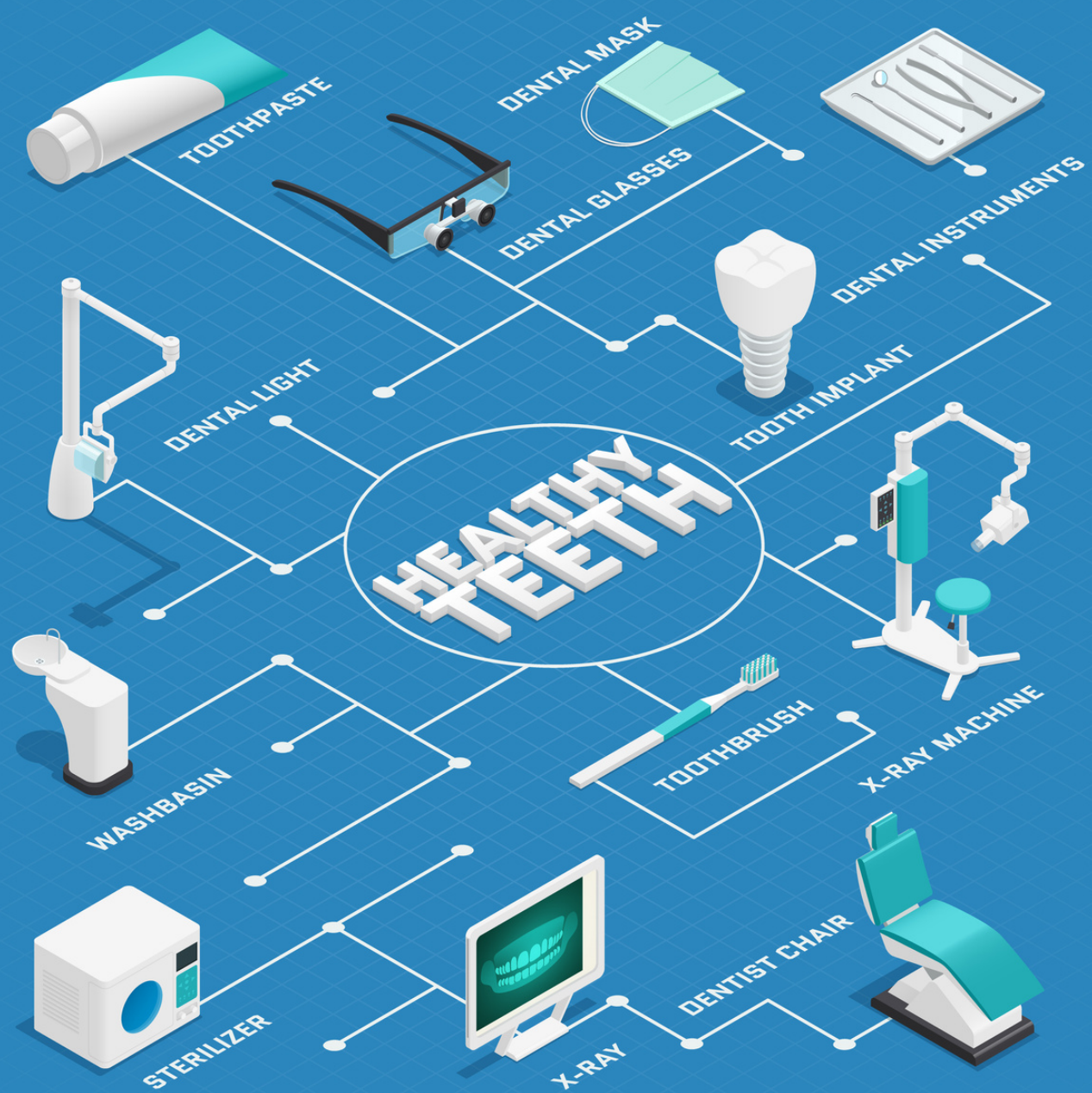


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## GET INVOLVED

Interested in writing for the Lingual Groove? Contact [asdohasda@atsu.edu](mailto:asdohasda@atsu.edu) for more information

## SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

Whether you like to take pictures in your free time or you've captured a chapter event and want to share it, consider submitting your photos for inclusion in the Lingual Groove

## SEND US A COMIC

Are you an artist who can make us laugh with a good dental pun or illustration of something every dental student has experienced? Email the editor for details

Lingual Groove is the American Student Dental Association Arizona chapter magazine. The Lingual Groove is dedicated to sharing the dental-student narrative and addressing their holistic needs as they prepare to enter the workforce as dental professionals.



