me time,” actual rest feels like a luxury. But even short naps can work magic. They help your brain reset and uplifts your mood.

Nutrition and Hydration: Postpartum depletion is real, and studies show that low levels of Omega-3s, B12, and magnesium can mess with your memory and mood. So, if avocado toast isn't your jam, grab an OTC magnesium supplement and hydrate like you just ran a 5k chasing a toddler. Your brain and body will thank you.

Sticky Notes and Reminders: Reminders like “Assistant Out” or “Send Prescription” have become the brain-saving champions. At this point, my team knows the drill—they leave me notes right on the schedule. In fact, we love our checklists so much, the whole office runs on them now. And yes, I'll admit it: I love Siri. She's my second assistant—without the scrubs, but equally lifesaving.

Brain Games and Bragging Rights: Light mental workouts like journaling, word puzzles, or a quick round of Wordle can help keep the cognitive cobwebs at bay. Wordle's become a full-blown family tradition—and yes, we share our scores at work some days too.

Delegation (Not Doing It All, Even If You Can): You don't have to do it all—and honestly, learning to not get up and do everything myself was the hardest part for a Type A dentist like myself. Let your team help. Let your spouse and family help. It makes a difference.

Fresh Air Fix: Light movement outdoors brings a welcome sense of calm and mental clarity—perfect for resetting between patients or starting the day on the right foot. Try to fit in a walk during your break or in the early morning. Just be sure to avoid exercising too late in the evening, as it may interfere with restful sleep.

Mindfulness (aka: I Rolled My Eyes—Until I Didn't): My sister-in-law kept nudging me to try meditation, and I'll admit—I low-key scoffed. I don't need that, I thought. Spoiler alert: I did. It wasn't until life cornered me into a few quiet moments that I realized how powerful they really were. So don't be me. Give it a shot. Just a few minutes a day can work wonders. You'll feel the difference—and so will the mom in you.

Get a Planner (Seriously, Just Do It): Between kids' activities, playdates, sleepless nights, meetings, and study clubs, my brain was spinning crazy. I started missing

important deadlines: License renewal, CAQH updates, DEA renewal, and the kids' pediatric appointments. That's when I finally gave in and got a planner. Even now, everything - deadlines, school spirit days, and doctor visits—gets logged. Crisis (mostly) averted.

Be Gentle with Yourself: Dentistry trains us to chase perfection, and let's be honest—we women tend to turn that dial all the way up. But one of the most humbling lessons of motherhood? Nothing is perfect, and that's perfectly okay. So, if something slips or doesn't go as planned, let it go. Celebrate the wins, be kind to yourself, and don't lose sleep over what's out of your control.

Final Thoughts (If I Remember Them)

The truth is, postpartum fog sneaks into every corner of life—even the operatory. You might forget if you finished your notes

or question if you really did review the ClinCheck or imagined yourself doing it while emptying out the diaper pail.

It's fine. We're fine.

But here's the real surprise: when I started sharing my motherhood moments with patients, the connection deepened. They opened up. They offered advice. Some even became part of my support system. Vulnerability didn't weaken the clinician in me—it humanized me. So go ahead, share your story. You'll be amazed at how many people are cheering you on—loupes, spit-ups, sleepless nights, and all. ■

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Dr. Diana Fat
and her family

Many of our members have experienced “mommy brain” firsthand, and we want to celebrate all of you who are balancing the demands of parenting and dentistry. These members shown here are just a fraction of the successful professionals and parents SDDS has in it’s membership!



Drs. Hana Rashid and Ibtisam Rashid (mother/daughter)



Dr. Christy Rollofson Porrino and her family



Dr. Julianne Digiornio and her son



Dr. Amanda Chen and her family



Drs. Kelly Giannetti and Maya Giannetti (mother/daughter)



Dr. Julianne Digiornio and her daughter



Dr. Uriel Carranza and his family



Drs. David and Colleen Steinberg with their children



Dr. Jenny Apekian and her daughter

Check Out Our RECENT EVENTS

SDDS Annual Shred Day was a Success!

The 14th annual Shred event was held at the SDDS office on September 12. It continues to be one of our favorite member benefits. We want to send a huge thank you to our many volunteers, we can't express how much we appreciate you and your hard work! Thank you to our sponsor - TDIC. We had 357 boxes of shredding and 978 lbs. of e-waste!



September General Meeting

For the past decade, the September General Meeting has been a Throwdown with multiple speakers presenting on the same topic. This year's topic was "Does CR Matter?" and we heard from three very experienced SDDS members; Drs. Bryan Judd, Peter Worth and Paul Binon shown here with Dr. Jeff Sue (second from the left). Thank you so much to everyone who came to learn from and support their fellow dentists.



September Business Forum

The September Business Forum was intimate and informative. We were pleased to have Brett LeMmon from Earned (SDDS Vendor Member) come speak to our members about Navigating Year-End Tax Planning and New Regulations. Thank you Brett and Amber for spending the evening with us, we appreciate you.



Nurse Meeting to Kick-off SFK 2025-26

The 2025-26 Smiles for Kids program year has been kicked off with our Annual School Nurse meeting. Thank you to all our partners and volunteers for spending the morning with us to prepare for a successful year serving the children in the greater Sacramento Community.



Pearls Continuing Education Course

"Pearls in Our Backyard" is a dynamic continuing education course that highlights the exceptional talent within the SDDS. Special thanks to Drs. Cliff Chow, Devan Dalla, Nisha Manila, and Brandon Martin for sharing practical clinical insights and real-world case pearls drawn from their daily practices.



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October General Meeting

Thank you so much to Dr. Shakalpi Pendurkar for speaking at the October General Meeting. Dr. Pendurkar is the State Dental Director and she shared the California Health Plan.

SDDS' October Member Mixer

SDDS' Member Mixer on October 16th at Zócalo in Folsom was a success! A huge shout-out to our amazing dentists for showing up, connecting, and bringing such amazing energy to the evening. A special thank you to Dental and Medical Counsel, PC and MUN CPAs for sponsoring this event.



