

2007 CDA House of Delegates - Outgoing President's Speech

Ronald B. Mead, DDS

Good Afternoon! This has been a fascinating year. Thank you very much for this honor.

The year seemed that it would go on forever but was over in a heartbeat. Together we have accomplished many things. This is an organization of leaders. Every volunteer plays a vital role. I am reminded of the saying "When you see a frog at the top of a flagpole, he didn't get there by himself."

Once again we had a very successful policy and legislative year. Just to highlight a few of the accomplishments:

- Individuals with dual dental coverage will actually be able to use it. When a dentist dies or becomes disabled the family will legally be able to keep the practice viable for a sale. Federally Qualified Health Centers will be able to bill for the services of a dental hygienist.
- CDA continues to gain substantial credibility with the support and implementation of the School Screenings related to AB 1433.
- A position paper on dentistry's view on health care reform was developed. This was a wonderful piece of work that states the problems clearly and focuses on prevention. The need for appropriate provider reimbursement was also included. CDA's position was seen as having long-term benefit to the residents of California - and was well received. We really are part of the solution.
- Unfortunately one important beginning step, the Children's Dental Disease Prevention Program was vetoed by the governor. The bill appears to be a victim of save a penny today – but spend several dollars tomorrow.
- Methods for licensure continue to be evaluated. A workgroup made up of representatives of the Dental School Deans, the Dental Board of California and CDA has met recently. The focus at this meeting was the portfolio model. Representative from the Dental Board also presented to the Trustees in August. There appears to be a real desire by all parties to move forward with improvement of the licensure process.
- CDA continues to strengthen ties with the ADA and the other constituent dental associations through out the nation. We have provided leadership by bringing together groups of states which have similar issues for joint, informal discussions. This has allowed CDA and the ADA to be more effective. These positive relationships will continue to grow in the future.

Last year at this time, I discussed three issues that are important to me.

One of those issues was the retiring dentist and the need to keep them involved. Part of the sessions' business plan is to provide forums referred to as "Transitions" where members beginning practice can meet with members nearing the end of their careers. Another possibility at sessions is the recognition of long-term members to thank them for continued support. A specific track for Stage 4 dentists is also being discussed. Thank you to the Sessions Board and the Council on Membership for working with this idea.

Another concern was the fracturing of the dental team. A great amount of effort was extended to provide a structure that would allow the Dental Hygiene profession to be responsible for licensing, examinations, continuing education and enforcement, but keep the dental team together. After the collaboration involved, it was disappointing that the legislative bill to accomplish this was vetoed. I

was going to discuss this more fully but since I gave an update on Senate Bill 534 earlier I will just say- it is vital for our profession to continue to work with other organizations to maintain professional standards and improve access to dental care.

My third issue was the CDA Foundation, student debt and more specifically the Student Loan Repayment Grant. The situation of student debt and the financing of dental education in general has certainly not improved since last year. The Foundation has awarded two more grants this year. Doctor Nam Hoang, who will be serving in Auburn Doctor James Forester, is serving at La Clinica de Tolosa in Paso Robles. Providing assistance to these individuals shows the professions commitment to providing a single tier, professional care for the underserved. But is providing two grants every few years enough? I don't think so!

As many of you will recall I made a pitch last year for each of you to contribute \$1,000 to the Foundation. If that money went to the Loan Repayment Grant up to seven grants could be awarded each year. Since that time, \$9,040 has been contributed specifically to the Student Loan Reduction Grant. I was hoping to report a higher figure. Two grants were made possible by combining this with \$210,960 of unrestricted funds. Many thanks to those of you who did contribute and please continue.

A painless way to contribute is to make a transfer of appreciated stock or mutual funds to the foundation. The Foundation receives the money, you get a deduction for the appreciated amount of the gift and you don't have to pay taxes on the appreciated amount. A real win-win. (I will make my plea again – please contribute generously.)

And now the thank yous.

- Thank you to all the CDA staff who keep this organization moving forward. Those who are here and those who are in less visible roles.
- Thank you to all of the council, committee and task force members. They have all done a great job.
- The Board of Trustees has been an effective, strong group. They debate the issues fully and make good decisions. They represent you well. It has been a great pleasure to work with each one of them.
- Thank you to my component, the Central Coast. They are to blame for all of this by sending me to my first HOD 21 years ago.
- Thank you to my friends at this table. I can't imagine better support, council and friendship than I have received from you.
- And most of all thank you to Susan. Even though there have been constant threats to burn any paper that has CDA on it and I have to hide the wire cutters so she will not disable my e-mail she has been very supportive. I suspect history will show that she has made a more of a lasting impression on CDA than most any president could.

Finally, I would like to end with a quote. "Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming – WOW – what a ride!"

Thank you.