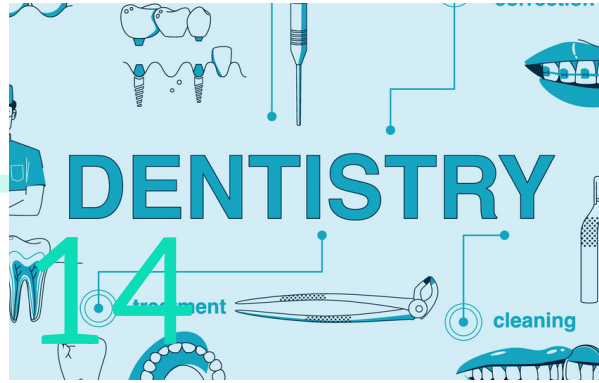
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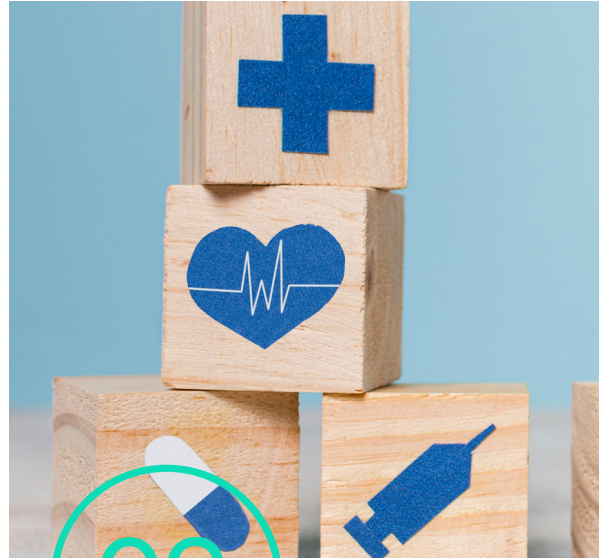
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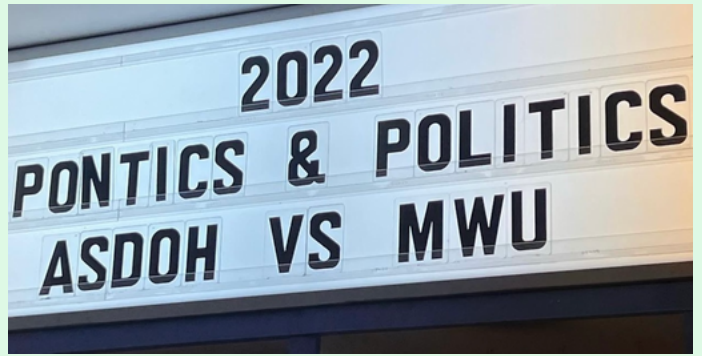
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**Claire Song**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

### Editor's Note:

I still vividly remember my first day of school in the U.S. I was twelve years old, overwhelmed by the unfamiliarity of my surroundings and anxious about fitting in. As I glanced at the name tag of the student seated next to me, "Isaiah," I felt a surge of nervousness. The last thing I wanted was to stand out by mispronouncing his name.

With determination and a pencil in hand, I instinctively scribbled the phonetic pronunciation of "Isaiah" in Korean letters. Writing became my safe space—a means to navigate through the challenges of communication. In that moment, I realized the power of writing as a tool for self-discovery and self-expression.

Now, as I assume the role of editor for this magazine, I am reminded of the profound impact writing has had on my life. It is my hope that this publication will serve as a platform for you, our talented cohort, to discover your own unique voices and embark on your own transformative journeys.

In this issue of our student-run magazine, we delve into a diverse range of topics that exemplify the power of self-expression and intellectual discussion. My mission is to underscore the transformative power of writing and its ability to ignite conversations, challenge norms, and inspire change. Whether it be policy-making, bridging gaps, or building a vibrant community that fosters a sense of belonging, writing has the capacity to shape the world around us.

