

**DANB**

Dental Assisting  
National Board

# Certified Press

Summer 2022



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dental assisting  
meaningful p. 9

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First group earns  
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## CELEBRATING CPFDA AND CRFDA

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## WORD FROM THE CHAIR



**A**s you may have seen, DANB debuted its new logo in April 2022!

DANB Chief Executive Officer Laura Skarnulis describes the new logo by saying, “Our new logo is a visual representation of DANB’s sharpened focus on meeting the changing demands of the profes-

sion and enhancing our connectivity with dental assistants and others in dentistry.” Read more on page 3.

With these wise words in mind, I find myself reflecting upon all the changes I’ve observed over five decades of dental assisting. Where do I begin? Dentistry is al-

ways evolving, with information coming our way faster than ever, and dental assistants have endless opportunities to accrue and demonstrate knowledge. How do we assistants keep up with the overload of information – or “infowhelm”?

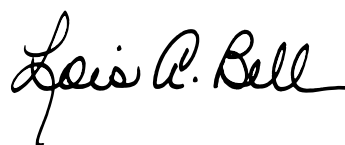
There is no single answer, but I believe it boils down to today’s dental assistants becoming, and remaining, lifelong learners. We must strive to keep up with the evolution in everything including technology, dental materials, infection prevention and control, and sterilization.

As a new dental assistant, it didn’t take long for me to recognize my own responsibility to keep pace with the changing dental landscape. Consider that my career began in the era of belt-driven handpieces, old Ritter chairs, cuspidors, mercury/silver dispensers — and no gloves! How far we’ve come since then! Along my career path, I always felt challenged to learn new things or risk becoming irrelevant. I always chose to move forward by becoming better and better, so that I could best complement my provider.

Here is what happened as a result: I became a lifelong learner! I encourage you all to chart the same course.

It’s such an exciting time for dental assistants, and especially DANB certificants and exam candidates, at all stages of their careers. It is inspiring to see the dental assisting community rally around DANB’s new look — which seeks to capture the energy and momentum of dental assisting — and feel proud of its reflection of the profession.

In dental, the sky is the limit! Today’s dental assistants can branch out into any area that interests them, and then go even further with the support of DANB and the DALE Foundation. With our new logo, DANB reaffirms: Dental assistants’ future is bright. We’re so glad to be supporting you all as you progress in your journey.



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

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**On the cover:** Whitney Greenleaf and dental assisting students volunteer at a 2022 Team Smiles event (see p. 9).



## NEW FEATURES, NEW LOOKS FOR DANB, DALE FOUNDATION

Earlier this year, DANB debuted digital badges and its new logo. And, coming soon — new websites for both DANB and the DALE Foundation.

This spring, DANB introduced digital badges as a new way to provide recognition to those who hold DANB or DALE Foundation credentials. The digital badges are issued through Credly, DANB's badging partner.



Dental assistants and other dental professionals who earn DANB certificates or certifications, or the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate, will be issued a digital badge, which they can claim through Credly's website and then easily and securely share with colleagues, employers and friends.

When the badge is embedded or shared, it links to a credential holder's profile page, which lists when the credential was issued, the requirements to earn it, the knowledge and skills it represents, and when it expires.

Credential holders can use this record of their achievements to differentiate themselves, while employers can use this information to validate current and future employees' qualifications and the skills they bring to the workplace.

### DANB's new logo

Also this spring, DANB unveiled a new logo to signal the advancements of the organization and the dental assisting profession. The new DANB logo integrates a streamlined design and more refined typeface. The logo's blue gradient color, along with the arc crossing through the letters, symbolize progress and forward momentum. This modernized look reflects the evolution of dental assisting and DANB's growth mindset to best serve the dental assisting community.

"Over the past several months, DANB has initiated many conversations about the pressing needs of dental assistants and dental teams, as well as DANB's role in addressing workforce issues and patient health," said DANB CEO Laura Skarnulis. "Our new logo is a visual representation of DANB's sharpened focus on meeting the changing demands of the profession and enhancing our connectivity with dental assistants and others in dentistry."

The previous logo had been in use since DANB was founded in 1980. Significant thought and care were taken in the redesign process. DANB's Logo Redesign Task Force led the change, with input from DANB stakeholders. DANB certificants and exam candidates who previewed the logo unveiling described the new design as bold, clear, fresh, modern and professional.

### New websites coming soon

Later this summer, DANB and the DALE Foundation will launch their redesigned websites, which will feature a modernized look, streamlined information, and more interactive content. On both websites, visitors will be able to more easily find what they are looking for and get the information they need. More information will be shared in the coming weeks.

