

Report No.	22	New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Substitute <input type="checkbox"/>	Amendment <input type="checkbox"/>
Submitted By:	Dr. Maurice Edwards, President-Elect			
Date Submitted:	May 13, 2025	Reference Committee <input type="checkbox"/>	Direct to House <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Total Financial Implication:	\$ none			
Amount One-time	\$ none	Amount On-going	\$ none	

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

Almost a year ago I remember being sworn in as your President Elect of the New York State Dental Association. I'm sure we all agree that so much has happened and so much has changed since that time. Shortly into the beginning of the new administration, the association was forced to deal with the premature termination of our Executive Director. Although as a board we have every right to decide to evaluate the current path of our association, discuss the merits and the shortcomings of the work being done, deliberate and then make decisions about course correction, we as a board spent the next 10 months split into two separate factions with very little ability to come to a common consensus in the effort to do the work of the association for our membership. In fact, instead of the split with the board getting smaller as time went on, we as a board hurt the association more by making the split in the board spill out and become a split in the state based on which side of the conflict your Trustee sided with, dictated the narrative that was generated and reported back to your component.

Ultimately, the result of this battle was the generation of two reports. One done by an Independent Certified Parliamentarian and a second more costly Investigation of the actions of the members of the board who orchestrated the termination of the Executive Director as well as the actions performed by the entire Board because of the termination. In summary, from both reports, the board had to learn how to function together, the association lost a good deal of money because of all the actions taken to mend the relationships as well as the working of the Board with itself and Leadership with its membership. A positive result of the termination was the recommendation from the legal investigation that provided a series of recommendations that an assigned committee of the board, led by myself, will work on generating policies and procedures to help dictate how certain actions of the board will be handled in the future to prevent those actions or decisions which could affect the association in such a dramatic fashion from being decided in such a quick manner without adequate deliberation about the financial implications, the possible negative and positive repercussions and to make sure the board performs their fiduciary responsibilities to the best of their abilities if there follow through with that particular action.

31 After all the growing pains of last year's battles, this I believe could be the best
32 and most consequential positive change to come out of the actions of the board.
33 NYSDA has also faced other challenges in the past year. We have lost several staff
34 members to attrition and finding better opportunities and we wish them all the best. I
35 also feel that we could possibly lose more due to a feeling of loss of job security and
36 lack of appreciation by leadership and some membership. So, as I prepare to take on
37 the role as President of our association, one of my main objectives will be to establish a
38 better relationship with our fabulous staff where they know my ask is for them to be the
39 best professionals that I know them to be. I want them to have the freedom to do their
40 job without micromanaging to allow them to work and generate to the fullest of their
41 potential with the hope that their hard work generates ideas of membership value that
42 both NYSDA and the ADA have been searching for in order to combat the declining
43 trend that Organized Dentistry has been experiencing for more years than we care to
44 count.

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46 This touches on the biggest problem facing every membership driven
47 organization. How do we show our membership and potential new members the value
48 and importance of belonging to Organized Dentistry? We understand that the biggest
49 value of Organized Dentistry is that we advocate for the profession. However, that is
50 done for the profession even if you aren't a member. The question we have to answer
51 is, what are the top 8-10 things the State Association can provide for our membership
52 that would make us invaluable? Health Insurance would be the greatest draw if the
53 State Legislature would allow NYSDA to act as a corporation/employee and offer group
54 insurance, that alone would probably have every dentist, and their staff join for that
55 benefit. Loan forgiveness, for every new and recent graduate, NYSDA has been
56 aggressively working and lobbying on different versions of loan forgiveness as a
57 member benefit while trying to tackle the problem of access to care in the middle portion
58 of the state, where millions of underserved poor members of our society live, known for
59 being dental desserts. Several other legislative priorities that we have been working on
60 over the past year tackles Non-covered Services, Medical Loss Ratio, Electronic Credit
61 Card Payments, Increasing Low Medicaid Reimbursement Fees, Workforce Shortage,
62 Attacks On Fluoridated Water Supplies, Scope of Practice, Dentist Giving Vaccines and
63 the Connection of Oral Health with Overall Health. Even during what some see as the
64 dysfunctional times of your association, NYSDA and Leadership have been working on
65 the concerns and suggestions voiced by our membership.