Within these pages, I invite you to engage with the articles, share your thoughts, and join us in celebrating the diversity of voices that exist within each of us.



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# DEAN'S MESSAGE



I appreciate the opportunity to provide this Dean's Message for A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health's (ATSU-ASDOH) ASDA Lingual Groove! As I write this, I am reflecting on recent events which happened over the past month here at ATSU-ASDOH. Specifically, our last admissions interview day for the class of 2027, a dinner with our ATSU Board of Trustees, a humanitarian mission trip to South Dakota, and our Give Kids a Smile (GKAS)/ Alumni Weekend. These collectively provide a window into the past, present, and future of who we are and our impact on our communities, dental education, and the dental profession. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to be a small part of our ATSU-ASDOH family, and incredibly proud of the accomplishments of our school, students, residents, staff, and faculty.

I'm sure that you all recall your interview day at ATSU-ASDOH, whether on campus or virtual. I have the opportunity to welcome each group of candidates at the start of day. I like to share our story of a dental school that was founded with a mission to graduate dentists who not only care for their patients' oral health, but their patients' whole-person health, graduates who care not only for the patient in their chair, but the patient's family and community, graduates who are committed to improving access to oral health care for those most in need, in short, graduates who are the heart of our profession.





In February, ATSU-ASDOH students, residents, and faculty all began a new humanitarian mission initiative in South Dakota, providing oral health care to members of the Great Sioux Nation. Of course February is also the time of year our longest standing community service project takes place here at ATSU-ASDOH, our annual ASDA GKAS. Both represent collaboration with multiple community partners to improve access to care for underserved, demonstrating our ability to work together to make a difference. Many ATSU-ASDOH alumni visited our campus, volunteering at our ASDA GKAS event, and reuniting with old classmates, and catching up with faculty and staff during Alumni Weekend. The accomplishments of our alumni are too many to list here, but I was simply amazed to hear how they continue to live our mission through their dedication to their patients, their communities, and many underserved populations across the country.

At the recent ATSU Board of Trustees (BOT) dinner, and I had the opportunity to invite faculty and students to attend and meet our ATSU BOT members, as well as other deans and vice presidents in the University President's cabinet. We made an amazing impression! Students representing ATSU-ASDOH were our DMD class officers, Joseph Huynh / Akshani Patel (D1, 2026), Gabe Roye / Pooya Sarrafzadeh (D2, 2025), Bashar Arsanos / Alex Stacy (D3, 2024), and ASDA representatives Michael Ly, Min Kim, Kimia Firoozi, and Payal Patel. Each of our students brought to life what makes our program so special, sharing their stories and experiences of their unique pathway to ATSU-ASDOH and how they plan to make a difference in their communities. Our 12 full-time alumni faculty were able to join the BOT dinner as well, specifically Drs. Eric Bjerke ('14), Jonny Brennan ('12), Clark Chen ('12), Rachel Duffy ('13), Mai-Ly Duong ('12), Scott Howell ('14), Mindy Motahari ('08), Seena Patel ('10), Austin Shackelford ('18), Lindsay Summerer ('12), Taylor Velasquez ('19), and Sammie Yineman ('20). I am so proud that collectively ATSU-ASDOH alumni make up 20% of our full-time faculty, and almost 10% of our over 300 external faculty, a very impressive statistic given the young age of our school. Each faculty member shared their story, and the many ways they've lived our mission, and how they will continue to make a difference as a faculty role model and mentor.

Which brings me back to my Dean's welcome at our admission interview days. At the end of my time I share with our candidates the reason why I came to ATSU-ASDOH almost eight years ago. It's very simple: it's the people. It's our faculty, staff, and students like yourself that make ATSU-ASDOH the special place that it is today. It starts when you have a school that is built with a mission to help others, it continues because it attracts those who simply want to help others - whether at GKAS, their practice, the Great Sioux Nation, an ICSP rotation site, or right here in our classrooms and clinics. Together we do make a difference, and that's why I choose to be a part of the ATSU-ASDOH family. Thank you for choosing ATSU-ASDOH, you are our future and it is in great hands!