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Speaker Lineup



Jenell Bell, Associate Analyst

Regulatory Compliance & Employment
California Dental Association

- Ask the Expert: Regulatory Compliance

Eric Blasingame, DDS, MS

- Soft Tissue Management Around Implants
- Predictable Solutions to Periodontal Problems

Leslie Canham, CDA, RDA, CDIPC, CSP

Leslie Canham & Associates, LLC

- California Dental Practice Act
- Infection Control

Jefferson Clark, DDS, MS, FACP

- Digital Dentures: Principles for Success

Gary Dougan, DDS, MPH

- Keeping Up with Recent Dental Code Changes
- Secrets of Smoother Claims Processing: Common Reasons Your Claims are Denied

Marc Geissberger, DDS, MA

- Cutting Edge Techniques and Materials to Maximize Success of Posterior Composite Resin Restorations
- Treatment Planning, Designing and Delivering Complex Restorative and Multidisciplinary Cases

Jennifer Goss, DDS

- Treatment Planning Extraction vs. Saving Teeth ("shuck it or f**k it"?)

Melinda Heryford, MBA

Melinda Heryford Consulting

- From Stuck to Aligned: What Every Dental Leader Needs to Know to Grow Without the Grind
- Right People. Right Seats. Real Results: The New Rules of Hiring & Retention in Dentistry

Dan Johnson

Chief Operating Officer; Acre Wood Dental

- Branding Strategies to Attract More New Patients

Rodney Johnston, MBA, CMA

OMNI Practice Group

- Selling to a DSO - The Good, The Bad & the Ugly

Katrina Klein, RDH, CEAS, CPT

- The Hand Bone's Connected to the Neck Bone, Instrumentation and Biomechanics for the Dental Hygienist
- Eyes, Ears and Explanations: Hygiene Assessments That Influence Comprehensive Care Without Selling

Thomas Lenhart, DMD

- Key Factors to Effectively Manage Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office
- Recognition and Management of Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office

Ali Nattah

Owner; Business PC Support, Inc.

- Key Step-by-Step Cybersecurity & Data Protection Techniques for Dental Practices

Ali Oromchian, JD

Dental & Medical Counsel, PC

- HR Essentials: How to Protect Your Practice and Avoid Legal Minefields

Anna Pattison, RDH, MS

- Advanced Instrumentation Techniques for Tenacious Calculus Removal
- Don't Get Burned – Keys to Avoid and Remove Burnished Calculus

Ashley Reich, RDA

Workforce Development Program Specialist, California Dental Association

- Streamline & Shine: Optimizing Inventory and Equipment Management

Loeta Robles, DDS and Brooke Edgar, RDH

- Tethered Oral Tissues in Infancy and Pediatrics: Early Diagnosis for Lifelong Oral Health
- Tethered Oral Tissues in Adolescents and Adults: Functional and Structural Consequences

Debbie Seidel-Bittke, RDH, BS

- Unleash Your Hygiene Superpowers: Ignite a Revolution in Oral Health
- Powerful Steps to Reduce Cancellations

Colby Smith, DDS, MAGD

- Thriving Extended Functions Dental Assistants for Thriving Dental Practices

Sara Stratton, NTP, ONC, ACDM-ACS

- Fueling Healthy Smiles: Nutrition's Role in Oral and Systemic Health

Jonathan Szymanowski, DMD, MMSc

- There is Air Up There!

Kenneth Tittle, DDS

- Biology, Technology, and Healing: Managing Dental Trauma and Root Resorption
- Minimizing the Heartbreak of Split Teeth and Fractures

Pinelopi Xenoudi, DDS, MS, MHA

- Light the Beam: Laser Dentistry Across the Spectrum

Nathan Yang, DDS

- Dental Photography for the Modern Practice
- Dental Materials for Your Practice

Andrew Young, DDS

- Responsibilities and Requirements of Prescribing Schedule II Opioid Drugs
- TMD Overview

Doug Young, DDS, EdD, MS, MBA

- Minimally Invasive Dentistry at the Tooth Level (SDF, GIC, and SMART)
- Treating Caries Chemically...WTF? (Without The Filling)

Richard Young, DDS

- Posterior Composites—21st Century Techniques for Clinical Success
- Anterior Composites - Modern Approaches to Age Old Problems-Black Triangles, Diastema Closures, and More

“

What an AWESOME MidWinter Convention! Our SDDS Committee is SENSATIONAL. If you have not attended, or attend infrequently, I encourage you to attend!

— Elizabeth Harmon, DDS (2025 attendee)

”





Holiday Giving... Do You Have the Spirit?

The Foundation is dear to our hearts in Sacramento. Our Foundation continues to grow through the generosity of our donors and members. This is the time of year for remembrance and recognition. I am asking you to consider a donation to the Foundation in lieu of the other gifts that you give to your friends, family and peers. Each time I receive a Spirit of Giving card it sits on my desk long after the holidays are over and I appreciate the generous thoughts and gesture even more than a gift of chocolates or baked goods. Most of us don't need the sweets during the

holidays and you can think of the Spirit of Giving as the low carb, gluten free, diabetic friendly gift that keeps on giving. It's effect goes well beyond the individuals who give and receive. The lives of many in our community are impacted in positive ways by your contributions. Thanks to all of you in advance who decide to take this opportunity to make the heart of our dental society grow even larger.

Thanks for the support,



By Viren Patel, DDS
Foundation Past President



What You Do Makes a Difference



"The gift I have been given goes far beyond simply fixing my smile - it is essentially a second chance to enjoy life, a fresh start."

- Melissa Gandy
(work done by Dr. Robert Daby)



20% of SDDS Members Participate in SFK!

"Sir Enamel fights the Sugar Bugs ...always a crowd pleaser in our elementary schools."

