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Submitted By:	Dr. Maurice Edwards, President			
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Amount One-time	\$ none	Amount On-going	\$ none	

## Report of the President

Good afternoon colleagues, friends, honored guests, and members of the New York State Dental Association.

Today, I stand before you with a heart full of gratitude, humility, and optimism as I conclude my term as President of this extraordinary organization.

Serving as President of NYSDA has been one of the greatest honors of my professional life. Over the past year, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the dedication, resilience, intelligence, and compassion that defines the dentists of New York State. I have seen leaders rise to challenges, volunteers give selflessly of their time, and members continue to advocate tirelessly for both our profession and the patients we serve.

Today is not simply about saying goodbye to a presidency. It is about reflecting on where we have been, acknowledging the challenges we have endured, celebrating what we have accomplished together, and looking confidently toward where we are headed.

When this administration began, we inherited a profession facing enormous pressures. Dentistry across New York State—and frankly across the nation—was navigating workforce shortages, inflationary pressures, staffing challenges, increasing regulatory burdens, insurance frustrations, access-to-care disparities, and a rapidly evolving healthcare environment.

At the same time, our association was facing profound internal challenges.

The abrupt loss of our Executive Director deeply impacted our organization. It was a moment that shook the foundation of NYSDA. Shortly thereafter, we experienced the departure of several key staff members whose institutional knowledge and years of service had been integral to the daily operation of our association.

Moments like those can either divide an organization or define it.

34 And while there were fissures—while there was uncertainty, frustration, and concern—I believe  
35 this organization chose something greater. We chose unity over division. We chose dialogue  
36 over dysfunction. We chose progress over paralysis.

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38 We did not ignore our differences. We addressed them.

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40 We listened to one another.

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42 We began to rebuilt trust.

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44 We strengthened communication between leadership, staff, component societies, and  
45 members.

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47 And perhaps most importantly, we reminded ourselves that NYSDA is bigger than any one  
48 individual, any one disagreement, or any one moment in time.

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50 This association has endured for generations because it is built upon a mission far greater  
51 than ourselves: protecting the oral health of the people of New York and advancing the  
52 profession of dentistry for those who dedicate their lives to it.

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54 Over the past year, despite the challenges we faced internally, NYSDA continued to deliver  
55 meaningful advocacy victories in Albany.

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57 Together, we elevated the voice of organized dentistry in the Legislature.

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59 Together, we strengthened relationships with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle.

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61 Together, we ensured that dentistry remained at the table whenever healthcare policy affecting  
62 our patients and practices were being discussed.

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64 We advocated forcefully for increased Medicaid reimbursement and policies aimed at  
65 improving access to dental care for underserved communities throughout New York State.

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67 We continued our efforts to protect the doctor-patient relationship and push back against  
68 policies that threatened the autonomy of dental professionals and the quality of patient care.

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70 We engaged legislators on workforce issues affecting dental practices across urban, suburban,  
71 and rural communities alike.

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73 We fought to reduce administrative burdens that take valuable time away from patient care.

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75 We worked to ensure that oral health remained recognized as an essential component of  
76 overall health—not an afterthought, but a fundamental pillar of healthcare.

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78 And we continued advocating for public health initiatives that improve prevention, education,  
79 and access to care for New Yorkers of all ages.

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These accomplishments were not achieved by one president, one committee, or one lobbyist alone.

They were achieved because NYSDA members showed up.

Our members traveled to Albany and D.C.!

They made phone calls.

They met with legislators.

They educated policymakers.

They contributed their expertise.

They volunteered their time.

They stood together.

Advocacy works when people participate—and this association proved once again that when organized dentistry speaks with one voice, that voice carries tremendous weight.

I want to thank our Governmental Affairs team, our component leaders, our Board of Trustees, our committees, our delegates, and every member who helped move our legislative priorities forward during these past few years.

You made a difference.

But as proud as I am of our advocacy efforts and accomplishments, I believe the most important thing we must continue working to accomplish together is the restoration of stability and confidence within our organization itself.

Periods of transition test leadership.

They test culture.

They test relationships.

And they reveal character.

During difficult moments, I watched people within this association step forward with courage and professionalism. Volunteers took on additional responsibilities. Staff members worked beyond expectations. Leaders from every corner of the state offered solutions, support, and perspective.

We did not allow adversity to define us.

We allowed it to strengthen us.

And because of that work, I truly believe NYSDA is positioned for a brighter future.

That future, however, cannot be built solely on tradition.

It must also be built on innovation.

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127 The reality is that organized dentistry is changing. Professional associations throughout the  
128 country are confronting evolving membership expectations, generational shifts, and financial  
129 pressures. The value proposition of membership must continually be demonstrated—not  
130 assumed.

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132 That means we must continue strengthening membership engagement across every stage of a  
133 dentist's career.

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135 We must connect with dental students earlier.

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137 We must mentor young dentists more intentionally.

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139 We must ensure that mid-career dentists see NYSDA not merely as an organization they  
140 belong to, but as a professional home that supports them, advocates for them, and helps them  
141 thrive.

