



Certified Press

Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.

Fall/Winter 2021 Digital Issue



CELEBRATING THE LIZ KOCH SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

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WORD FROM THE CHAIR



Dear readers,

As incoming Chair of the DANB Board of Directors, I'm honored to welcome you all to the fall/winter 2021 issue of Certified Press.

On page 4, learn more about the 2021-2022 Boards for DANB and the DALE Foundation. As leaders, we look forward to working with new CEO Laura Skarnulis and staff to move the organizations forward, so that we can best support dental assistants and other dental professionals in their career growth.

Also inside this issue, hear from Laura, who assumed the leadership role on Aug. 16.

On page 8, we highlight the four winners of the 2021 Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship. These scholarship recipients were chosen from applicants across the country, based on their interest in and commitment to the oral healthcare profession, as well as mentorship experiences. Congratulations!

We also spotlight outstanding DANB certificants such as Theresa Treharn, CDA, on page 17. Treharn is celebrating 30 years of holding DANB certification, which she says helped her secure a dental assisting position in the prison setting, plus take on management duties. And on page 10, we celebrate the illustrious career of Mary Harrison, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, FADAA, former DANB Board Director and officer, who retired in December 2020. Harrison has contributed to the dental assisting profession in a multitude of ways, through her service with DANB, the American Dental Assistants Association and more.

Plus: Read more inside about the dental office management professionals who recently achieved Fellowship, Mastership and Diplomate status with the American Association of Dental Office Management (AADOM), as well as those who earned AADOM awards during its 2021 annual conference. Teresa C. Spence, DAADOM, earned the incredible honor of being named AADOM's 2021 Practice Administrator of the Year (page 13). Kudos to you all!

As usual, there's always much to celebrate because DANB certificants, dental assistants and dental office managers are so dedicated about going the extra mile and shining in their careers. You're all amazing.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lois A. Bell".

Lois Bell, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, MADAA
Chair, DANB Board of Directors

WELCOME FROM THE DANB/ DALE FOUNDATION CEO

Dear DANB certificants and others in the dental community,

It is hard to believe that three months have passed already since I joined DANB and the DALE Foundation as the Chief Executive Officer. The time has flown by and I am learning so much. I've had the opportunity to engage with many of you and your fellow professionals either through meeting with our volunteers or while attending virtual meetings including the American Dental Assistants Association House of Delegates, the American Dental Education Association's Dental Assisting Section Leaders, the American Association of Dental Administrators Annual Meeting, and the American Association of Dental Boards Annual Meeting.



I am excited to be here and partner with staff and volunteers to advance the missions of DANB and the DALE Foundation. Together, we strive to ensure that dental professionals like you are well-equipped to achieve career excellence.

All of us here at DANB and the DALE Foundation are proud of you and proud to have you as part of our community. As DANB certificants, you demonstrate hard work and commitment. I've spoken with some of you, and I've been impressed with the loyalty and passion you have for the profession and for providing the highest level of patient care. I look forward to meeting more of you in the future and hearing more of your stories.

It is one of our top priorities to foster more conversations with dental assistants and others in oral healthcare. In the coming months, we'll be looking for ways to reach out and hear from you. Your voice, your stories, your challenges and your successes are part of the fabric of this community, and I welcome the opportunity to hear from you and learn more.

The future of DANB and the DALE Foundation is bright, in large part because of dedicated dental professionals like you who earn and maintain DANB certification. I look forward to seeing you progress in your careers and continue to elevate the profession for dental assistants everywhere.

With the holiday season upon us, I would like to extend my gratitude to each and every one of you for the care you've provided to patients during exceptionally challenging times and for your commitment to the profession. I hope you all are able to take some time for yourselves as the year winds down and celebrate all that you've accomplished.

Warmest holiday wishes,

Laura Skarnulis
Chief Executive Officer

INTRODUCING THE DANB AND DALE FOUNDATION BOARDS



New to the 2021-2022 DANB Board of Directors are (left to right) Frank Maggio, D.D.S.; Kimberly Plate, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, B.S.; and Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S.

DANB is pleased to announce its 2021-2022 Board of Directors:

- Lois Bell, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, MADAA — Chair
- Steven J. Holm, D.D.S. — Vice Chair
- Constance J. Reed, CDA, EFDA, B.S. — Secretary-Treasurer
- Michael Conte, D.M.D., M.P.H.
- Frank Maggio, D.D.S.
- Meagan Morton, CDA, B.S.
- Kimberly Plate, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, B.S.
- Esther R. Scherb, D.M.D., J.D.
- Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S.

