

Report No.	10	New <input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute <input type="checkbox"/>	Amendment <input type="checkbox"/>
Submitted By:	Council on Membership and Communications			
Date Submitted:	April 21, 2026	Reference Committee <input type="checkbox"/>	Direct to House <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Total Financial Implication:	\$ none			
Amount One-time	\$ none	Amount On-going	Approx.	

Report of the Council on Membership and Communications

1 The Council continues to meet regularly to address the various matters affecting
2 membership recruitment and retention. We work closely with the ADA Council on
3 Membership, as well as with the component executive directors, to coordinate activities
4 throughout the tripartite.

5
6 **Council Leadership - Chair Appointment:** The Council voted unanimously to
7 recommend Dr. Christopher Calnon of the Seventh District Dental Society to incoming
8 NYSDA President Dr. Amarilis Jacobo for consideration for appointment to the position
9 of Council Chair from June 2026 to June 2027. If approved, this will be Dr. Calnon's
10 second term.

11
12 **NYSDA New Dentist Committee:** The NYSDA New Dentist Committee (NDC) continues
13 to meet quarterly. Key initiatives include supporting increased resident outreach by
14 developing webinars and resources focused on membership benefits important to
15 residents and early-career dentists. Topics include student loan refinancing, associate
16 employment contracts, and Q&A with the NDC panel. To date, the resident webinars have
17 generated 222 membership applications, providing NYSDA with valuable updated
18 member contact information and new members.

19
20 The NDC has come to a consensus to support the PGY-1 requirement for NYS dental
21 licensure.

22
23 **ADA Early Career Discount Resolution:** The Council discussed the proposed draft of
24 the Early Career Dues Discount Resolution of the ADA 8th District. Given that the ADA
25 Membership Council convened on the same day as the NYSDA Membership Council, the
26 Council elected to defer further discussion of this matter until the ADA Membership
27 Council had reached a decision. In the interim, NYSDA staff reinforced the option of
28 financial hardship dues waivers to the Council and to local staff to continue to share with
29 their young members. The Council will call for a special meeting following the decision of
30 the ADA Membership Council.

31
32 The NYSDA Membership Department reported to the Council that, despite a 50%
33 discount, the second-year-out dentists were ~25% of the total 2026 non-renewal
34 members at the time of the March 20 meeting. This further enforces the viewpoint that a
35 discount on dues alone is not enough. The value must be understood to justify the cost.

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37 **NYSDA Membership & Communications Updates:** The NYSDA Membership Team
38 reported to the Council that, although they continue to struggle with the
39 Salesforce/Fonteva database, there has been enough improvement to get the 2026 dues
40 bills out on schedule. Issues persist with the ADA's Universal Membership Application
41 (UMA), including an unclear initial landing page and subsequent login page for non-
42 members. The NYSDA Membership Team has received calls from non-members
43 requiring assistance with filling out the UMA. Mr. Peter Lacijan, NYSDA Membership
44 Director, reported that the dues quotes have been more accurate.

45

46 Mr. Lacijan reported that as of 12/31/2025, the 2025 membership year was the worst
47 renewal year for NYSDA, with a total net loss of 365 members. Mr. Lacijan & Ms. Heather
48 Relation, NYSDA Director of Membership Outreach and Engagement, offered the Council
49 reasons that potentially contributed to the loss of members: 1) no recruitment in last
50 quarter of 2024 due to launch of Salesforce/Fonteva; 2) delayed 2025 billing; 3) only three
51 (3) statements sent versus the typical five (5) statements; 4) potential login issues onto
52 new system; 5) the ADA's transparency of ADA financial loss.

53

54 Ms. Relation reported that the NYSDA Membership Department is working closely with
55 the NYSDA Director of Marketing and Communications, Ms. Kasey Bennett, on
56 messaging in an effort to reinstate 2025 non-renewal members. including a non-renewal
57 survey. Ms. Relation separated the 673 non-renewals by district and distributed the lists
58 to each district to support the NYSDA outreach efforts.

59

60 The Council was updated on 2026 recruitment, retention, and renewal efforts, supported
61 by visual presentations, including strengthening NYSDA's connections with dental
62 residency programs and supporting early-career dentists with tailored resources, such as
63 updating the New Dentist Survival Guide Series.

64

65 As the NYSDA Membership Concierge, Ms. Relation introduced the Council to a new
66 initiative to expand upon the "Personalized Pathways Program," which are 1:1 Member
67 Benefit Review sessions. She will work directly with residency faculty and NYSDA/local
68 dental society leaders to hold virtual webinars for groups of residents, highlighting the
69 importance of organized dentistry. The goal is to expand the reach beyond individual
70 sessions and to book more 1:1 sessions from the group webinars.

71

72 The Council will build a relationship with NYSDA Support Services (NSS) to ensure that
73 the work of both groups does not interfere or overlap. NSS will explore endorsement
74 opportunities for practice owners to offer to their staff.

75

76 **Life Member Discount:** Mr. Lacijan presented the Council with figures showing the net
77 revenue loss if the NYSDA reinstates a discount on Life membership dues at various
78 percentages. Ms. Relation explained how removal of the Life Member discount has
79 effectively increased requests for membership dues waivers. The removal of the Life
80 Member discount began in the 2021 membership year, with the ADA's promise of Life

81 Member discounts on other ADA services. Beyond the 2021 membership year, no further
82 Life Member discounts were offered.