- SCUSD School Nurse

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Volunteer OPPORTUNITIES

Ways to volunteer and support the SDDS Foundation:

Become a member of the Foundation –
it's only \$75 per year

Donate to the programs of the Foundation –
donations help provide screening supplies,
toothbrushes and fund the puppet shows

Smiles for Kids Day – February 7, 2026 –
Opportunities include:

- Host an SFK site
- Adopt a child, post SFK Day
- Volunteer to be a specialty
provider for adopt-a-child
- Volunteer to screen kids at schools

To volunteer, Contact: SDDS office
916.446.1227 • smilesforkids@sdds.org

Smiles for Big Kids is ongoing all year long –
we need volunteers to adopt the BIG kids too
(especially vets and the elderly)

Volunteers Needed: Dentists willing to
“adopt” patients for immediate/emergency needs
in their office.

To volunteer, Contact: SDDS office
916.446.1227 • sdds@sdds.org

Willow Dental Clinic

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information. You can check out their website
here: www.willowclinic.org/services/dental

CCMP (Coalition for Concerned Medical Professionals)

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Dental Assistants and Hygienists.

To volunteer, Contact:
916.925.9379 • ccmp.pa@juno.com

Everyone for Veterans

To volunteer, Contact: SDDS office
916.446.1227 • sdds@sdds.org
everyoneforveterans.org/for-dentists.html



By **Craig Alpha, DDS**
2025 Secretary

Board Meeting Highlights

September 2, 2025, at the SDDS Office

The SDDS Board of Directors met on September 2, 2025, at the SDDS office. In attendance were Drs. Nima Aflatooni, Lisa Dobak, Chirag Vaid, Michael Payne, Kart Raghuraman, Andrea Cervantes, Carl Hillendahl, Craig Alpha, Jeffery Sue, Diana Fat, Cherag Sarkari, Volki Felahy, Rosemary Wu, and student representatives Dr. Brandon Azali (CNU Student), Dr. Resha Shah (UOP Student), and guests: Alison Sandman, Legal Counsel (CDA), Dr. Lindsey Robinson, Board Member (CDA), and Executive Director Caroll Badgley

President Dr. Nima Aflatooni called the meeting to order and welcomed the guests and new student board representatives. The agenda and consent items, including May 2025 minutes and July financials, were approved.

CDA/ADA Update

Guest Dr. Lindsey Robinson, CDA Board of Directors, provided an informative update on both CDA and ADA developments.

She reported that ADA's national membership market share is currently at 54%, while CDA continues to perform above the national average, maintaining one of the strongest market shares among state dental associations. Although there has been a slight decline, CDA remains focused on engagement and retention, especially among mid-career dentists (6–11 years in practice) a demographic identified as the most at risk for non-renewal.

Dr. Robinson also explained that CDA has transitioned from calendar-year renewals to anniversary-date renewals, a change designed to create a more flexible and member-centric experience. ADA is currently testing this same renewal model through a three-year pilot program in partnership with CDA to assess its impact on member retention.

She gave an overview of ADA's financial standing, noting that reserves had declined from \$200 million to \$38 million in recent years due to technology investments (notably the Fonteva system), research initiatives, and past operating deficits. However, ADA reserves have since rebounded to approximately \$150

million, largely due to property sales, though leadership has committed to preserving those funds as building reserves.

In the area of legislative advocacy, she shared updates on several key bills and propositions that CDA is actively monitoring and engaging on, including Proposition 56, AB 371, SB 386, and SB 351. She highlighted CDA's strong advocacy presence, supported by both state and federal lobbyists, and reiterated the organization's commitment to protecting the dental profession and promoting access to oral health care.

Student representatives then shared updates from their respective schools: Dr. Resha Shah (UOP), beginning her second and final year, and Dr. Brandon Azali (CNU), reporting successful accreditation, growing patient volume, and continued progress in their new Broadway facility.

Dr. Aflatooni announced that the SDDS Holiday Party will be held on Thursday, December 11, at The Sutter Club.

Secretary's Report

Dr. Alpha reported SDDS's current market share at 78.4%, with growth expected in the coming months as new graduates join and membership outreach continues. Engagement and attendance at SDDS events remain strong.

Treasurer's Report

Dr. Sue reported on the finances. Confirming that the organization is financially sound and in order.

The Board approved the 2025 401 (k) safe harbor match and 457(f) annuity contribution and authorized a financial audit, the first since 2019. The Cathy Levering Fund currently holds \$71,923.

Program and Event Highlights

- The Ice Cream Social brought together over 70 members, students, and some new and familiar faces.
- The New Member Dinner at the Old Spaghetti Factory hosted 21

new members, with Dr. Cervantes representing the SDDS Board.

- The GM/DMD Program has nearly 80 participants, with the goal of reaching 100.
- The Next Level Leadership Reception is set for October 8, and the next Member Mixer will be held on October 16 at Zocalo's in Folsom.

Board of Component Representatives

Dr. Felahy discussed a proposed resolution requiring that anyone submitting a resolution be a full dues-paying member. He announced his plan to step down from the Board of Component Representatives after his current term, but will remain active in SDDS and the SDDS Foundation.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Caroll Badgley shared updates from her recent attendance at the ADA Conference in Chicago, where she attended sessions on membership development, wellness programs, AI applications in association management, and social media strategy.

She also highlighted several staff milestones:

- Jessica – celebrated 10 years with SDDS
- Anne – retiring later this year
- Sofia – receiving the Hero's Award from the Center for Oral Health

The 2026 MidWinter Convention planning is well underway, with 57 booths sold, \$76,600 in sponsorships secured, and a goal of \$115,000 in total sponsorship revenue. Attendance is projected at 828, including 225 dentists and 603 staff members.

Next Meeting

The next SDDS Board of Directors meeting will be held on November 4, 2025, at the SDDS office.