New to the Board are Dr. Maggio, Ms. Plate and Ms. Tamayo.

Dr. Maggio is a periodontist with a practice in Elgin, Illinois; he is also a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry, Department of Periodontics.

Ms. Plate, of Pingree Grove, Illinois, currently works as director of the dental assisting program

News and Updates

at Elgin Community College (ECC). She previously worked as an ECC adjunct dental assisting faculty member from 1998 until assuming her director role there in 2004.

Ms. Tamayo, of Honolulu, Hawaii, has worked as a dental assistant with the U.S. Air Force for nearly 10 years in Florida, Colorado and North Carolina. Her roles have included Dental Flight Chief, Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Records and Reception, and Dental Technician.

[Learn more about the DANB Board of Directors.](#)

Additionally, the DALE Foundation, the official DANB affiliate, is pleased to announce its 2021-2022 Board of Trustees:

- Lori Gagliardi, CDA, FADAA, RDA, RDH, Ed.D. — President
- Guinevere B. Juckett, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, EFDA, FADAA — President-Elect
- Vicki L. Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H. — Secretary-Treasurer
- Joanne Dawley, D.D.S. — Immediate Past President
- Opal Anderson, FAADOM
- Lois Bell, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, MADAA
- Michael Conte, D.M.D., M.P.H.
- Carol K. Oeder, CDA-Emeritus, COA-Emeritus, CPFDA-Emeritus, CRFDA-Emeritus, CDPMA-Emeritus, FADAA, LPN
- Royann Royer, CDA, RDH, M.P.H.
- Kathy Zwieg, CDA, LDA

[Learn more about the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees.](#)

THANK YOU TO OUTGOING DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES



DANB thanks outgoing Directors Sandra Garcia, CDA, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM; Denise Romero, CDA, COA, RDA, Ed.D., FADAA; and Karen L. Comisi, CDA, RDA, FADAA, for their dedicated service to the Board.

The DALE Foundation thanks outgoing Trustees Frank Maggio, D.D.S., and Katharine “Kate” Noble, CDA, CRFDA, SSgt ME Air National Guard, for their dedicated service to the Board.

GETTING THEIR START THROUGH DENTAL ASSISTING

Pre-dental students find success through Temple University's post-baccalaureate program that includes dental assisting coursework

For aspiring dentists, fulfilling their dream begins with gaining entrance into dental school. However, this can be challenging to achieve, with the enrollment statistics not always in applicants' favor.

But a unique post-baccalaureate program offered through Temple University's Kornberg School of Dentistry gives dental school hopefuls the opportunity to advance their education and become more competitive for admission to dental school.

The program includes a combination of dental assisting training and advanced translational science courses. Students take dental assisting lectures and labs, plus online courses offered through the DALE Foundation, the official DANB affiliate. After completing the coursework, students take DANB's Radiation Health and Safety (RHS); Infection Control (ICE); and Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP) exams and, after passing the exams, are allowed to assist third- and four-year dental students in the clinic.



The students enrolled in this year's class have all completed their dental assisting training and passed the DANB exams.

[Hands-on experience gives students a head start](#)

Students from previous years have said the post-baccalaureate program thoroughly prepared them for dental school. In particular, knowing dental terminology and how things work in the clinic provided confidence to help them excel in their first year of dental school.

One of the unique elements of the Kornberg School of Dentistry's post-baccalaureate program is the hands-on experience that students gain by assisting in the clinic. Students said the real-world learning opportunity gave them a head start when they entered dental school. Additionally, the opportunity to assist student-dentists provided a deeper understanding of how to work with a dental assistant so a procedure can go as smoothly and quickly as possible.

"Those post-baccalaureate students admitted to dental school after completing the program definitely feel they have an advantage once they enter the preclinical and clinical settings in dental school," says JoAnn Nyquist, BSDH, M.A., Ed.S., Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Diversity and Director of the Post-Baccalaureate Program with Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry.

Nyquist elaborates: “While students who enter dental school typically have maybe 80 hours of shadowing, and some have been dental assistants, by the time our students finish the post-baccalaureate program, they’ve got almost 300 hours accrued in all dental specialties and restorative dentistry.”

