

# 2024 oda Annual Report



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## *TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER*

**THE ODA ANNUAL REPORT IS AN OPPORTUNITY** to share with you all the accomplishments that the Oregon Dental Association had in 2024. It is also an opportunity to encourage members to be ODA membership ambassadors by encouraging your colleagues to join. There is a great deal to celebrate about 2024, and we continue to expand programs going into 2025. We are a membership association, and without members growing membership, our work will not be able to be accomplished.

Our work includes advocacy, wellness, an annual continuing education meeting with the largest dental exhibitor hall in the state, and a great affordable Regional Event just to name a few of our endeavors. Without the ODA, none of these programs would exist, and there is no individual or group that would fill the gap. In 2024 the groundwork was done to introduce three legislative bills for the 2025 session. This required the work of one full-time staff member, two contract lobbyists as well as a media consultant. All of this requires the support of membership dues, because without those dues we are unable to support this team. Having now observed the early weeks of the 2025 legislative session, I can tell you that individuals are introducing no dental legislation. It takes an association to represent you. The same can be said for an annual meeting with 3,000 attendees and over 100 exhibitors, or a wellness program that has been advocating for programs to take care of the dental team.

The Oregon Dental Association is dedicated to advancing the dental profession and promoting the highest standard of oral health and oral healthcare in the state. Together we are stronger, and without the support of a larger membership base, we will be leaving it to others to decide our fate.

## *ADVOCACY*

### **2024 Legislative Session**

The 2024 Legislative Session was arguably one of the most bipartisan and congenial sessions in recent memory. The short, five-week session saw Republicans and Democrats come together to tackle remarkably complex issues, including affordable housing, homelessness, campaign finance, and addressing Oregon's drug crisis. However, in a crowded legislative session, the ODA remained focused on a handful of key bills impacting Oregon dentists.

ODA tracked and advocated for hundreds of bills, from funding

for dental rate cuts and dental lab registration requirements, to a bill that would have limited private equity ownership in health care organizations and a modification to the Oregon Family Leave Act, and much more.

Regarding dental rates, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recently announced cuts to dental rates between 3-6% for the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) population. To offset the rate cuts, a coalition of dental care organizations (DCOs) and the ODA asked legislators to provide a backfill of \$14M. However, with much of the short session focused on the priority

legislation on housing and drug recriminalization, the legislature did not address the rate cut through a budget note as the coalition had requested and failed to fund the \$14M.

ODA continued to focus on the health and well-being of its members during the 2024 Legislative Session. ODA, and a coalition of medical associations, advocated legislators to fund the Oregon Wellness Program (OWP), which provides confidential counseling for healthcare providers. Although the OWP did not receive the desired funding, it was well-positioned, and ODA expects that funding for

the OWP will remain a key issue for healthcare providers in 2025.

## 2025 Legislative Agenda Development

The ODA's Regulatory Affairs Committee (RAC) engaged in policy discussions with the ODA's government affairs team beginning early summer 2024 to determine what policies and legislative concepts the association would prioritize for the 2025 Legislative Session.

The RAC and the ODA Board of Trustees agreed upon a 2025 legislative agenda that prioritized what we heard from our members as some of their top priorities, including an insurance reform bill, Senate Bill 532 (SB 532) (<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/LIZ/2025R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB0532>), that, if passed, will help address current challenges facing patients and dental offices, and House Bill 2676 (HB 2676) (<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/LIZ/2025R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2676>) that will include Oregon in the multi-state Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact, in order to support efforts to expand Oregon's dental workforce. ODA will also continue to support and advocate for increased dental reimbursement for serving the OHP population by supporting House Bill 2597 (HB 2597), which will set minimum rates of reimbursement providers serving OHP patients (<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/LIZ/2025R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/HB2597>).

### *Dental Insurance Reform*

The challenges of navigating dental insurance are perennial concerns that we hear from members. Some of the challenges members have shared are with assignment of benefits, retroactive denials, and prompt pay. After research and discussion, the RAC recommended



### **ODA will be monitoring bills related to oral health**

that these three ideas be bundled into a Dental Insurance Reform bill, which became an ODA proposed bill, SB 532 (<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/LIZ/2025R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB0532>). Below is a description of each component.