## DANB, DALE FOUNDATION PARTNER WITH ASPEN DENTAL

Aspen Dental has launched a partnership with DANB and its affiliate organization, the DALE Foundation, to invest in dental radiography training and credentials for dental assistants across Aspen Dental's network of nearly 1,000 offices nationwide.

In most states, dental radiography procedures are a regulated skill, and dental assistants are required to complete a state-approved course, participate in hands-on training and register through the state dental board to perform them. The DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam is recognized as an industry standard in more than 30 states and will support dental assistants across the Aspen Dental network in meeting state radiography requirements.



“Dental assistants are core to our mission at Aspen Dental — as we continue to bring down barriers and make dental care more accessible and affordable, ensuring our teams have the resources and training they need to perform all essential functions is critical,” said Arwinder Judge, D.D.S., chief clinical officer at Aspen Dental. “DANB is a leader in recognizing the value dental assistants bring and developing curriculum that’s practically applicable to day-to-day office functions and patient care.”

“Dental assistants are integral members of the oral healthcare team,” said Laura Skarnulis, CEO of DANB and the DALE Foundation. “They enhance the productivity of the practice by partnering with their doctors to manage the busy patient workflow, and their chairside interactions often positively impact the patients’ experience and treatment plan acceptance. That’s why

we’re so excited to see Aspen Dental’s commitment to ensuring these essential team members have up-to-date training and knowledge to effectively perform their central duties.”

The DALE Foundation offers interactive e-learning courses and resources to educate dental assistants on the fundamentals of dental radiography to prepare them for DANB’s RHS exam. Aspen Dental assistants will complete the DALE Foundation’s DANB RHS Review course and take the DALE Foundation’s DANB RHS Practice Test to assess their knowledge in preparation for the DANB RHS exam. The partnership also includes options for dental assistants to complete education and earn credentials in other practice areas to expand their skill set at their own pace.

To learn more about Aspen Dental or the Aspen Group, visit [aspental.com](https://aspental.com) or [teamtag.com](https://teamtag.com).

# HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PREPARE FOR DENTAL CAREERS

The dental sciences program at Woodhaven High School in Michigan has helped students accelerate their careers in dentistry.

Like many areas across the country, Michigan dental practices are grappling with a shortage of dental assistants. Parts of Wayne County, where Woodhaven High School is located, are designated as a dental care health professional shortage area. “Dental care is at a high demand,” says Dawn Damron, RDH, M.A., dental sciences instructor at Woodhaven-Brownstown School District, a position she has held since 2009.

Previously, Damron worked as a dental hygienist at a private practice. Since moving into dental education, Damron has served as an advisor for the National Technical Honor Society and HOSA-Future Health Professionals. She is also a member of the advisory committee at Wayne County Community College District, the marketing team at Downriver Career Technical Consortium, and the DANB/DALE Foundation Entry Level Dental Assisting Curriculum Task Force.

The dental sciences program at Woodhaven High School was developed by Mary Brockschmidt many years ago, says Damron. “Mary started the program and I give her all the credit. She really did the legwork to create a great curriculum.”

Today, that curriculum is a two-year program that brings in students from nine different districts. Damron says the program is rigorous, covering anatomy, radiography, chairside assisting, and front office skills. The program also incorporates a variety of learning activities, such as videos and worksheets, as well as online courses from the DALE Foundation. During the program, students can take the DANB exams and when they graduate, they are eligible to earn DANB’s National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA) certification.

“I was very excited to incorporate the DALE Foundation courses and DANB exams into our program,” Damron says. “Being able to graduate with a certification is huge. It helps employers to verify the knowledge of the students, and it gives students confidence when they start their first job.”

The program focuses on preparing students for the workforce and giving them employability skills. Several colleges and universities in the area grant credits to incoming students for completing the program, which gives them a head start in furthering their education. “We are providing students with alternative routes to career paths,” Damron explains. “The latest follow-up survey data shows that 70% of our students are working in the field.”



Students from the dental sciences program at Woodhaven High School volunteer with TeamSmile to provide free dental care to children.

## Launching dental careers

Two of Damron's former students are advocates for the program and since graduating have taken their careers to new heights.

Former student Madison Thomas will graduate this year from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry and fulfill her dream of becoming a dentist. Thomas says her interest in the program was first piqued because her aunt and cousin worked in dentistry and "they were the only people that I talked to who loved their jobs."