Shyam Ladani completed the post-baccalaureate program in the May 2021 class and is currently enrolled at Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry, with an expected graduation year of 2025.

Ladani says being able to earn NELDA certification was an amazing feature of the program, along with its comprehensive nature: “We had preclinic opportunities, clinical opportunities, we assisted students, and using DALE Foundation courses helped.”

He adds: “I really liked how the DALE Foundation courses were accessible online, so I could watch the videos, do the modules, and gain knowledge that way, as a supplement to what we were being taught in the classroom. The content of our teachers’ classroom presentations was very similar to the DALE Foundation modules, which reinforced the material.”

Overall, Ladani credits DANB, the DALE Foundation and the Temple post-baccalaureate program for helping him in his journey to becoming a dentist.

“In addition to allowing me to strengthen my dental school application, the program also allowed me to learn more about the dental field, like terminology and even simple things like mixing ingredients to make impressions,” he shares. “It’s learning about little things like that during the post-baccalaureate program that has been largely beneficial. Now, as a dental student, I feel more confident in my work and can spend class time more efficiently.”



JoAnn Nyquist, BSDH,
M.A., Ed.S.

Increased focus on infection control

The post-baccalaureate program also incorporates the Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate Program, co-developed by the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP) and the DALE Foundation. The certificate program includes two educational components and an assessment. Additionally, students complete a module on COVID-19 Respiratory Droplet and Aerosol Protection.

Nyquist says it’s important for students to complete the certificate program, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Students utilize the most updated and current information to prepare them for their acceptance into dental school and their future,” she says. “They appreciate the emphasis in today’s healthcare settings to acquire the necessary training and knowledge.”

Learn more about the program

The current Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry’s Post-Baccalaureate Program began at the end of May 2021 and continues through April 2022. After successfully completing the program, students may be conditionally accepted to Temple University’s Doctor of Dental Medicine program. Students are encouraged to apply to other dental programs as well.

To learn more, visit the [program webpage](#).

WINNERS NAMED FOR LIZ KOCH SCHOLARSHIP

Four dental professionals have been named as the winners of the 2021 Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship.

Scholarship funds can be used for professional development activities, such as continuing education, dental conferences, DANB certification renewal and college courses. Each year, applicants describe how they also strive to be lifelong learners and build a successful career dedicated to impacting and inspiring others.

This year's winners, selected from applicants across the country, are no exception. They have set career goals that include pursuing dental hygiene, completing an expanded functions program, and earning DANB certification.

Celebrating the 2021 Scholarship Winners



Joanna L. Girdner, CDA, EFDA

Joanna L. Girdner, CDA, EFDA, of Westerville, Ohio, has been working in the dental assisting profession for nearly 20 years. She now has her sights set on earning an associate degree in dental hygiene from Columbus State Community College, where she's currently enrolled. Girdner plans to put her scholarship toward the tuition cost.

"I have dedicated myself to learning everything I can," says Girdner. "I have a ferocious appetite for knowledge. Learning will not stop with earning my associate degree. I will continue my journey to obtain my bachelor's degree as well in dental hygiene, and I hope to finish my career by teaching the future generation of dental professionals."

Kalyn Rhodes, CDA, of Murphysboro, Illinois, has been a dental assistant for more than four years for Shawnee Health Service in southern Illinois. Since June 2021, she has been working toward completing the expanded functions dental assisting program at John A. Logan College and plans to use her scholarship to offset the tuition cost.

"I have been on the search for more ways to provide for



Kalyn Rhodes, CDA

Spotlight on Excellence

my patients,” says Rhodes. “Bringing new expanded-functions skill sets to my practice will not only help in developing my lifelong career in oral healthcare, but also bring more opportunities to mentor other dental assistants looking to grow in this rewarding and ever-changing field.”



Clarissa Torgersen, CDA

Clarissa Torgersen, CDA, of Ingleside, Illinois, has been working at a pediatric dental practice in Lake Zurich, Illinois, for nearly nine years. In 2016, she transitioned from the role of assistant to clinical coordinator for the practice. Her responsibilities now include overseeing clinical staff training, mentoring new dental assistants and coordinating staff continuing education. Education remains top of mind for Torgersen in her own career as well — she put her scholarship toward earning DANB certification, and she also plans to earn a restorative functions dental assistant credential.