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Religious Accommodations in California

By Mari Bradford; California Employers Association
(SDDS Vendor Member)

Q. *Our office will be closed in observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. An employee asked for an extra day off for a different religious holiday. Do I have to give them an extra day off? Do I have to pay them when they take another day off for their own religious holiday observance?*

A. California employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations for employees' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices, including observance of religious holidays. Under laws such as the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers must make a good-faith effort to adjust work schedules or policies unless doing so would cause an undue hardship.

What Accommodations Are Required?

Common accommodations include allowing flexible scheduling or shift swaps so that the employee can observe their own religious holidays that may not be recognized by the company. For example, an employee may request time off for Yom Kippur, Eid al-Fitr, Diwali, or other observed holidays during the year. Employers should engage in an interactive process to determine a workable solution.

Employers should handle these requests consistently and without discrimination, focusing on whether the accommodation can be made without significantly disrupting operations. Clearly written policies that outline procedures for requesting religious accommodation help promote fairness and legal compliance.

What About Additional Holiday Pay?

Employers are not required to pay additional holiday pay, but they can allow the employee to use accrued and available vacation or unpaid leave.

By supporting employees' diverse faith practices, employers not only meet their legal obligations but also foster a more inclusive and respectful workplace culture. ■

If you have any questions on holiday pay, or any other HR issues, give us a call on the SDDS HR Hotline at 888-784-4031, and we will be happy to help!

A Note from Carol Badgley, SDDS Executive Director

As dental professionals and business owners, it's important to foster a respectful and inclusive workplace. Being mindful of employees' religious holidays, beyond the widely recognized ones like Christmas or Easter, shows genuine care and cultural awareness. When possible, accommodate requests for time off or reschedule meetings that conflict with observances.

Some less familiar holidays to keep in mind include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Jewish), Diwali (Hindu), Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha (Muslim), Lunar New Year (Buddhist and East Asian traditions), and Nowruz (Persian New Year). A simple conversation or calendar note can go a long way in supporting a positive and inclusive team culture.

2024 Salary Survey Available
visit sdds.org or email sdds@sdds.org to order

The Long Game: How a Lunch Line Led to a Legacy



By **William Gilbert, DDS**
SDDS Member

I didn't plan to meet my successor in a high school career center. And I certainly didn't expect to hand off my dental practice to a kid I met over zipper fobs and pamphlets. But that's exactly what happened—and it's a story worth telling. It's a story about a local kid making good, and it's a story that never would have happened if I were not a lifelong CDA member.

next class, and I went back to my office, never expecting our paths to cross again.

Forward to 2012. I'm volunteering at a CDA Cares event at Cal Expo, waiting in line for lunch and guess who rolls up behind me in line? Yep, sure enough, it was Eli from Granite Bay High School, and now he was an undergraduate at UC Irvine, fixing to apply

of pretty good stuff, and I was finding this out in circumstances other than a 30-minute job interview. As he approached graduation from dental school, I knew: This is the guy. This is who I want to carry forward the kind of care I'd spent decades cultivating.

Beginning in August 2018, Eli joined me two days a week, and worked another job three days a week in a corporate practice setting, which was a very different environment compared to my practice. This experience helped him solidify in his mind that my style of practice was what he wanted for himself and his future. We gradually traded places—he ramped up, I ramped down. We were transparent with staff and patients from the start, and when escrow closed in January 2023, the practice was his, and the transition was seamless. I stayed on as his associate for 18 months, then retired completely in June 2024.

I'm proud of the elegant transition Eli and I created. These days, practice transitions are often abrupt, secretive, and jarring. I promised my staff years ago I wouldn't do that to them—and I kept that promise.

Also, I am grateful for my lifelong California Dental Association membership. It occurs to me that if I were not a CDA member, I would not have attended the CDA Cares event in 2012, and thus would not have been waiting in line for lunch at that fateful moment when Eli and I re-connected. CDA offers countless tangible benefits, but for me, the human connections—the mentorships, the friendships, the serendipities—were the most profound. My exit from dentistry, in abundance and grace, was one of those uncatalogued membership benefits, and certainly not the least among them.

If you care to meet or know more about Dr. Elias Almaz, look him up at <http://granitebaydentist.com/> - He's the real deal. ■



The story begins in 2007, just past the midpoint of my years as a dentist. I was invited to the career center in my local high school to meet with students who were interested in careers in the dental field. I showed up with the full suite of outreach resources from CDA: The Orange Chair Diaries, replete with video, pamphlets, pencils, and zipper fobs. Yes, zipper fobs. One student showed up. Just one. A skinny sophomore named Eli. Eli was already fairly dialed into dentistry as a career choice, and he was seeking to gather as many perspectives as he could. We had a glorious chat for 90 minutes, then he went on to his

for admission to dental schools. We enjoyed lunch together, then he assisted me chairside the rest of the day. We decided to keep track of each other, so he came out to my office to visit and shadow a few times, and we did several more volunteer events together, with CDA Cares and with California Care Force.

As years went by, and I observed Eli progressing through his dental curriculum at UC San Francisco, I realized what a fine dentist and what a fine human being he was becoming. I saw integrity, warmth, and a deep sense of purpose. He was clearly made



By Idean Rezaei
CNU Dental Student (D4)

Originally from Florida, Idean is now in his fourth year of dental school. His future career goals after school include working as an associate for a private practice or a DSO while also taking CE courses in implants. Outside of dentistry Idean enjoys most outdoor activities, and is looking forward to continuing to enjoy all that California has to offer.

Beyond Dental School: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND OUR FIRST JOBS

Being in my 4th year of dental school, I am beginning to learn and evaluate job offers almost like I am evaluating periodontal conditions. This article will go into what new graduates have come to expect from their future place of employment, especially as it relates to what we have been taught over the past 4 years.

It is no secret that the first couple years will be filled with as much education, if not more than dental school. No doubt that workflow will be radically different from what we are used to in school so mentorship will be paramount for a smooth transition. This is not to say that we need hand holding, but rather structure. Mentorship plans for the first 6-12 months include shadow days, weekly case reviews, competency milestones (e.g. endo on anteriors> premolars> select molars).