Dr. Trombly



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# From the Presidents



Executive Board 2022-2023

Dear ASDOH Students,

It has been an immense joy and honor to serve you this year as the Co-Presidents of ASDOH ASDA.

As newcomers to the EC, we were initially a bit apprehensive, as most of us had not experienced these events before the COVID era. However, thanks to the tremendous dedication and hard work of all 37 members on the ASDOH ASDA board, we were able to successfully organize a series of remarkable events, breathing life back into the school's largest, student-run, student-led organizations.

Our Prophecy Cup committee deserves special recognition for arranging a delightful day of golfing with faculty. Despite the challenges, our vendor relations committee swiftly adapted, transforming the Vendor Fair from an outdoor to an indoor event within just three days. The Pre-Dental Committee tirelessly organized various Zoom sessions for pre-dental students, in addition to Pre-Dental Day, showcasing the true magic of ASDOH. And let's not forget our fantastic health and wellness team, responsible for the enjoyable wellness events such as yoga, Thai Tea, DIY Sushi, and bowling.

The Communications Team also deserves praise for their outstanding work in creating a brand-new website and rebranding our Instagram. Additionally, our community service team received a national ASDA community service grant and is currently organizing Foster Care Day. The debate team and legislative committee burned the midnight oil, representing us admirably and securing a victory over Midwestern at Pontics & Politics. Our ethics committee organized another successful Ethics Week, featuring engaging events like Mugs and Morals and our Class Debate.

Our hard work has been recognized at the district level, with awards such as the D10 Community Service Committee Award, D10 Health and Wellness Committee Award, Chapter President of the Year (Michael Ly), and Rising Leader of the Year (Zaki Minas). Zaki will be serving as the D10 trustee on the district level.

We are incredibly grateful for the opportunities to coordinate these events and, more importantly, we are immensely proud of the support and representation from our dental school community. Thank you for attending our various activities throughout the year, such as Pontics & Politics, lunch and learns, ASDA Fever Week, dental issue lobbying at the Capitol, our festive Christmas party, and representing ASDOH at the D10 and NLC conferences.

We hope that our team was able to bring a year of memories and laughter to all of you at ASDOH. As we pass the baton of leadership forward, we can't wait to see what the future leaders of ASDOH ASDA do. Whatever it entails though, we know it will be great. Thank you all for inspiring us to be the best leaders we could be.

Best wishes, warmest regards,

**Michael Ly and Min Kim**

*ASDOH ASDA 2022-2023 Co-Presidents*



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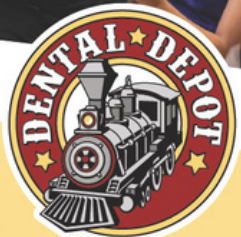
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# H.R. 4439: Medicaid Dental Benefit Act

Savannah Rose '24

Low-income communities in America very significantly when it comes to the number of adult Medicaid enrollees who have dental coverage. In 2021 only 22 states had adult dental reimbursements, nine offer emergency care only, and four did not have any type of coverage (Vujicic et al., 2021). A new bill, H.R. 4439: Medicaid Dental Benefit Act, was introduced on July 16th, 2021, its purpose is to expand adult Medicaid oral health coverage (GovTrack, 2022). Specifically, policy modification to the Social Security Act's title XIX law about adult dental services. It would "...require state Medicaid programs to cover dental and oral health services for adults. It also increases the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (i.e., federal matching rate) for such services (Congress.gov, 2022)."





There are over 317 million people who are enrolled in Medicaid, that's 28% of the population (KFF, 2019). Since the expansion of Medicaid services, the rate of uninsured Americans went from 17% in 2013 to 10% in 2017. 1 in 7 adults are covered by Medicaid and every 1 in 5 people are Medicaid beneficiaries, while every 1 in 6 dollars is spent on the health care system by Medicaid (KFF, 2019). Out of all the programs in the federal budget, it remains the third biggest, and the second largest for states (Rudowitz et al., 2019). Medicaid helps cover populations who are at higher risk for decay yet, face more difficulties paying for dental services. They are vulnerable adults who lack appropriate education on dental health, are more likely to experience tooth pain and poor oral health (ADA, n.d.). Still, less than half of the states have a reasonable dental plan.