“This scholarship will be a tremendous help in my continuous efforts of obtaining as much education and training to further my career in the oral healthcare field,”

says Torgersen. “I have many education and career goals, plus an overall passion for dentistry.”

Jacqueline Wilson, of Forest, Virginia, has been working as a dental assistant for almost eight years. She plans to put her scholarship funds toward earning DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification.

“I am very eager to pass the required exams to finally obtain DANB CDA certification,” says Wilson. “This scholarship will help me to further advance my education and career goals. I strive to go on to earn CRFDA certification as well. Through holding DANB certifications, I feel I’ll be able to do even more not only for my employers, but also for my community. I am so passionate about dentistry.”



Jacqueline Wilson



ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

The DALE Foundation launched the Liz Koch Memorial Scholarship in 2014 to honor the late Liz Koch, who served as Chief Operating Officer of DANB and the DALE Foundation before her untimely passing in 2011. For more information, visit the Scholarships page at www.dalefoundation.org.

LOOKING BACK ON A LIFE-CHANGING CAREER

Former DANB Board Director and Officer Mary Harrison retires from dental assisting after 50-plus years

For Mary Harrison, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, FADAA, of Portland, Oregon, retiring last year after spending over five decades in the dental assisting profession is bittersweet.

In hindsight, Harrison is content to have enjoyed a life-changing career in dental assisting, enhanced by educational experiences and credentials, meaningful patient relationships, and dental assisting volunteerism and leadership roles — including as a former member and officer of the DANB Board of Directors, from 2010-2016.

“Being able to serve on the DANB Board for sure has been the pinnacle of my career,” says Harrison, who served as a DANB Board Director from August 2010 to August 2011, DANB Board Secretary from August 2011 to August 2015, and DANB Board Vice Chair from August 2015 to August 2016. “The people at DANB have become like my family.”

Harrison elaborates that she’s grateful to have built such a large, cherished professional network, including not just DANB staff, but volunteers and members from other dental assisting groups. Through the profession, she’s also established memorable connections with longtime colleagues.

“All this has been so important to me,” Harrison recalls with nostalgia. “It’s amazing, the dear friends I’ve made in my dental assisting career. We always say, ‘You could go anywhere across the country, and if you need something, there’s always a dental assistant you can call’ — that means a lot.”

But it’s when thinking of those relationships she’s built with patients that Harrison feels most emotional about retiring from dental assisting.

Since her retirement coincided with the “stay-at-home” times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Harrison regrets not having the opportunity to say goodbye to many of her patients. “I’ve already been receiving emails from patients who are telling me they’re sorry I retired,” Harrison says,



Harrison gestures toward her longtime dentist employer, Steve Scheffel, D.M.D. “We had good times at work,” shares Harrison.

Spotlight on Excellence

adding that all the positive memories make closing this professional chapter a bit easier.

“I was always so lucky to look forward to going into work every day,” she reflects. “I loved being in the dental office and helping patients, one of my greatest rewards.”

Reflecting on the importance of education

When she was young, Harrison always had a hunch that education would serve as her passport to success — and looking back, she now knows this to be true.

“For me, it’s always been important to learn as much as I could — to learn something new every day and understand that if you do this, pretty much anything can happen,” Harrison believes.

In fact, this was the mantra of Harrison’s family growing up. “My parents always said, ‘You have to do the best you can for yourself; you have to work hard,’” Harrison says. “I had that type of support and encouragement from them. At the beginning of my professional journey, I was motivated to become a dental assistant and become DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certified. That decision changed my life.”

Harrison proudly graduated from the first coed class of students at Salem Technical Vocational College, where she studied dental assisting, in 1964. Afterward, she continued studying dental assisting so that she could become eligible to take DANB exams, earning certification in 1967.

“It was important to me to educate myself and become DANB CDA certified — that was the thing for dental assistants to do,” Harrison reflects. “Throughout my career, being able to write ‘CDA’ as part of my signature has always made a big difference for me.”

“It’s always been important to learn as much as I could — to learn something new every day and understand that if you do this, pretty much anything can happen.”

— Mary Harrison, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, FADAA

As a DANB CDA certificant, Harrison has worked as a clinical chairside dental assistant for more than 20 years with the office of Steve Scheffel, D.M.D. She also is an Oregon Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) and Oregon Expanded Function Orthodontic Assistant (EFODA).