Another green flag when it comes to potential employers will be a realistic production ramp with transparent metrics. These metrics include new patient flow, payer mix, average production per patient, and assistant to doctor ratio. Clearly defined ramps like how many patients to expect per day depending on where we are in our first year of employment. It is also prudent to explain how emergencies, no shows, and same day add ons are handled.

Speaking of green flags, transparent discussion on compensation will be the biggest factor for many new graduates. It is already common for a guaranteed base pay during the ramp period that transitions

to percentage of collections, with clearly defined adjustments (write-offs, remakes, discounts). Clear communication on lab fees, CE stipends, DEA license reimbursement, relocation support, malpractice (including tail), retirement match, and health benefits. Plainly disclose sign on bonuses clawbacks. W-2 vs 1099 is becoming a more relevant discussion point, especially in California.

Schools are now teaching digital dentistry, and many new grads have come to expect these conveniences such as intraoral scanners, CAD/CAM, quality photography, 3D printing access to be able to be more efficient. For practicing dentists that are evolving their tech stack, new grads can be the ones to help lead it.

Lastly, culture and feedback can seem like vague factors but remain most important. Monthly calibration meetings, chart audits with constructive feedback, and a path to partnership or equity can be instrumental in retaining new grads. If this is not possible then open communication will be paramount to attract long term associates who will come to expect growth and respect.

This can seem like a long list from new grads that do not have the experience to make these demands. But with ever evolving trends in dentistry as well as a robust job market, mentorship, transparency, and proper support remain the cornerstone of any good job offer. ■

Mentoring Opportunity!

We would like to invite you to consider mentoring or sponsoring a UOP or CNU student at an upcoming General Meeting. Students receive a discounted rate to attend GMs, and sponsorship is a great way to welcome them into our community and support their professional growth. If you are interested in sponsoring a dental student at any future General Meeting, please call or email the SDDS office - we'd be glad to help make the connection.



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YOU THE DENTIST, THE BUSINESS OWNER

The Supply Ordering Mistakes Costing Your Practice Thousands

Submitted by **Torch Dental** (SDDS Vendor Member)

Dental practices are under increasing pressure to control overhead while delivering quality care. One often-overlooked source of lost revenue is inefficient supply ordering. A recent white paper reveals how outdated procurement processes—called “silent profit leaks”—can quietly drain thousands of dollars annually¹.

This article highlights the paper’s findings and offers actionable steps to save money, reduce burnout, and improve efficiency by modernizing how your practice orders supplies.

Outdated Ordering Drains Time and Money

Many practices still rely on emails, phone calls, catalogs, and spreadsheets to manage supplies¹. These methods feel familiar—but they’re far from efficient. Each order takes an average of 44 minutes of staff time². For busy or multi-provider offices, this adds up quickly, pulling staff away from patients and production.

Meanwhile, overhead costs are growing faster than revenue. Between 2013 and 2022, dental practice revenue rose only 2.2%, while expenses jumped **7.7%**³. The ADA’s Health Policy Institute lists rising overhead as one of the top three challenges practices will face in 2025³.

Fragmented Systems, Opaque Pricing

Many teams manage multiple vendors and systems, with no way to easily compare costs or track inventory⁴. This lack of visibility can lead to overpaying by 17% or more for routine supplies⁴.

Inaccurate inventory tracking also causes duplicate orders, overstocking, and critical shortages—each of which costs time, money, and impacts patient care⁵.

The Human Cost: Burnout and Turnover

Outdated supply processes don’t just waste money—they contribute to burnout. Hygienists, assistants, and front office staff are often pulled from core responsibilities to manage orders. This adds stress and lowers job satisfaction.

According to the 2025 DentalPost Salary Survey, 35% of dental professionals are considering a job change, citing inefficiency as a major factor⁶. Front office staff—often tasked with ordering—face particularly high turnover⁶.

A Smarter, Modern Solution

The good news? Digital platforms offer a streamlined approach. Practices using cloud-based systems benefit from:

- Transparent pricing⁷
- Real-time inventory tracking⁵
- Automated reordering⁷
- Centralized vendor management⁴
- Team-wide coordination tools⁷
- This shift doesn’t just reduce stress—it saves money and improves practice performance.

Real Practices, Real Results

Smilen Dental Group cut ordering time by 50% after consolidating 30 vendors into one platform—freeing up hours for clinical care⁸.

Garden City Dental Center saved 22% annually—about \$27,200—by adopting a more efficient, transparent ordering system⁹.

YOU ARE A DENTIST. You’ve been to school, taken your Boards and settled into practice. End of story?

Not quite. Are you up to speed on tax laws, potential deductions and other important business issues?

In this monthly column, we will offer information pertinent to you, the dentist as the business owner.

**MEMBER
BENEFIT!**

Is Your Practice Leaking Profit?

Ask yourself:

- Does your team spend hours managing supply orders?
- Are you confident you’re paying the best prices?
- Do you frequently run out of or overstock supplies?
- Is your current process frustrating or outdated?

If yes, it’s time to reevaluate your supply system. Tools like Torch Dental’s “Rate My Practice” calculator can estimate savings and highlight specific improvement areas¹⁰.

Final Thoughts

Silent profit leaks are avoidable. By updating your supply process, your practice can cut costs, boost morale, and improve care.

Whether you’re looking to grow, save money, or reduce stress, modernizing supply ordering may be the most impactful move you make this year. ■

References

1. The Silent Profit Leaks in Your Dental Supply Ordering—and How to Stop Them, p. 4.
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4. Ibid., pp. 6, 9.
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6. DentalPost 2025 Salary Survey, cited in white paper, p. 8.
7. Ibid., pp. 11–12.
8. Torch Dental case study, “Smilen Dental Group,” cited in white paper, p. 13.
9. Torch Dental case study, “Garden City Dental Center,” cited in white paper, p. 16.
10. Torch Dental “Rate My Practice” tool, described in white paper, pp. 17–18.