The ADA is in support of this proposition stating it is estimated that an expansion of Medicaid could save the nation \$2.7 billion a year in health system costs through providing much needed dental services, and decreasing preventable emergency room visits (ADA, n.d.). It is estimated that this law would lead to \$1.1 billion in dental care costs and a \$273 million in medical care savings (ADA, n.d.). Unfortunately, unintended consequences of this bill may include less access to care.

*"...an expansion of Medicaid could save the nation \$2.7 billion a year in health system costs through providing much needed dental services..."*

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The concept of barriers to accessing care is a multifactorial and complex one, it isn't as easy as increasing dental insurance benefits. Moreover, Medicaid is historically known for poor reimbursement of dental care costs. This is one considerable reason there is opposition to the bill. Due to this, dental offices have stopped taking Medicaid patients altogether, thus perpetuating the initial dilemma to accessing dental clinics.

In addition to legislation like H.R. 4439, we need health policy that holds states accountable for fair reimbursement rates for providers. Otherwise, this bill may fall short of reaching its objectives. While Medicaid is not the perfect system out there, it has proven to be better than no coverage at all. Studies show that having Medicaid benefits increases a person's access to care comparable to those with private insurance, while those who are uninsured have a far worse fate. When people take advantage of having increased access it leads to improvements in self-reported health, a reduction in mortality among adults, and a decrease in emergency room visits (Rudowitz et al., 2019). •

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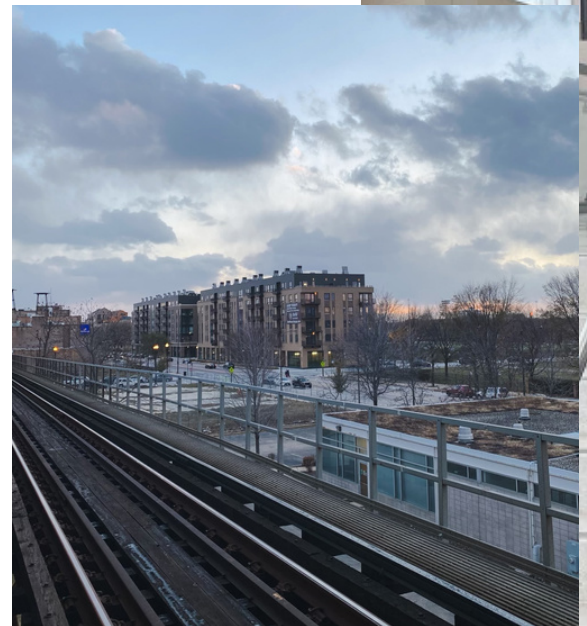
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# National Leadership Conference 2022

Joey Huynh '26

**W**hen I reflect on my D1 year, one of the best memories I had was attending the National Leadership Conference (NLC) in Chicago, Illinois. For those who are not familiar, the NLC is an annual event where dental students from around the country gather to learn about skills towards becoming a successful team leader in the field of dentistry. From learning how to manage and lead a team in a private practice, to learning about the many career options available for graduating dentists, the NLC provides attendees with an experience that cannot be taught in the dental school curriculum. Once I found out about this opportunity through ASDOH ASDA, I applied in hopes to learn more about skills I could use to improve myself personally and professionally. As class president for the D1 class, I knew this was an experience I did not want to miss out on.

At the NLC Conference, the day started off with morning presentations given by various presenters which included private practice owners, dental service organization representatives, specialists and financial advisors to name a few. With there being so many different speakers, attendees got to pick and choose the types of presentations that interested them. Throughout my experience, I focused on attending presentations that would provide me skills to better myself as a class leader for my peers.








2022 NLC ASDOH Attendees

Some of these skills consisted of learning how to manage a team in a private practice or learning how to cope with difficulties managing a private practice. One lesson that was taught and still sticks with me today is how being a leader consists of more than knowing how to make the best decisions for a team. More importantly, a successful leader requires knowing how to listen and effectively communicate with a team when problems arise. \*Shameless Plug: Shout out to Dr. Mike Meru for the words! If you see this, I think you're a stud!