Reflecting on the rewards of involvement

Early in her career, Harrison quickly learned the importance of not only investing in her education, but also getting involved in dental organizations.

“When I first started out, I knew this was important — to show that I cared, that I wanted to do better, and that I was motivated to learn and do more in my career,” Harrison elaborates.

Specifically, she has been an active member in the American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA) for more than 50 years, making contributions at national, state and local levels. She has held numerous officer positions within the Oregon Dental Assistants Association (ODAA), including president and vice president, and served on various ODAA committees. And she has taken on leadership positions within local dental assisting societies and served on all society committees.

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Harrison also won the ADAA Achievement Award in 2006, and she earned Fellowship in the ADAA approximately 15 years ago — an emotional milestone achievement.

Harrison remembers: “During that year’s ADAA annual session Fellowship induction ceremony, my husband, daughter, son-in-law and then-3-month-old grandson surprised me by traveling to the event. I had no idea they were going to be there. This meant the world to me.”



Harrison works to provide patient care alongside Dr. Scheffel.

Plus, it was Harrison’s ADAA involvement that led her to DANB — she was an ADAA nominee elected to DANB’s Board of Directors in 2010.

Beyond her extensive ADAA and DANB involvements, Harrison has been a representative to both the Oregon Dental Association and the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD); testified before the OBD and the Oregon State Legislature, representing ODAA and all dental assistants in the state; and served as a consultant to the OBD for the assisted chairside, EFDA, and EFODA exams, as well as the assisted chairside exam for the Western Regional Dental Board.

Additionally, Harrison notes that she partnered with Ginny Jorgensen, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, AAS, in a business called Dental Career Advancements in the mid-to-late 1980s and early ’90s, traveling around the state of Oregon providing education for assistants working toward their EFDA and EFODA credentials and taking state ex-

ams. “We employed a dentist, dental hygienist and dental assistants helping with some of the courses,” explains Harrison.

Overall, “being involved in dental organizations is a very, very important part of building your dental assisting career and professional network,” Harrison reiterates.

Looking forward

Almost a year into retirement, Harrison plans to spend more time with her family. She will continue volunteering, including with her local church. In the past, Harrison has served with Give Kids a Smile Week Committee and the Portland Public School Fluoride King Program, among other community work. “I’ve always wanted to volunteer anywhere I could help,” she says.

Harrison also anticipates meeting up for lunches and museum trips with friends from both her dental and non-dental worlds. And Harrison hopes to travel more soon; in fact, she and 30-some dental colleagues are planning a cruise for 2023. She looks forward to her first cruise experience, viewing it as a special chance to add more memories to those accrued over almost a lifetime.

“I miss gathering with my peers and talking about dentistry,” concludes Harrison. “To me, dental assisting has always been what I do and will always be who I am.”

TERESA SPENCE EARNS TOP AADOM AWARD

Spence was also inducted with the first class of AADOM Diplomates



Teresa C. Spence, DAADOM, is honored to have been named this year's [Practice Administrator of the Year](#) during the Association of Dental Office Management ([AADOM](#)) conference, held Sept. 9-11 in Orlando, Florida.

"It's been exciting," shares Spence, Practice Administrator at Amelia Dental Group in Fernandina, Florida. "I was in shock when I heard my name called! I was speechless."

2020 Practice Administrators of the Year Debbie Evans, DAADOM, and Jennifer Steadman, DAADOM, announced Spence as this year's winner during the lunch kicking off the conference.

"Jennifer and I were both thrilled to present the 2021 Practice Administrator of the Year award," Evans reflects. "Teresa is wonderful. All the nominees were wonderful — they have to be. So it

was an honor to pass the baton, so to speak, a really great thing to do."

For the past three years, Spence has been a runner-up for AADOM's premier award, so being selected as Practice Administrator of the Year in 2021 felt especially meaningful to her.

Spence is an experienced professional who has spent 35 years in dentistry, including 30 with her current practice. She's served in her current dental office management role since 2010, when she also joined AADOM to help build her knowledge base. Spence enjoys working with patients and staff, and also likes to help the team and others develop in their careers. In addition to having a hand in hiring dental team members, she also connects them to continuing education opportunities. Spence is currently helping an assistant in her office to prepare to take DANB exams and earn Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification.