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143 And we must continue honoring and engaging our senior members whose wisdom and  
144 experience remain invaluable to this profession.

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146 Membership growth is not simply about numbers.

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148 It is about relevance.

149 It is about relationships.

150 It is about creating an organization where every dentist in New York feels heard, represented,  
151 and valued.

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153 At the same time, we must also recognize that the financial future of organized dentistry  
154 cannot rely exclusively on dues revenue.

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156 If we truly want to invest boldly in advocacy, technology, education, leadership development,  
157 member services, and the future of the profession, we must identify new opportunities for  
158 sustainable non-dues revenue.

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160 We must think creatively.

161 We must pursue strategic partnerships.

162 We must expand educational opportunities.

163 We must modernize how we deliver value.

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165 We must identify innovative programs and services that benefit members while strengthening  
166 the financial stability of the association.

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168 The organizations that thrive in the future will not simply adapt to change—they will help shape  
169 it.

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171 And I firmly believe NYSDA has the talent, leadership, and vision to do exactly that.

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The future of this association is incredibly bright because of the people in this room.

I see young leaders stepping forward with passion and fresh ideas.

I see experienced leaders mentoring the next generation.

I see component societies collaborating more closely.

I see renewed energy around advocacy and engagement.

And most importantly, I see a shared understanding that our common goals far outweigh our differences.

At the end of the day, every one of us entered this profession for the same reason: to improve lives.

Every day across New York State, dentists relieve pain, restore confidence, detect disease, improve systemic health, educate patients, and change lives in ways both large and small.

Dentistry matters.

Oral health matters.

And organizations like NYSDA matter because they ensure that the voice of the profession remains strong, respected, and united.

As I conclude my term this weekend, I do so with tremendous confidence in the future leadership of this association.

Leadership is never about one individual. It is about stewardship—leaving an organization stronger than you found it and preparing the next generation to succeed.

I am proud of what we accomplished together.

I am proud that we navigated difficult times with integrity.

I am proud that we continued to advocate fiercely for our profession and our patients.

And I am proud that even during moments of uncertainty, we never lost sight of our mission.

Before I close, I would like to acknowledge some but by no means the only people who have helped me immensely by working diligently to make my presidential year and this 2026 House of Delegates what I believe to be a roaring success. From our ED Mr Michael Hermann and all the staff at NYSDA, with a special shoutout to Jenna, Patty and Chelsea for putting up with me and my wishes. To all of you I say thank you for everything you did and do for the profession of Dentistry here in NYS! (Applause)

218 To our Board of Trustees and the Members of this House of Delegates, thank you for standing  
219 shoulder to shoulder with me on this Battlefield as we fight the good fight in trying to increase  
220 access to oral care while eradicating the obstacles to good oral health in our state. To All of  
221 You I Say Thank You!

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223 To you NYCDS, my first second home, I say to all of you along with our E.D., Miss Diane  
224 Laurenzo, my two HOD Events Co-Chairs Dr.'s David Shipper and Jim Jacobs, and all the  
225 committee chairs and members of NYCDS, I ask that you all please rise..... and if this house  
226 would help me recognize them not only for all their support but also for all the time and hard  
227 work given to put on the 2026 House Of Delegates here in Atlantic City! We All Say Thank  
228 You!!!

229 (Applause)

230

231 I want to thank my family for their support, patience, and sacrifice throughout this journey.  
232 Leadership requires time away from home, long meetings, difficult decisions, and countless  
233 hours of service. None of it would have been possible without their unwavering encouragement  
234 and support. Thank you Michelle, my wife of 31 years and girlfriend of 41 years. Thank you to  
235 my kids, Keanna, Brianna and Christian, my grandkids kyrie and Kaleed, my mother Diann and  
236 father Eddie, my brother Mark, sisters Wendy and Desiree and my mother in law, Lola.  
237 Without your support I would not stand here the man that I am!

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239 And lastly, I wish to thank each and every member of NYSDA for placing your trust in me.  
240 Serving you has been a privilege I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

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242 To the future leaders of this organization, I leave you with this thought:

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244 Our greatest strength is not found in our structure, our bylaws, or even our history.

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246 Our greatest strength is found in our willingness to work together.

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248 When we collaborate, when we communicate, when we respect differing perspectives while  
249 remaining united in purpose, there is nothing this association cannot accomplish.

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251 The future of dentistry in New York will require courage.

252 It will require adaptability.

253 It will require innovation.

254 But above all, it will require unity.

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256 And I believe deeply that at NYSDA, the best days are yet to come!

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258 So in conclusion, I want to say Thank You for the honor of serving as your 144th President.

259 Thank you for your friendship.

260 Thank you for your dedication.

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262 Thank you for continuing the important work you do towards the advancement of good oral and  
263 overall health for the residents of New York State.

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265 May we continue moving forward together—with purpose, with vision, and with pride.

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267 And now.... let's take care of business, TOGETHER!

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269 THANK YOU!!!!