Attending presentations and having the opportunity to learn only made up a portion of my experience in Chicago. The other portion consisted of having the opportunity to socialize with thousands of dental students from around the country and explore the beautiful attractions and city lights Chicago had to offer. From having the chance to explore the city with friends to enjoying deep dish pizza with my lactaid pills, I am so glad I had the opportunity to attend. This was an experience I will never forget and will forever be a part of my dental school memory. For those have the opportunity to attend next year, I recommend to apply and don't be surprised if you wish this experience was longer. ●



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# Childhood dental disease:

## Addressing a multifaceted issue with a multidimensional approach

Vinh Tieu '24

DESPITE OUR MODERN AGE of medicine and progress in public health, dental disease persists as the most prevalent illness affecting US children. According to recent statistics, 20% of children between the ages of 5-11 have at least one untreated cavity (NCSL, 2020). Compared to other health conditions, the high rate of dental disease is surprisingly high, given the availability of preventative measures. With this said, the cause behind the high rates of dental disease is not simple as just blaming diet and sugar, but rather a complex issue involving healthcare disparities and healthcare literacy. Healthcare disparities remain at large, obstacles that interfere with dental care delivery, with children from disadvantaged and minority families at significantly higher risk of developing dental disease (Benjamin, 2010). In addition, the lack of healthcare literacy within these disadvantaged communities perpetuates the spread of dental disease, increasing the difficulty of reducing dental disease in children (Benjamin, 2010).

*...preventive measures alone are insufficient to produce long-lasting improvements in a population's oral health.*

Since the issue of dental disease in children is multifaceted, a layered approach to identifying specific causes and solutions, such as intervention mapping, is needed. Intervention mapping is an approach to assessing healthcare programs by establishing a foundation for their development, implementation, and evaluation (Kabiri et al., 2022). A recent study by Baraheh Kabiri et al. examined the efficacy of intervention mapping by applying it to a low-income community in Iran. They found that its application increased the adoption of oral hygiene habits and awareness. The success of intervention mapping suggests that this methodology can be applied to US communities, particularly with school-based interventions.



A study by Peter Akera et al. found that school-based interventions effectively reduced the burden of oral disease in school-age children (Akera et al., 2022). However, preventive measures alone are insufficient to produce long-lasting improvements in a population's oral health. A potential solution is utilizing intervention mapping to develop a school-based intervention program to reduce dental disease in children. This combination of intervention mapping and school-based interventions could be particularly effective in dental HSPAs, areas with

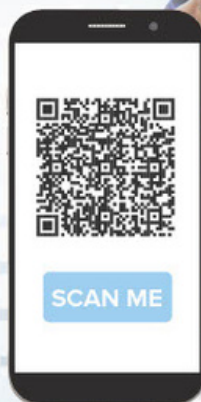
shortages of dental care professionals (Closing the Gap on Dental HSPAs: Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment, 2018). Due to the higher rates of dental disease and lower access to care in these areas, these locations are ideal for implementing oral care interventions. In recent years, there have been great strides in reducing childhood dental disease. Programs such as the National Health Service Corps have helped increase the number of providers in dental HSPAs. In addition, the Affordable Care Act and Children's Health Insurance Program have ensured greater

insurance coverage for children (Closing the Gap on Dental HSPAs: Louisiana Oral Health Workforce Assessment, 2018). Although the outlook of reducing dental disease in children is promising, there is still much left to accomplish. The continuation of progress depends on the understanding that childhood dental disease is a complex issue, and public health experts must consider all factors affecting children's oral health for future solutions. ●