Spence takes professional development seriously, and has furthered her education through the DALE Foundation, DANB's educational affiliate. Last year, she earned the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate™ as part of the requirements to earn AADOM Mastership. This year, she earned Diplomate status and was inducted with AADOM's first-ever class of DAADOMs.

To Spence, the opportunities AADOM provides to dental office managers to support their career growth are endless, and much appreciated. "I particularly enjoy the networking AADOM offers — and all the resources they provide," Spence elaborates.

Spence also values the camaraderie fostered through AADOM. She has attended AADOM conferences every year since 2011. "I enjoy going to the conference for all the continuing education opportunities, so I can learn something new, and to see all the sponsors and vendors who can share what's new out there, which you could bring back to your practice."

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Spence is pictured here with her award and her dental colleagues at Amelia Dental Group in Fernandina, Florida.

Attending this year's conference was especially meaningful for Spence — not only because she was an award winner, but also because it was held in person.

“The energy for this year's conference was over the top because we didn't get to see each other last year in person,” Spence recognizes, noting the 2020 event was held virtually due to the pandemic. “It was nice to catch up with people who came to the conference from across the country. You ‘see’ one another through social media, and connect through email and

the web, but the vibe is always especially phenomenal at an in-person AADOM conference. It was a little emotional because of what we all had gone through the previous year.”

Spence says that the support offered through AADOM has been priceless and uplifting: “Every step of the way this past year, we've all been there for each other. And for this year's conference, we got to be together and talk about that. There were lots of raw moments and tears because we made it through together.”

SPENCE'S ADVICE FOR DENTAL OFFICE MANAGERS

Keep learning. Spence says: “I always tell people to read, read, read — because we learn so much by reading and researching. Continuing to self-invest is one of the biggest things you can do to move your career forward. Always strive to be better than you were the day before — not for anyone else, but for yourself. Because this automatically benefits the practice and other people around you.”

Get involved. In particular, Spence advocates for joining AADOM, to take advantage of all the learning and networking opportunities offered. “If I am facing something that I hadn't faced before in my career, I know I have a group of individuals out there I can reach out to with questions, because somebody probably has already been through it before, or is going through it, and we can navigate it together. And the executive team is amazing. They can connect you to a fellow member or resources to help you.”

Expand your expertise. Spence also has completed the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate Program and recommends it to dental professionals who are looking to build their expertise in this critical area. “Infection prevention and control is a very important part of our jobs and is a big responsibility. It's a good program for expanding your knowledge,” she says.

[Learn more](#) about the OSAP-DALE Foundation certificate program.

PRACTICE MANAGERS INDUCTED WITH HONORS

First class of Diplomates among AADOM inductees for 2021



Members from the first-ever class of DAADOMs gather during AADOM's annual conference.

DANB and the DALE Foundation extend a heartfelt congratulations to the 2021 class of American Association of Dental Office Management ([AADOM](#)) Fellows, Masters and Diplomates.

This year, 94 dental office managers [earned these prestigious dental distinctions](#) during AADOM's annual conference held Sept. 9-11 in Orlando, Florida. In total, 19 DAADOMs, 20 MAADOMS, and 55 FAADOMs were recognized during the induction ceremony. The in-person event was streamed to AADOM's Facebook page, so that online viewers could also see the event, including hearing AADOM Founder and President Heather Colicchio's opening address.

"Since the induction ceremony last year was virtual, this year's was even more memorable," says Jennifer Steadman, DAADOM, Director of Operations at New England Dental Partners in Massachusetts and founder of the Boston chapter of AADOM.

To kick off the ceremony, Colicchio greeted the inductees and audience. Then, Fellows walked across the stage to receive their award as Odyssey Management's Teresa Duncan, M.S., called their names.

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Jennifer Steadman, DAADOM, right, poses with Kristi Abrahamsen, DAADOM.

Next, Masters crossed the stage as AADOM Vice President Lorie Streeter, CTC, FAADOM, introduced them. As part of meeting AADOM Mastership requirements, MAADOM candidates must hold current AADOM Fellowship distinction, as well as successfully complete the three-step OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate Program.

Lastly, the members of the class of Diplomates were recognized as Colicchio called their names. "This is the induction of our very first class of AADOM Diplomates for 2021," Colicchio told the audience. "These DAADOMs are unstoppable, and I am so amazingly proud. It is my honor to induct the AADOM 2021 class of Diplomates."

