

2010 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The following is a report of activities of the executive director and staff on behalf of the South Dakota Dental Association since the close of the 2009 SDDA Annual Session:

Advocacy - Our major legislative achievement this year was the passage of a bill to preclude insurance companies from setting the amount a dentist can charge for a service not covered by a patient's dental insurance plan. The adult dental Medicaid program was funded for next year, but there were no increases for provider reimbursements. We participated in the Legislature's summer study on Medicaid reimbursements. The consensus is that rates should be increased, but more state revenue will be required to fund the increases.

Dental Auxiliaries – We are now in our fourth year of having dental auxiliary staff as allied members of the SDDA. In 2009 we had more than 500 allied members.

Office Administration – The Association's finances continue to be in good condition. We completed 2009 with a surplus of \$8,500. Our permanent reserves stand at approximately \$305,000, which represents well over half a year's operating budget. The funds are diversely invested, per our investment policy, and experience modest growth each year.

South Dakota Dental Foundation – The SDDF has continued to grow in its activities. The Foundation's endowment fund has cash investments of over \$277,000. The Board has begun to increase the level of disbursements from the fund. A total of \$24,500 of contributions were made from the endowment fund in 2009.

Member Communication – Our major communication pieces consist of quarterly issues of our newsletter - *Dentistry in South Dakota*; monthly distribution of an electronic piece called *e-news*; and the website, including a "Members Only" section. On a daily basis the staff and I respond to dozens of requests from members and their staff. Most of these requests involve compliance with laws and regulations, continuing education, peer review, insurance, patient issues and practice management. We proactively inform our members about emerging issues and regulations. This communication comes via the newsletter, web site, e-news and CE offerings. In addition to responding to member requests, I work to be proactive in communicating with SDDA members by attending the fall and spring meetings of the four district component societies in South Dakota. Communication with the House of Delegates, Trustees and Executive Committee is now done via email.

More than 70 percent of our members responded to a member survey this year. The results of the survey will be used by the Board of Trustees to make decisions regarding the direction of the SDDA.

Dental Work Force – The number of dentists practicing in South Dakota continues to hover in the neighborhood of 380. This is a dramatic increase from 10 years ago when the number of dentists practicing in the state was 305. A dental work force plan developed by the Board of Trustees and adopted by the 2001 House of Delegates set us on a course to recruit students into the profession. The plan has yielded the desired results. We are now on the cusp of a significant number of

retirements and it is likely that we will begin to see the overall number of dentists in the state begin to decline slightly over the course of several years. There are five dentists participating in the State's Tuition Reimbursement Program. This is the maximum number allowed by the State. The SDDA's on-line placement system, that allows dentists seeking to practice in the state to view a list of practice opportunities placed by our members, continues to see significant activity with 50 seekers and 42 opportunities listed on the service. Additionally, we maintain a database of dental school and pre-dental students interested in practicing in South Dakota and work closely with students intending to practice in the state. Several students spent a portion of their summer in South Dakota as participants in the state's Dental Externship Program. The students worked in private practice, on the Care Mobile and at community health centers. This was the third year for the program.

Prevention and Education – We concluded the tobacco cessation education project this year. Through that project, 45 dental practices throughout the state received on-site tobacco cessation training. The SDDA contracted with six hygienists to be trainers and provide the in-office workshops. The project was funded through a grant from the SD Department of Health.

Access to Dental Care – The SDDA is still deeply involved in the effort to address "access to care" issues through our leadership in the South Dakota Oral Health Coalition. The coalition was formed in 2002 and we have led the group since that time. Access to dental care for children on Medicaid has improved greatly over the past seven years. Thirty-eight percent of children accessed a dentist in 2009 compared to only 27 percent in 2002.

This is our fourth year of administering the Donated Dental Services Program in South Dakota. Approximately 10 hours of Brenda's time is dedicated to the program each week. We are compensated for her time, and our other expenses, through the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped. There is a long waiting list for patients who seek help through the DDS program.

We continue to administer the Sunshyne Smiles Program, a state-wide program that assists in providing orthodontic treatment to deserving children who would not otherwise receive care. Each year, approximately 20 children begin orthodontic treatment with the assistance of this program. There are approximately 70 children currently in the program. Sunshyne Smiles is a program of the South Dakota Dental Foundation, but it is administered by the SDDA staff.

The past year has been very productive. The staff and I enjoyed the opportunity to represent and work for the South Dakota Dental Association.



Paul Knecht
Executive Director