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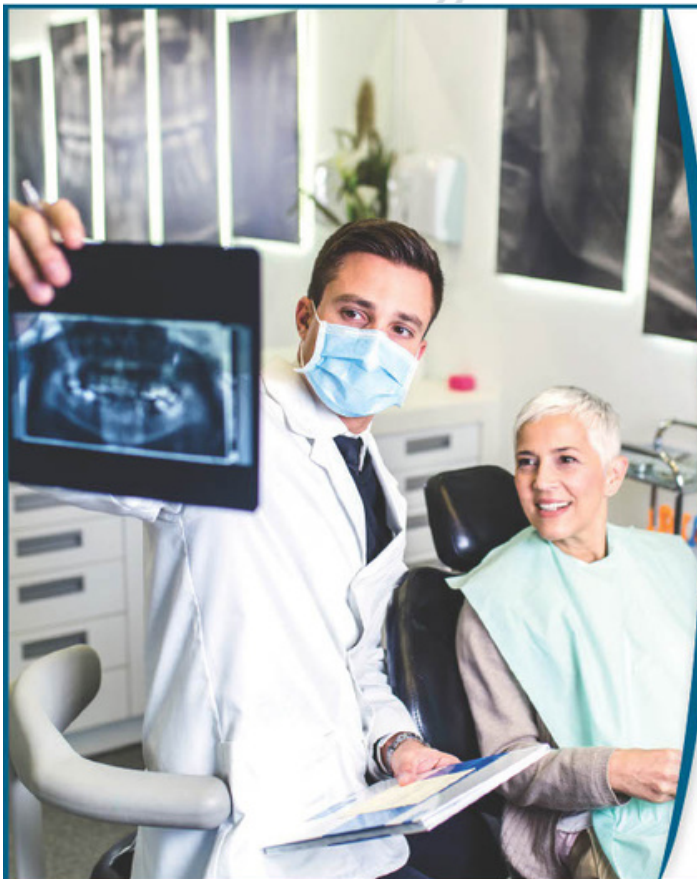
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# 2022 Pontics & Politics

## ASDOH vs. Midwestern

Gianna Tommarello '24

**A**pplying to debate in Pontics and Politics was something I had never thought about before I was approached by classmates to apply. I've always enjoyed public speaking and having a family of lawyers I felt like debating was in my blood. I was notified that I was accepted to debate, the topics were emailed and the two teams. In the days leading up to the big night, not only was my partner switched but also my topic. The changes were for the best, as they enhanced the strength of our teams. My partner Billy drilled the speech into my head, making sure I could bring my sass and attitude to my speech and keep it under the time limit. We practiced and rehearsed for hours night after night. To help with our argument we consulted with various faculty, including Dr. Howell. We all critiqued each other's speeches, trying to think of what the opponents would try to say or question regarding our defense or offense, where to add more sass or research. Each one of our statements were backed by science and factual evidence. That was one thing we were sure of. For me, winning was never even thought about while preparing. I simply wanted to make ASDOH proud and experience something new.



*"Winning was never even thought about while preparing. I simply wanted to make ASDOH proud and experience something new."*



The night we had been preparing for arrived. So did the nerves. We knew we came equipped to win, but we were not sure how well the opponents prepared or researched. Melissa and Shima were the first team, and they dominated. They were able to quickly think on their feet to counter what the opponents were saying and had the strongest arguments. They set the bar high for Billy and I. The topic we had was challenging, but the public health certificate helped us understand the topic more. Billy surprised the opponents the most, being able to regurgitate facts and evidence in seconds, as they were not prepared for what he said. The look on the opponent's faces were priceless. Listening to the other schools' arguments, I knew we were destined to win. They did not provide nearly enough evidence to support their points. Most of what they said were opinions. All I could think of that night when looking into the audience, in the first row, was Dean Trombly, and how proud he had to be of his students dominating this debate.





The deliberation process took way longer than it should as we were the clear winners, and just like we thought, ASDOH won for the first time in four years. Everyone from ASDOH went crazy cheering and celebrating as if their favorite sports team just won the Superbowl. It was one of the most memorable nights of my dental school career. Words cannot express how incredible that feeling was and to be a part of that historic night. •



2022 Pontics & Politics Winners (From left to right) Gianna Tommarello '24, Melissa Yu '24, Shima Setork '24, & Billy Blong '24.