83
84 The NYSDA Membership Department does not recommend reinstating a Life Member
85 discount on dues. They do recommend that the ADA reinstate a discount on goods and
86 services to satisfy their initial promise, that local dental societies continue to share their
87 Life member discounts with NYSDA to promote, and that NYSDA explore potential
88 discounts on non-dues revenue benefits.

89
90 The NYSDA Membership Department would also welcome the reinstatement of the 25%
91 and 75% dues waiver discount options to offer membership on a case-by-case basis.

92
93 **Health Insurance Options:** Dr. Geoffrey Gamache, NYSDA Board of Trustees Liaison,
94 provided the Council with a one-page document, prepared by NYSDA Executive Director
95 Michael Herrmann, highlighting why NYSDA cannot offer group health insurance to
96 members. The NYSDA Board of Trustees is considering introducing NFP as a new
97 NYSDA-endorsed partner to offer health insurance via a Professional Employer
98 Organization (PEO).

99
100 The Council discussed an alternative pathway to health insurance via Associate
101 membership with the Eighth District Dental Society. Mr. John Craig, Eighth District Dental
102 Society (EDDS) Executive Director, will explore this option with the EDDS health
103 insurance provider and will report back to the Council with an update. Dr. Eugene Porcelli,
104 Nassau County Dental Society (NCDS) Executive Director, informed the Council that the
105 NCDS offers a Medicare supplement plan that is available to NCDS Associate members.

106
107 Dr. Christopher Calnon, NYSDA Council on Membership and Communications Chair,
108 suggested that the NYS Insurance Law can be changed and offered an alternative
109 lobbying option by way of a coalition-based initiative with other NYS professional
110 associations. NYSDA employs Brown & Weinraub for lobbying services, who also serve
111 many other professional associations. The Council expressed interest in reaching out to
112 Brown & Weinraub to determine the interest of other professional associations, but.
113 Ultimately, decided to explore Associate membership first before introducing a resolution
114 to the NYSDA House of Delegates.

115
116 **Membership Decline Root Cause Analysis:** Dr. Calnon asked all Council members to
117 complete a Membership Decline Root Cause Analysis survey prior to the September 2025
118 meeting. Members were asked to provide their generation and their perceived top three
119 (3) reasons for membership loss. The Council and guests participated in an in-person
120 exercise, carried out by Dr. Calnon, to determine the Council's consensus for the root
121 cause of membership loss, which was determined to be "unclear benefits."

122
123 The Council was asked to break out into groups by generation and to explore the benefits
124 most important to their generation. The generational groups presented their findings to
125 the full Council. The goal is to use these findings to help build future NYSDA programs.

126

127 During the March 2026 meeting, Ms. Relation provided the Council with a comprehensive
128 spreadsheet outlining the desired membership benefits from each generation developed
129 during the September 2025 meeting, including links to all current ADA and NYSDA
130 benefits. The goals are to 1) highlight the benefits that already exist but may not be well-
131 known; and 2) review the existing benefits to determine if they are meeting the wants and
132 needs of the membership.

133
134 **Benefits Beyond Practice Ownership:** Ms. Relation introduced TicketsAtWork.com as
135 a potential membership benefit for all members, regardless of practice modality. Dr.
136 Calnon and Ms. Relation suggested local district leadership and staff explore partnerships
137 with local businesses – i.e., restaurants, car washes, country clubs, local hot spots – to
138 offer a discount for members on their goods and services. The goal is to offset the cost
139 of dues with savings on what members are paying for in their everyday lives.

140
141 **AI Chatbot:** Ms. Relation introduced the concept of implementing an AI chatbot on the
142 NYSDA website. The goal is to ensure that members have access 24/7 to their
143 membership questions and can navigate NYSDA content on the website more easily.
144 Betty.AI and Futr are two options presented to the NYSDA Board of Trustees. Dr.
145 Gamache informed the Council that the NYSDA Board of Trustees is in favor of
146 implementing a chatbot on the NYSDA website and will continue to look at options for the
147 best fit. The chatbot will be a closed-loop system featuring only NYSDA content. The
148 Council was shown the features and cost comparison between Betty.AI and Futr.

149
150 **NYSDA Marketing and Communications Update:** Ms. Kasey Bennett, NYSDA Director
151 of Marketing and Communications, highlighted to the Council all the promotional pieces
152 – both physical and digital – she has developed in-house, therefore saving the Association
153 the cost of outsourcing graphic design. She highlighted all new recruitment and retention
154 campaigns, including new promotions, such as “Early Bird Get the Perks,” a NYSDA
155 postcard for all renewing members, banner ads, and social media posts, with the goal of
156 attracting new members and keeping members engaged.

157
158 Ms. Bennett showed the Council all the new advocacy marketing materials she created,
159 including 2025 legislative wins and 2026 goals. The goal is to educate and inform
160 members as the year progresses.

161
162 Ms. Bennett said 2025 was a great year for media relations. NYSDA has partnered with
163 CBS, NY Times, Capital Pressroom, PBS, Newsday, Dentistry Today, and more. Topics
164 include fluoride, dental workforce, and oral health education.

165
166 Social media engagement in 2025 grew considerably and impressively. Ms. Bennett told
167 the Council NYSDA Facebook page views on posts were 828.5K and link clicks were up
168 3,100%. The NYSDA Instagram account also had impressive engagement, with 200.1K
169 views and link clicks up 284.1%. A single “NYSDA Member Benefits Guide & NYSDA
170 Benefits At-A-Glance” post had 371.9K views.