#### *Assignment of Benefits*

In Oregon, insurers are not required to submit insurance payments directly to the dentist when patients are seeing an out-of-network dentist. Instead, payments go directly to patients, a practice known as “assignment of benefits.” This burdensome process often means that the patient is forced to pay out of pocket for services and await reimbursement from their insurer, while the dentist has to contact the patient for payment after services have been rendered, leading to confusion from patients who expect their insurers to pay providers directly.

Senate Bill 532 will allow patients to choose for payments to be sent directly to their provider, putting patients in control of their benefits while ensuring that the insurance benefit is used for its intended purpose.

#### *Retroactive Denials*

Retroactive denials allow insurance companies to require dentists to repay claims already paid to them when insurers discover they paid a claim mistakenly, even if the claim was processed years ago. This

practice often results in unexpected bills for patients and erodes trust between patients and their dentists.

Senate Bill 532 will limit the time frame within which an insurer may demand a refund on a claim they have paid. Most existing retroactive denial laws across the country limit the time frame allowed for insurer recoupment to 12-24 months, which is longer than the window of time many insurers give dentists to timely file claims.

#### *Prompt Payment*

Many dentists regularly encounter unpredictability and delay associated with getting paid by insurers. When these payments are delayed, dentists may have trouble paying staff and other administrative expenses, impacting the patient experience – and potentially access to dental care. This is particularly important today as operational costs have dramatically increased while insurer payments have not kept pace with inflation.

Senate Bill 532 would bring dental issuance laws in line with existing medical insurance laws which require an insurer to pay a clean claim or deny the claim no later than 30 days after the date on which the insurer receives the claim. At the time of this writing, 46 other states had laws that required prompt payment from dental insurers.

### **Dental and Dental Hygienist Compact**

The ODA team and leadership know that workforce challenges remain one of the biggest issues facing dentistry today. So, ODA is being solution focused and advocating for House Bill 2676, which will bring Oregon into the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. The compact, which has already been approved by 10 states, will allow licensed dentists and dental hygienists to practice in all states participating in the compact, rather

than get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. The ability of dentists and hygienists to immediately treat patients after moving from another state to Oregon will increase Oregon's dental workforce. Mobility and multistate practice for licensed dentists and dental hygienists is particularly critical for dental practices or practitioners living in Portland and Vancouver, as they are not currently allowed to practice on both sides of the Oregon/Washington state border.

## Modernizing Medicaid Dental Rates

Medicaid dental rates are at a tipping point. While facing an ongoing erosion of Medicaid dental investments, oral health providers are striving to resolve pandemic-related issues – workforce, utilization, and costs – and readying for new waiver responsibilities, increased caseloads, and coverage. Oregon's fee-for-service reimbursement is the lowest of the Western states, compared to average dentist charges

and private dental insurance; therefore, most dentists can't afford to treat OHP patients.

Senate Bill 2597 will require the OHA and coordinated care organizations (CCOs) to reimburse dental providers at a minimum of 59.8% the average rate paid by insurers in Oregon. Using transparent and actionable data from the independent nonprofit Fair Health will promote sound rate setting. The bill also directs OHA to review and revise rates annually.

## MEMBERSHIP

This year we saw our local component landscape change as we continue with the intention of providing each ODA member a comparable membership experience. Southern Willamette Dental Society and Lane County Dental Society merged, creating Coastal Cascade Dentist Society. The new dental society has a robust calendar of CE and social events throughout 2025. Yamhill County dissolved and members were moved into Washington County Dental Society, Marion Polk Dental Society, and Multnomah Dental Society. Rogue Valley Dental Society has hired an experienced executive director who also serves as the executive director of Southern Oregon Dental Society to increase consistent member value within the region. The 2024 House of Delegates passed resolutions which will further component restructuring to better serve our members. We continue to support our 14 local components throughout the state. This effort may look different depending on whether the local component has staff or is purely volunteer driven, is large or small, in the metro area or rural. The ODA staff is here to support our diverse components and members as we understand one size does not fit all. We worked closely with local

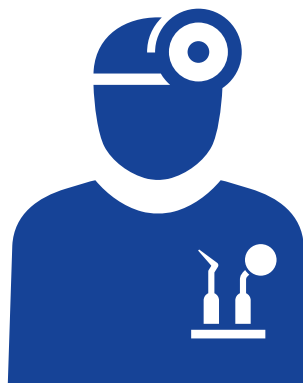
component leadership to retain and recruit members throughout the state using a variety of methods. Member engagement focused on email, direct mail, digital ad campaigns, and social media. Multiple campaigns focused on new dentists (0-10 years out of dental school) or recently lapsed members. Moving into 2025, peer-to-peer recruiting by current members continues to be critical to growing the association. We encourage you to reach out to a non-member peer you know and invite them to a local component meeting. Staff attended nine component/social meetings and held four component leadership meetings. We were there to listen to you, the members, inform members and non-members of association benefits,

and continue to expand offerings to make membership valuable and relevant.