# Fashioning Cultural Identity: Incorporating Tribal Art and Design in Dentistry

Teague Rutherford '24



**M**y name is Teague Rutherford, and I am a tribal member from the Aaniiih and Nakoda Nation in Northern Montana. I am a current 3rd year dental student at ASDOH, and I love to incorporate my tribal identity and culture through fashion in the dental field. It is difficult to be inclusive to my culture in dentistry, but I found it is more than possible with fashion. I have a scrub top that was embroidered by my friend who is Shoshone Bannock from Fort Hall, Idaho. She collaborates with a tribal artist friend of hers, who is also Shoshone Bannock, to get the cultural designs and art then embroiders them on different clothing and accessories. In the picture included she custom designed two symmetrical tribal floral patterns with what she refers to as a “Southwest bear” at the bottom of the design. The southwest bear is to represent two things 1) paying respect to my alma mater the University of Montana Grizzlies because I am a lifelong Griz. Go Griz! 2)



I am also attending dental school in the southwest. Hence, the Southwest bear. I also have a beaded medallion smiley face that was designed by me and beaded by my friend who is a member of the Northern Chippewa Cree tribe. She beads each bead one at a time with different colors to design the art piece I gave her. I chose a smiley face because I am a dentist who wants to provide a beautiful smile to all my patients. I have received so many compliments on my fashion designs when I wear them to school and in our clinic while providing patients with dental care.

I attend the annual Society of American Indian Dentists (SAID) national conference every year and most recently in Albuquerque, New Mexico in June 2022. I wore my beaded medallion and again received many compliments on the art piece. The next SAID national conference will be at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska in 2023. Our goal as an organization is to help get more Native people into dental school and the dental field as well as ways to increase access to dental care for Tribal Nations and Members. SAID is comprised of both Native American and Non-Native American members. More information on how to join, become a member, and attend the conference is at the Society of American Indian Dentists website.



*"Native people into dental school and the dental field as well as ways to increase access to dental care for Tribal Nations and Members."*

An advertisement for Denco Dental Construction Inc. The image shows a young child wearing a yellow hard hat with the Denco logo and a safety vest, sitting at a desk and drawing on a blue sheet of paper with a pencil. The background is a modern office interior. The text "Making Your Dream a Reality!" is written in a cursive font at the top. At the bottom, the Denco logo is prominently displayed in red, along with the text "Dental Construction Inc." and the phone number "(480) 835-7273". The license number "ROC#122935" is also visible in the bottom right corner.

Primary Sources:  
<https://www.thesaidonline.org/>

Access to more Northern Tribal Artwork and Resources  
<https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/collection/indigenous-arts-north-america>

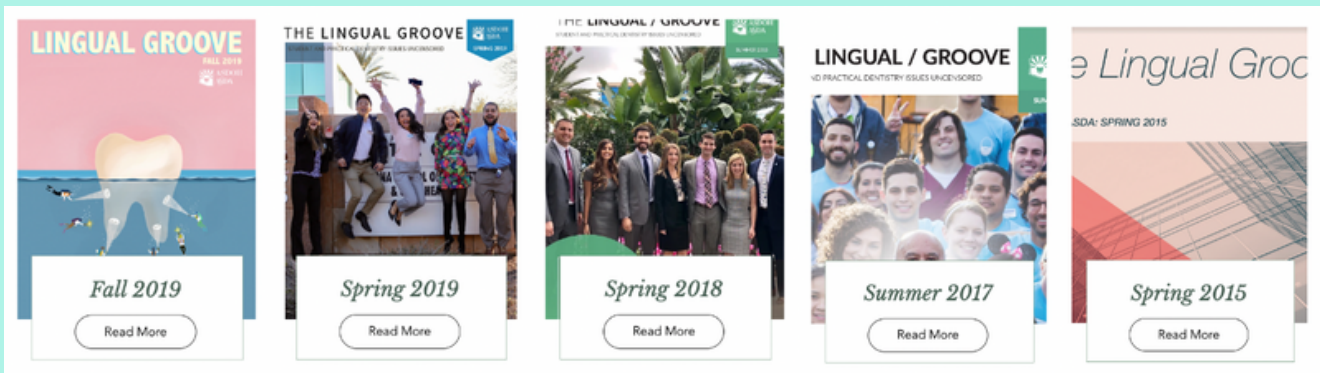
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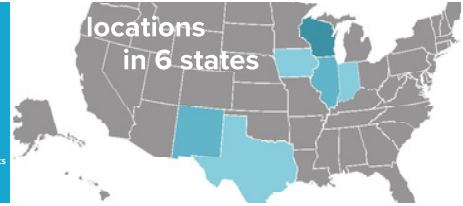
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