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Step Up. Get Involved. Make a Difference.

Be part of SDDS in 2026! Volunteer for a committee, task force, or workgroup and help keep SDDS strong, innovative, and member-focused. Your involvement makes us better, builds our impact, and keeps organized dentistry thriving. Are you interested in serving on one of SDDS' committees in 2026?

If you'd like to network with fellow members of SDDS, meet new people, and do great things for the SDDS – we'd love for you to join us. Most committees meet only 3-4 times a year and the committees come up with ideas, programs and events that enhance the Strategic Plan.

Here are the committees that would love to have you participate:

- Membership and Engagement Committee
- Continuing Education Committee

- Leadership Development Committee
- CPR Committee (be an instructor)
- Social Media Advisory Committee
- *Nugget* Editorial Advisory Committee
- Pre-Dental Club (CSUS) Advisory Committee
- Put me anywhere!

If you're interested in serving on a committee, complete the enclosed form and get it back to us. It can be emailed, mailed or faxed to the SDDS office.

2025 SDDS Committees Schedule

Leadership

Board of Directors
Nov 4

Executive Committee
Dec 5

Other

SDDS Caucus
Nov 3

CDA House of Delegates
Nov 21-22

Check the next *Nugget* for the 2026 Committees Schedule



Are You Interested in Joining the *Nugget* Editorial Committee?

We're always on the lookout for fresh ideas and new members to help curate future issues of *the Nugget*. You don't have to be a writer to be on the committee. We meet twice a year and would love to have you join us, just complete the enclosed form and we'll invite you to the next meeting.

Want to get more involved with SDDS?

Your chance is now! Use the committee and volunteer signup form included in this issue and we'll make sure to find the right place for you!



Leadership Reception

October 8, 2025

What an inspiring night! In early October, a fantastic group of leaders and future leaders came together at the SDDS office for our Leadership Reception. The energy was contagious and everyone left feeling reconnected, motivated, and proud to be part of organized dentistry.



TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

(as of 10/2/25)

2,067

RETENTION
RATE: 94%

ENGAGEMENT RATE:
79% active
58% retired

MARKET SHARE: 78.6%

TOTAL ACTIVE MEMBERS:
1,403

TOTAL RETIRED
MEMBERS: 359

TOTAL DUAL
MEMBERS: 10

TOTAL AFFILIATE
MEMBERS: 1

TOTAL STUDENT
MEMBERS: 237

TOTAL CURRENT
APPLICANTS: 0

TOTAL DHP
MEMBERS: 57

TOTAL NEW
MEMBERS FOR 2025: 101

Member Update

Nov/Dec
2025

Welcome to our newest members

Amin Abdallah, DDS

Orthodontics

- UCSF School of Dentistry in 2016 and NV Roseman University in 2019 for Orthodontics specialty.

Garrett Barnett, DDS

General Practice

- UOP Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in 2024.
- Practices at Davis Community Clinic in Davis.

Kendall Block, DDS

General Practice

- University of Utah School of Dentistry in 2025.
- Current Post Grad Student at Veteran Affairs Northern California Health Care System.

Madeline Connick-Baldwin DDS

General Practice

- University of Michigan in 2018.
- Practices at Jarrett Thomas, DDS in South Lake Tahoe.

Horacio Donjuan Velez, DDS

General Practice

- Loma Linda University in 2022.
- Practices at Jackson Creek Dental Group.

Asaad Farooqi, DMD

General Practice

- New Grad from Temple University School of Dentistry.
- Practices at Natomas Crossing in Sacramento.

Shruti Kanda, DMD

General Practice

- New Grad from University of New England.
- Practices at Land Park Modern Dentistry in Sacramento

Mark Kovar, DMD

General Practice

- Western University of Health Sciences.

Brett Martin, DDS

Pediatric Dentistry

- UCLA School of Dentistry in 2013 and UCSF in 2016 for Pediatric Specialty.
- Practices at Rocklin Pediatric Dentistry

Lincoln Nguyen, DDS

Periodontics

- UCSF School of Dentistry in 2021 and University of Alabama in 2024 for Periodontics Specialty.
- Practices at Creekside Endodontics in Roseville.

Farhad Tahmoresi, DMD

Endodontics

- Nova Southeastern University in 2025 for Specialty of Endodontics.

Congratulations to Our New Retired Members!

Forrest Boozer, DDS

Janice Work, DDS

In Memoriam

Dr. Robert Church

Dr. Robert Church passed away September 29, 2025. He graduated from dental school in 1995 from Creighton University. Dr. Church was a member for over 55 years and he had a successful dental practice in South Sacramento for nearly forty years.

Dr. James Peck

Dr. James Peck passed away September 17, 2025. He graduated from dental school in 1961 from University of Nebraska Medical Center and then from UCSF School of Dentistry in 1971 with his specialty of Orthodontics. Dr. Peck was the SDDS President in 1994 and was an active member for over 60 years.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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DESCO, Inc. (SDDS Vendor Member) on the opening of their new showroom and having been in business for 40 years! We are so proud to call them not only SDDS Vendor Members (since 2012), but friends as well. The open house they put on had some fun games, yummy food and great conversation. Thanks so much for inviting SDDS to join in the celebration. **(1)**



Frank Sanchez with NEO Dental Laboratory (SDDS Vendor Member). Frank walked his daughter Alexia (Lexi) down the aisle at the wedding celebration on August 23, 2025 at The Willow Ballroom in Hood, California. Shortly after, while on their honeymoon in Europe, Lexi and her husband, Brandon Nubla, visited the Vatican and were selected to receive a blessing (Sposi Novelli) from Pope Leo XIV. **(2)**