The ODA has continued highlighting member value to new dentists and OHSU dental students. The New Dentist Council continued to support the ODA Mentor Program. The program currently has three in-person pods, with 65 mentees participating and 24 mentors who meet monthly to discuss life in dental school, interesting cases, wellness, and life after dental school. We continue to have a presence at OHSU, which led to 26 touchpoints/programs in 2024. We continue to partner with OHSU staff/faculty and ASDA to expand our programming to present relevant topics and have plans to expand faculty outreach.

In conjunction with the ADA, we converted to a new customer relationship management (CRM) system. We hope that you are becoming acquainted with your new ADA portal where you can manage your account, pay dues, and purchase ADA CE and resources. If you have any issues with your portal, please do not hesitate to contact the ODA office.

We are pleased to share that with the support and hard work of our volunteer leaders and staff across the state, we retained 93%



**1,989**  
Total Members

of membership. Welcoming 119 new members into ODA membership in 2024, we ended the year with membership totaling 1,989 dentists throughout the state; this represents 51.5% of active dentists. As we move forward into 2025, we will continue to concentrate on retainment of current members

while demonstrating the value of membership to all Oregon dentists. Our strength comes in numbers, and we urge you to share your community experiences with colleagues in hopes that they will join your association! We thank you for your support of organized dentistry. We love to see our members thrive!



**119**  
New Members

## EDUCATION AND EVENTS

### 2024 Oregon Dental Conference

The 131st Oregon Dental Conference (ODC) was held on-site at the Oregon Convention Center, April 4-6, 2024. Fifty speakers presented 81 scientific continuing education sessions. Two of the sessions were hands-on workshops. There was a focus on health & wellness that included daily yoga, a wellness hub, and continuing education in several health & wellness categories.

The exhibit hall was held on Thursday, April 4 and Friday, April 5. There were 107 exhibiting companies with a total of 122 booths. There was a Grand Opening Reception with a fireside chat with ADA President Brett Kessler on Thursday to drive traffic to the hall. There were also professional headshots offered on Friday and the wellness hub both days that offered massage chairs, activities from Hope for the Day including a coloring wall, and resources from the Oregon Wellness Program.

The Friday night president's party, *Night of Smiles*, was rebranded to the *ODC Party*. The 2024 theme was *80s Edition!* and featured arcade games and live music from the band 5 Guys Named Moe. The event was sponsored, in part, by Delta Dental of Oregon. The ODA New Dentist Award was awarded to Dr. Adam Fox, and the Tom Tucker Humanitarian Award was awarded to Dr. Tom Holt.

A total of 3,025 individuals attended the conference (2,525 dental professionals and 500 exhibitor personnel). We thank everyone

who attended and supported the 2024 ODC!

The 2025 ODC will once again return to the Oregon Convention Center. It will feature 48 speakers and 80 courses from April 3 to 5, with four hands-on workshops. The exhibit hall will feature several activities to draw traffic including a grand opening reception, food trucks, professional headshot station, a superhero-themed day on Friday, and a book signing by 2025's keynote speaker, Dr. Jeffrey Gurian. Supply companies Henry Schein, Burkhardt Dental and Patterson Dental are all making their return to the exhibit hall for the first time post-pandemic. Oregon Board of Dentistry courses are being provided for free to ODA Members (Infection Control, Cultural Competency & Medical Emergencies) with the ICE track that also allows them access to the exhibit hall and keynote speaker at no charge.

In the fall of 2024, the Annual Meeting Council voted in favor of moving the dates of the Oregon Dental Conference to March. Due to the scheduling system with the Oregon Convention Center, this will begin in 2028 with the potential dates of March 2-4, 2028.