Among those inducted were Valarie Caulfield, DAADOM, office manager at Sodorff and Wilson Family Dentistry in Spokane Valley, Washington. "I chose to pursue the Diplomat distinction because

dentistry is my career; why not shoot for the stars?" Caulfield shares. "Being one of 19 in the nation to have achieved the Diplomat distinction makes me so proud, to be among the very best in dental office management."

Agrees Steadman, "The 19 DAADOM inductees have a tight bond from going through the program together. We supported each other through the process and were each other's cheerleaders, making sure we all met deadlines and accomplished this together."

Caulfield — who was not only in this year's inaugural DAADOM class, but also among those acknowledged as an AADOM Practice Administrator of Distinction — was grateful to be back at an in-person AADOM conference. "I did attend the national conference in Orlando, and it was so fabulous getting to network with my people again."

"One takeaway I got from the national conference recently was that as office managers in our practices, it's up to us to set all of our team members up for the future, to keep teaching each other and keep learning," Caulfield continues. "As with everything, change is inevitable, with technology, insurance, products and people. Let's build each other up and help every generation beyond our own succeed. Let's continue demonstrating our professional pride. I know that I am very proud of my profession."



Valarie Caulfield, DAADOM, proudly displays her award.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF DANB CERTIFICATION

Theresa Treharn, CDA: Holding DANB certification enhances dental assistant career growth

Longtime dental assistant Theresa Treharn, CDA, administrative dental assistant with Mid America Health, has reached her 30-year DANB certification milestone. Over three decades, Treharn has seen firsthand the benefits that holding DANB certification can bring — including immense career development.

“Being a DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certificant, I’ve been able to move up the career ladder to have more management duties,” says Treharn, who spent 20 years as a dental assistant in private practice before taking the next step in her career. “I have a very good position in my career right now,” she says. “I work for the Ohio state prisons as an experienced dental assistant. I’ve been with them for 13.5 years.”

Working in the prison setting where both medical and dental patients are seen, Treharn now has more tasks than ever before, including having a hand in treatment planning, completing audits and statistic recording.

“We as a medical/dental team cross over all the time. Every day is so challenging, with regular new tasks,” Treharn says. “I chose to keep maintaining DANB certification so that I’d be well-equipped for more challenging tasks, including with infection prevention and control.” Treharn adds that beyond ensuring a safe visit for patients, she also must make sure that office protocols are kept up to date. To be successful in this area, Treharn understands the importance of completing continuing dental education.

“You have to stay on top of the updates with all of the different types of infectious risks of late,” believes Treharn, who adds that DALE Foundation resources can be helpful for those looking to hone their expertise in infection prevention and control.

“I do use DALE Foundation courses, and I recommend them to up-and-coming dental assistants, too, when I go to a local school and career center here in our town and speak to students who are graduating,” Treharn says.

When talking with aspiring dental assistants, and with those aiming to take their career to new



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—Theresa Treharn,
CDA

Spotlight on Excellence



Theresa Treharn, CDA, is pictured while attending the 40th National Conference on Correctional Health Care in October 2016 in Las Vegas. Treharn explains: “Since I work in a medical setting as well as a dental one, I had the privilege and honor of being invited to go with the nurses at the institution I work in.”

heights, Treharn doesn’t just tout the importance of continuing education. She also recommends dental assistants demonstrate their knowledge and skills through DANB certification.

“I encourage young dental assistants to earn and maintain DANB certification,” Treharn says. “I promote its importance. I tell them it’s better to hold certification than to not, because you have to work hard to earn and maintain DANB certification.”

Doing so has led to many career benefits for Treharn, she says: a higher salary, more benefits, a flexible schedule, and much more.

“Holding DANB certification ultimately gives me more recognition among my peers and patients,” Treharn says. “Overall, I’ve earned more respect and have more job opportunities.”

With all this in mind, Treharn has this message for those looking to grow as a dental assistant: “Don’t settle for less. Become certified. And once you do, maintain certification.”

EXPERIENCING THE BENEFITS OF DANB CERTIFICATION

For dental assistants, earning DANB certification leads to higher pay, greater career satisfaction, and many other personal and professional benefits. Learn more — including about certification renewal — by visiting www.danb.org

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