Sofia Gutierrez... On September 18th, SDDS celebrated a very special moment! Our very own Sofia, SDDS/SDDF Foundation Projects & Membership, received the Cathy Levering Health Hero Award from the Center for Oral Health at their Gala Event at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Sacramento. As Cathy Levering said, "Sofia is tireless, committed, and she has such an amazing heart." In her role, Sofia works closely with SDDS member dentists who volunteer their time and expertise to provide vital dental services to children and adults in need throughout our community. Joining to celebrate were SDDS leaders: Dr. Aflatooni (President), Dr. Sue (President-Elect), Dr. Hillendahl (Foundation President), Dr. Delmore (Foundation Board Member), along with SDDS staff. We are so proud of you, Sofia! **(3)**



Anne Rogerson on retirement. It's hard to put into words how much Anne has meant to the Sacramento District Dental Society. After nearly ten years of dedicated service, Anne will be retiring at the end of December, leaving behind a legacy of knowledge, kindness, and commitment that has touched every corner of SDDS. Since my arrival as Executive Director in April, Anne has been an incredible source of guidance, from helping me learn the names of our members to knowing exactly where that elusive file lives on the shared drive. If I could grow to so deeply appreciate her in just seven months, you can only imagine how hard it will be for the staff who have worked alongside her for years. Anne will spend the next couple of months training and sharing her invaluable wisdom before heading off to Australia to visit family and begin her next adventure. While we wish her all the love, joy, and relaxation this new chapter brings, her contributions to SDDS will never be forgotten. Please join us in celebrating Anne! Stop by the office to say goodbye or send her a note or email to share your well-wishes. **(4)**



California Northstate University's D2 Class of 2028 on their White Coat Ceremony! This ceremony celebrates their transition to clinicians as they begin to take the first steps into patient interactions. **(5)**

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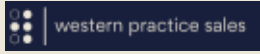
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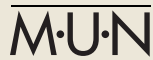
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ENDODONTIST: Seeking a Endodontist to join our professional dental team. We have been serving Sacramento for over 25 years and Voted Top Dentist by Sacramento Magazine. If you like to experience the many facets of dentistry, our practice consists of general, periodontist, endodontist, and orthodontist this practice is for you. For more information about us, please visit DrAmyWoo.com. 1-2/24

Kids Care Dental & Orthodontics seeks doctors to join our teams in the greater Sacramento and greater Stockton areas. We believe when kids grow up enjoying the dentist, healthy teeth and gums will follow. As the key drivers of our mission—to give every kid a healthy smile—our dentists, orthodontists and oral surgeons exhibit a genuine love of children and teeth. A good fit for our culture means you are also honest, playful, lighthearted, approachable, hardworking, and compassionate. Patients love us... come find out why! Send your CV to drtalent@kidscaredental.com. 6-7/17

WELLSPACE HEALTH ORGANIZATION (an FQHC) is taking applications for fill-in/part-time/full-time dentists. Send your resume/CV to eljohnson@wellspacehealth.org. 1/15

Kids Care Dental & Orthodontics seeks orthodontists to join our teams in the greater Sacramento and greater Stockton areas. We believe when kids grow up enjoying the dentist, healthy teeth and gums will follow. As the key drivers of our mission—to give every kid a healthy smile—our dentists, orthodontists and oral surgeons exhibit a genuine love of children and teeth. A good fit for our culture means you are also honest, playful, lighthearted, approachable, hardworking, and compassionate. Patients love us... come find out why! Send your CV to drtalent@kidscaredental.com. 6-7/17

FOR SALE/LEASE

Practice for sale: Roseville, CA. 4 days a week. Private & insurance pts. 3-Ops, CBCT, Oral Scanner. \$251,000. Contact hleemartinez@gmail.com if interested. 11-12/25c

Price Reduced \$649,900 Madison Avenue Dental Office for sale; Roseville New Construction/ Sacramento Orthodontic/Dental Offices for Lease; Ranga Pathak, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Gold, DRE01364897; Tel: (916) 201-9247; Email: ranga.pathak@norgold.com. 8-9/21

SACRAMENTO DENTAL COMPLEX has one 3 unit suite which is equipped for immediate occupancy. Two other suites total 1630 sq. ft which can be remodeled to your personal office design with generous tenant improvements. 2525 K Street. Please call for details: (916) 539-1516. 10/11

FOR SALE/LEASE

FOR LEASE - Carmichael CA: Large Dental Practice Bldg. 10 potential dental rooms, plus more office, recent complete renovation, 4200 sqft. single floor, ample parking. Call Loren Ransier DRE 02120991, (916) 439-3588. 11-12/25

Practice for sale in Mt. Shasta, CA. Refers out most endo, 3rds, ortho, some implants. FFS/ no insurance contracts, very busy and well known in the community. High visibility location in town, shares building with medical practice, real estate is also available. OpenDental, XDR, Sirona CBCT, Ergonomic Products delivery systems. 7-digit production and collections on 4d/week, asking 650K. Great schools and community, live where others vacation. Contact practice owner at 530-925-5900. 9-10/25

NEW Online "This Week" Classified Advertising for SDDS Members/Vendor Members only

SDDS' weekly "This Week at SDDS" eblast reaches our entire membership every Sunday at 8:00am, with a circulation of 2,200 and an impressive open rate of 67% – contract due by noon on the Wednesday prior to the Sunday e-blast.

Guidelines for Online Classified Advertising:

- Members must place and pay for the ad themselves
- Non-Vendor Member companies and representatives cannot be listed in the ad
- Contact info in the ad must be direct to member/member's office, non-member emails and phone numbers are prohibited

Visit www.sdds.org/publications-media/advertise/ to advertise

SDDS member dentists can place one Nugget classified ad

FOR FREE!

MEMBER
BENEFIT!