### 2024 Regional Event

On November 1st & 2nd, 2024, the ODA successfully hosted the third annual Regional Event in Powell Butte, Oregon at Brasada Ranch. Karen Daw gave a very well-received presentation in the morning, with local Oregon



**3,025**  
Attendees

oral surgeons Dr. Daniel Petrisor and Dr. Jonathan Jelmini giving an equally well received lecture in the afternoon. Attendees were able to earn five hours of CE credit. The Friday evening prior featured a fun trivia social event hosted by ODA's own Dr. Travis Baskerville. The Boots & Bling Party followed the education sessions. This event was open to all ODA members as well as non-members and dental team members. We had 96 attendees in total, 53 of those being ODA members.

ODA's next regional event is scheduled for the weekend of November 8th at Salishan in Lincoln City. We hope to have over 100 registrants for this event, which will be highlighted by a Luau-themed party on Saturday evening. Save the date and watch for registration to open soon!

### Winter Webinar Series

The Oregon Dental Conference is in transition to change its dates to early March, but this will not take place until 2028. In 2024, the Winter Webinar Series was created in response to this. This series was

created to provide ODA members the opportunity to receive Oregon Board of Dentistry-required courses before the licensure deadline of April 1st.

These webinars are 100% free and exclusively for ODA members.

The Winter Webinar Series is a three-part series featuring a webinar a

month. January 2025 was on cultural competency; February 2025 will be on infection control; and March 2025 will be a medical emergency update.

## WELLNESS

2024 was a year of significant progress for the Oregon Dental Association (ODA) Wellness Initiative, marked by key leadership under Chair Dr. Julie Spaniel. With a continued commitment to supporting dental professionals' well-being, the ODA maintained its position as one of the leading states addressing wellness in the dental community. Dr. Spaniel's active involvement as an ADA Wellness Ambassador and a member of the ADA's Dental Wellness Advisory Committee has strengthened the alignment between the ODA and ADA in their shared wellness goals.

### Key Highlights of 2024

- **Leadership and Advocacy:** The ODA has played a critical role in advancing wellness initiatives within the dental profession. Dr. Spaniel's work with the ADA has ensured that both the ODA and ADA are united in their wellness objectives, reinforcing the ODA's commitment to creating a supportive environment for dental professionals across Oregon.
- **Wellness Committee Engagement:** The Wellness Committee met four times virtually in 2024, with an in-person option provided. These meetings served as a platform for collaboration, allowing speakers from the health and wellness sector to share valuable insights and feedback on wellness within the dental community. The exchange of ideas during these meetings has contributed to the growth and

expansion of wellness initiatives within Oregon.

- **District 11 Collaboration:** A notable development in 2024 was the participation of wellness advocates from District 11, which includes Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Montana. Representatives from these states attended all four meetings, actively contributing to the development and streamlining of Wellness Ambassador programs and resources. Looking ahead to 2025, it was decided that two meetings will focus specifically on District 11 wellness topics, while the other two will address Oregon-specific Wellness Ambassadors and initiatives.
- **Oregon Board of Dentistry Policy Update:** A significant milestone was achieved with the Oregon Board of Dentistry's approval of a language change that aligns licensure applications with the Oregon Medical Board's licensure language. The ODA will follow up on this update to ensure the information is reflected on the website and in all relevant literature.

### Looking Forward to 2025

- **Formal Training for Peer Support:** A consensus emerged among District 11 wellness advocates on the need for formal training for those dentists who take phone calls from colleagues in need of support. After evaluating proposals and quotes from three different organizations, the ODA has decided to move forward with *Hope For The Day* for a two-part

training session titled *Things We Don't Say*.

- **Part 1** will be an asynchronous online learning platform.
- **Part 2** will be a live webinar scheduled for August 2025. This training is designed to equip dentists with the tools and resources needed to provide meaningful support to their peers, addressing the mental and emotional challenges faced within the dental profession.
- **Continual Advocacy for Wellness Funding:** In addition to promoting the Wellness Ambassador peer-to-peer support network, the ODA will continue advocating for increased funding for the Oregon Wellness Program. This ongoing effort aims to ensure that resources are available to all dental professionals seeking assistance, further reinforcing the ODA's commitment to mental health and wellness in the dental community.

### Conclusion

2024 was a successful year for the ODA Wellness Initiative, with notable achievements in leadership, collaboration, and policy development. As we move into 2025, the ODA remains focused on expanding wellness resources and providing essential support to dental professionals throughout Oregon and District 11. The ongoing efforts to strengthen training, peer support, and funding will continue to make Oregon a leader in dental wellness, ensuring that dental professionals have the resources they need to maintain their well-being and thrive in their careers. ●