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67 As I mentioned already, the last year has been an extremely challenging time for
68 Leadership, but we have not stopped trying to do the business of the association as
69 best as we could under the circumstances. So not only did we have an unusual number
70 of in-person meetings, but we also doubled that number with the number of virtual
71 meetings the Board of Trustees participated in, in order to accomplish the business of
72 the Board while trying to rectify the dysfunctional relationship that the board wanted to
73 correct. In conjunction with all of these meetings, I participated in the Visionary
74 Lobbying Efforts led by our Director of Governmental Affairs, Ms. Briana McNamee.
75 These efforts consisted of multiple virtual and in person Lobby Days and Events where

76 your NYSDA Leadership was put in face-to-face contact with the legislators who we are
77 working with to champion our legislative priorities.
78

79 I would be remiss if I didn't mention all of the hard work given daily by all of the
80 NYSDA Staff. Mr. Michael Hermann, who stepped up into the interim ED position and
81 then was later made the permanent ED of NYSDA after which, Michael worked hard to
82 replace positions in the staff that was vacated for a myriad of reasons. Instead of
83 costing the association possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars hiring new staff to
84 replace or fill the missing staff positions, Michael was able to combine and or fill these
85 important vacated positions by looking within current staff and promoting from within to
86 make the association stronger while allowing existing staff to prove their talent, their
87 abilities and their ambition. Not surprisingly we saw that not only did we make good
88 hires originally, but we have a gold mine of talented staff from which we can relocate
89 into bigger and stronger positions as needed by the association. The amount of work
90 placed on staff like Michael, Patty, Jenna, Briana, Stacy, Mary, Lance, Heather,
91 Amanda, Isabella, Kasey, Jeanne, Jacqueline, Lauren, Peter, Chelsea, Jocelyn, Lynne
92 and Brenda.
93

94 The last but not longest of my responsibilities of this year was my President-Elect
95 visitations to the different components. I was fortunate enough to visit with twelve of the
96 13 components. The first of which was my home component, First District, New York
97 County. After which I visited 2nd District, Bronx County, 8th District, Suffolk County,
98 Fifth district, Nassau County, 3rd District, Ninth District, Queens and 7th District both
99 Virtually and my final visitation was with 4th District Dental Society up in Saratoga on
100 May 8th. Every one of the visits was enjoyable, interesting and important. Why because
101 it showed the different makeup of membership from around the state. Our interests
102 were different; our issues were different and our needs and expectations from the state
103 were different. The visits gave me the opportunity to tell each component what I wished
104 to do. Everyone found out that my main objective is to make everything done at the
105 state level as transparent as possible.
106

107 I will be the head steward for one year. It is my hope that every decision made
108 during my years will reflect the fact that I want membership to know even if they don't
109 agree with the final decision, it was made from a place where I felt it was made in an
110 effort to be in the best interest of the association. With all the issues at the national level
111 with the ADA, the last thing I want is for membership to feel every action taken was
112 made in a Silo without input of thought from all segments of the State membership.
113 Although I appreciate that there is a representative from each component, in the most
114 recent years there seems to be representations who put their ambitions and wishes
115 above that of the State or even their Components, and this behavior has led to more
116 fighting among the board rather than collaboration and trust. My hope is that the board
117 experiences a few years of harmony and focuses on the work of the association. With
118 all of this in mind, I plan to have my leadership style be one where we all feel equal and
119 comfortable speaking our opinions, disagree, compromise and in the end come to a
120 decision which we all feel has the best interest of the association at heart. The best way

121 we will accomplish this is by putting the past few years of turmoil behind us now that
122 what has been done is done, And always moving forward while trying to give each other
123 grace and the benefit of the doubt that it's a new day and a new administration and we
124 all will be judged on our current actions and the success of the agenda we put forth on
125 day one!
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127 I'm looking forward to a successful and rewarding year and invite all of you to join me in
128 making
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