Selling your practice? Need an associate? Have office space to lease? SDDS member dentists get one complimentary, professionally related classified ad per year (30 word maximum). For more information on placing a classified ad, please call the SDDS office at 916.446.1227 or visit www.sdds.org/publications-media/advertise/



TOOTHSTOCK

PEACE, LOVE & CE

2026 MIDWINTER ATTENDEE REGISTRATION

2026 MidWinter Convention & Expo | Presented by the Sacramento District Dental Society

To submit, either scan/email to events@sdds.org OR fax (916.447.3818) OR mail your registration form OR register online at www.sdds.org.

ONE REGISTRATION FORM PER ATTENDEE Please print clearly. This information will be used to print name badges.

Attendee Name: _____ Title/Degree: _____

Member Dentist's Name: _____ ADA #: _____

Office Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Attendee Email: _____

**Attendee's email required - convention correspondence and handout link will be sent to this email (not main office email)*

Team Special - Register 6 staff, get the 7th FREE!

FEES (circle the rate for the above attendee)	EARLY (on/before 11/14)	REGULAR (on/before 3/4)	LATE (begins 3/5)
Dentists (ADA Members)	\$425	\$475	\$500
Dentists (ADA Members) — ONE DAY ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Friday ONLY	\$375	\$400	\$450
Auxiliary (ADA Member)	\$345	\$375	\$400
Auxiliary (ADA Member) — ONE DAY ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Friday ONLY	\$310	\$335	\$375
SDDS DHP Members*	\$325	\$350	\$375
SDDS DHP Members* — ONE DAY ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Friday ONLY	\$275	\$300	\$325
Dentists (Non-ADA Members)	\$900	\$950	\$999
Dentists (Non-ADA Members) — ONE DAY ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Friday ONLY	\$750	\$850	\$899
Auxiliary (Non-ADA Member)	\$450	\$500	\$550
Auxiliary (Non-ADA Member) — ONE DAY ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday ONLY <input type="checkbox"/> Friday ONLY	\$375	\$400	\$425

Refund/Cancellation Policy

Cancellations received in writing by February 26, 2026, will receive a full refund less \$25 per registrant processing fee. Cancellations received after this date are nonrefundable, but substitutions will be allowed. There will be no refunds for "No Shows" or for registrations made after this date.



PAYMENT METHOD: ☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Credit Card **TOTAL: \$** _____

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Cardholder Name: _____ 3-digit Security Code: _____

Billing Address: _____

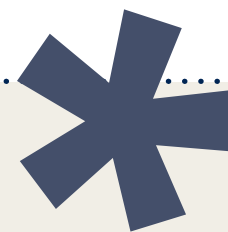
***DHP stands for Dental Health Professional (auxiliary staff).** This membership is designed for dental office team members and offers discounted event and CE pricing for all DHP members. Contact sdds@sdds.org for more information on becoming an SDDS DHP member.

By registering for this event, I agree to the terms and conditions of this event. Visit sdds.org for full details. Attendees agree that if you register for the convention at the member price and your membership is not renewed by the date of the convention, you will be required to pay the balance for the advertised non-member rate. To ensure you retain the member pricing, please make sure to renew your membership before March 26, 2026.

Please make checks payable to Sacramento District Dental Society (SDDS)
2035 Hurley Way, Ste 200 • Sacramento, CA 95825 • 916.446.1227 ph • 916.447.3818 fx • www.sdds.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SDDS CALENDAR OF EVENTS



NOVEMBER

- 7** CPR – AHA BLS Blended Learning Skills Testing, 3 Time Sessions
Friday • 8–8:45am,
9–9:45am, 10–10:45am
SDDS Classroom • 3 CEU, Core
- 11** General Membership CE Meeting
Tooth Be Told! Drilling Down on Office Based Anesthesia
Samuel Seiden, MD, FAAP

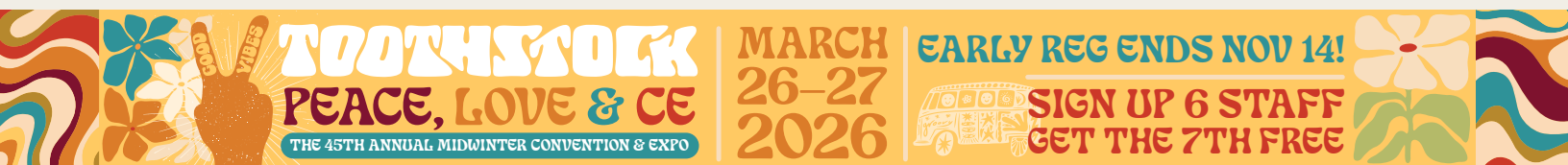
- 14** Licensure Renewal
California Dental Practice Act and Infection Control
Joy Brack, RDA
Friday • 8:30am–12:30pm
SDDS Classroom • 4 CEU, Core

DECEMBER

- 4** Polar Express Train Ride
Thursday • 5:45-8pm
Central Pacific Passenger Station

- 10** Webinar
Harassment Prevention for Employees and Supervisors
California Employers Association (CEA) - VM
Wednesday • Webinar
11am–12pm • Employees • 1 CEU, Core
11am–1pm • Supervisors • 2 CEU, Core
- 11** Holiday Party
Thursday • 6-9:30pm • Sutter Club

For full details and to sign up for courses online, visit: www.sdds.org



Upcoming GENERAL MEETING

NOV 11 Tooth Be Told! Drilling Down on Office Based Anesthesia

Tuesday • 3 CEU, Core • \$99 regular (begins 10/29)
\$109 late (begins 11/9)

Presented by Samuel C. Seiden, MD

This presentation will discuss the multifaceted components of performing office based general anesthesia.

Objectives:

- Understand safety requirements for performing office based anesthesia including necessary equipment from dental office, patient selection criteria, team members required, and roles and responsibilities of team members.
- Review market factors affecting office based anesthesia including public versus private payors and office anesthesia versus scheduling at hospital or surgery centers.
- Discuss some common challenges that arise in office based anesthesia.



5:45–9:00pm: Hilton Sacramento Arden West
(2200 Harvard Street, Sac)