



President’s Post

David McCarley, DDS, TDA President

TDA leadership attended the ADA Washington Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, in late May 2014 to advocate for our patients and profession. It is quite the eye opener to experience national politics, in which partisan politics are the norm. The process is very slow compared to Texas and involves several more steps of approval and conformation before action.

The TDA was well represented and fielded the usual questions about how Texas enacts legislation in just 120 days every 2 years. It makes me proud of our process in Texas and stands as a testament to our founding fathers. Several topics were discussed regarding upcoming legislation on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, including:

Action for Dental Health Act 2014 (HR 4395)

This bill funds 2 federal grant programs. The first would provide \$10 million annually to qualified state and local organizations offering free dental services for underserved populations. The second program would provide \$10 million annually to organizations implementing Action for Dental Health initiatives that reduce the barriers to care.

Medicaid RAC Audits

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) were asked to examine the Medicaid RAC (Recovery Audit Contractor) programs that have been implemented across the states and assess the impact such audits have had on providers enrolled in the program and subsequent patient access to services.

Student Loan Interest Deduction Act of 2013 (HR 1527)

This bill will assist in easing the burden of student loan debt by significantly increasing the deduction allowed for student loan interest and making the deduction available to all regardless of income. It was assigned in April 2013 to a congressional committee for consideration before sending it to the House or Senate.

Additionally, the Federal Student Loan Refinancing Act was also assigned in May 2013 to a congressional committee for consideration before sending it to the House or Senate. President Obama also signed an executive order in June 2014 calling for expansion of a program to lower monthly federal student loan payments.

All of this legislation is very promising and could help the access to care and student debt problems. We can only hope that our legislators in the 113th US Congress who are currently in session can be as responsive and effective as their Texas counterparts. ■

MEET YOUR STAFF



Donna Cortez is the TDA’s program manager. She manages the peer review program, the ethics and judicial program, and the third-party resolution program. She staffs the Council on Peer Review, which reviews and resolves problems or misunderstandings regarding dental treatment. Peer review exists for the benefit of the patient and the dentist as an alternative to civil litigation and serves as a confidential means of resolving complaints. Donna also staffs the Council on Dental Economics, which lately has been very busy serving as a resource in community oral health issues, which include oral health planning, preventive dentistry, nutrition, and fluoridation.



Where did you grow up? I grew up in Corpus Christi, which will always be home. Between Austin and Corpus, I am really not sure where I spend the most of my time. When people ask me where I live, I usually say somewhere on I-35/I-37 southbound!

What is one thing about you that might surprise people? People are always surprised at the fact that I have an almost 30-year-old son. I actually have 3 wonderful sons, Andrew, Jacob, and Nathan, all of whom I am extremely proud. They help keep the miles on my car high and the balance in my bank account low!

What is your favorite thing about the job? Definitely the customer service, both internally and externally. I enjoy working with the TDA leadership, my council chairs, the public, and of course our wonderful staff. I hear many people say, “I could never listen to complaints all day!” But, it doesn’t really bother me. Many people just want someone to listen. If my listening can make a difference, then I’m happy to do so.

Where did you work before TDA? Customer service roles have always seem to end up being part of my job descriptions. Before coming to TDA in 2001, I worked with TDA Director of Membership Lee Ann Johnson at the Texas State Teachers Association. And, I was also previously employed by Texas A&M University at the Art Museum of South Texas. My work in associations and non-profit positions have definitely been my most meaningful learning experiences.

Why did you decide to come to the Texas Dental Association? Both times, coming to TDA was a great opportunity for me. This second time was a more difficult choice because it meant leaving my home and family and moving back to Austin, but it was an opportunity I couldn’t pass up. Thankfully, being a previous TDA employee left me with lasting relationships that made the transition easier. ■

TDA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



TDA Vice President Jerry J. Hopson, DDS, rode his Harley Davidson from Bonham to Colorado to visit the Garden of the Gods, the Royal Gorge, and the Great Sand Dunes.

Jerry J. Hopson, DDS, Bonham

He rides a Fat Boy. He wears leathers. He’s a Weekend Warrior.

Jerry J. Hopson, DDS, of Bonham is a dentist by day, biker by night ... or at least on the weekends. He rides a 1993 Harley Davidson Fat Boy when he’s not driving his 1976 GMC truck, and he says being king of the road is exhilarating.

“I always wanted to ride,” Dr Hopson says. “My parents, of course, didn’t want me to.” So, after taking a motorcycle safety riding class in 2000 with his wife and some local friends, he bought himself a beautiful blue Harley with lots of chrome and just the right amount of power and prestige. As an initial member, he belongs to the “Booger Holler Scooters and Street Cars Riding Club.”

Dr Hopson graduated from Texas A&M University Baylor College of Dentistry in 1978 and started his general dentistry practice in Bonham. He is a vice president on the TDA Board of Directors. With his wife, Deborah, they have one daughter, Morgan who is an accomplished violinist and a graduate of Texas Christian University.

Deborah also has her motorcycle license and prefers to ride her own bike, but occasionally will accompany Dr Hopson. They have ridden the hill country ride together in Austin. He says the best thing about motorcycling is the ride itself: “The scenery, the outdoors, wind in your face, and a clear mind.”

He’s attended the Republic of Texas (ROT) Biker Rally in Austin 4 times. It’s the largest “turnstile” motorcycle rally in the country, and tens of thousands of motorcyclists descend on the city. The most recent ROT Rally wrapped up in June, but Dr Hopson couldn’t attend as it coincided with a TDA Board meeting. “It’s loud, it’s rowdy, there’s lots of chrome,” he says, laughing. “You can’t help but think about how much all of those bikes cost.”

Dr Hopson is not the only TDA dentist-turned-biker. In fact, a hill country ride is being coordinated to occur at the American Dental Association (ADA) annual session in San Antonio in October with TDA President Dr David McCarley of McKinney, former ADA and TDA President Dr John Findley of Plano, former TDA Board member Dr Larry Herwig of Dallas, and TDA Delegate Dr Art Nelson of McKinney.

“There are a lot of logistics to getting the bikes down there,” he says. “I enjoy riding in a group rather than by myself. People see and hear you coming. Also, it’s safer.”

He puts the brakes on motorcyclist stereotypes, as he doesn’t fit the mold of a tough biker. “You never know who that person is on the motorcycle,” he says, recalling an encounter at a dental meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona.

“These 3 guys looked rough — they’d ridden all day wearing their boots, leathers, and do-rags as they entered our hotel. We were concerned about getting in their way. When they came down later to dinner, cleaned up and dressed in their civilian clothes, turns out one was a banker, one a pharmacist, and one a surgeon.”

It shows that motorcycling appeals to all walks of life — whether it’s the machine’s guttural and distinctive growl, its strength and power, or the connection between the rider and the environment. As the biker’s mantra goes, “Four wheels move the body. Two wheels move the soul.”



Dr Hopson tends to his bike during a ride to Colorado a couple of years ago.



This recurring section highlights the lives of TDA members outside of the office. If you have an interesting story about yourself, if you are working on a project that your peers might find interesting, or if you have a hobby that keeps you busy, please contact TDA Managing Editor Nicole Scott, nicole@tda.org, 512-443-3675.