"Being able to graduate with a certification is huge. It helps employers to verify the knowledge of the students, and it gives students confidence when they start their first job."

— Dawn Damron, RDH, M.A.

When she started the program, she quickly realized how much she enjoyed the classes and, in the process, built her skills and confidence. "I found my passion," Thomas says. "The skills I mastered are worth more than my whole high school education combined, in my book."

Damron's influence and support made an impact on Thomas and helped her realize what she could achieve. Securing her first job as a dental assistant was a point of pride. "I walked into a local dentist office with the resume [Damron] helped me create, and I landed a job as an assistant immediately," Thomas recounts. "The whole office was so impressed with what I was being taught and how I was able to use my skills. I would have never thought I would be here with a million opportunities and a passion for dentistry, but this class will do that to you."

Rachel Weatherhead is another former student of Damron's program. Today, Weatherhead is a Doctor of Dental Surgery and runs her own dental practice in Woodhaven, Michigan. "Before I became a dentist, I took the dental occupations class at Woodhaven High School in 2007 and 2008," Weatherhead says. "That was the first time I was exposed to a career in dentistry and what that would look like. I want to thank everybody who worked so hard at putting on this program. I think it's a huge benefit and I encourage everyone to look into it."

## Supporting students' journeys

When it comes to preparing students for a career in dentistry, it's not just about teaching them what they need to know from a textbook. Damron says supporting students emotionally and building their confidence is a big part of the work she does.

"One of my former students said she really struggled with feeling confident at first," Damron reflects. "I've seen this with a lot of my students. I don't know if it's fear or being uncomfortable with accountability. But as students go through the program, I see their mindset shift and they start to grow."

With all the changes and challenges of the recent years, Damron says many students, even the most hard-working ones, struggle with their emotions and uncertainty about the future. "Some of my students are very unsure of their futures and they deal with that anxiety," she explains. "Even my students who are high achievers sometimes feel overwhelmed and need someone to listen to them."

Damron says she strives to be there for every student and point them to resources and opportunities. One of those opportunities, she notes, is earning DANB certification when they graduate. "That certification will show that they've met a standard, which is something that employers can see," she says. "I am so grateful these students have this program to set them up for success."



# PERSPECTIVE: MOVING TO PRACTICE ADMINISTRATION

AADOM Fellow and DANB certificant Terri Lenihan shares insight about making the switch.

**A**sk any dental professional what they love about working in dentistry, and you'll likely hear about all the opportunities to learn and advance. With so many paths to explore, from working chairside as a dental assistant to having a role at the front desk and more, dentistry is an exciting field to enter.

While everyone on the dental team has varying responsibilities, they also share one commonality: All dental professionals can benefit from pursuing education and credentials, plus networking with and learning from colleagues.

Terri Lenihan, CDPMA, FAADOM, office manager at Broadway Family and Cosmetic Dentistry in Council Bluffs, Iowa, knows firsthand that professional proactivity is the key to finding the perfect role in dentistry, as well as staying a step ahead in the field. For this reason, she's been a longtime active member of the American Association of Dental Office Management (AADOM) and continues to maintain certification with DANB. Here, Lenihan shares her story and advice for those looking to transition to practice administration, too.

**Certified Press:** Thank you for speaking with us about your dental career path! **First things first: What brought you to the dental assisting profession?**

**Lenihan:** It all began when my friend called to ask whether I wanted a job working with her as a dental assistant. At the time, I was going to college and working as an assistant manager at a fast-food restaurant. Unhappy with the major I had chosen in school, but also knowing that I enjoyed working with people, I figured that a change in direction was worth a try!

It wasn't long into my on-the-job-training in dental assisting that I fell in love with helping people as part of my role, and that I discovered there was a lot more involved in dentistry than I ever realized. It was interesting to learn about all the areas of the practice. Since I love learning new things, I made sure to help in whatever dental office areas I could, soaking up new information like a sponge.

**Sounds exciting! Why did you decide to pursue dental practice administration?**

I was working for a few offices as an assistant when, to my surprise, one of the doctors approached me and



asked if I would be interested in moving into the front-desk position. Having been finding that I truly enjoyed the business side of dentistry, the decision to make the change was an easy one for me.

Within a few years, the office manager I worked with announced her retirement, and it was a natural transition for me to move into that role. With this new responsibility came an entirely new set of skills and processes to learn.

### **During this transition, how did you gain the dental office management knowledge you needed?**

In 2007, I completed the exam through DANB to become a Certified Dental Practice Management Administrator (CDPMA) certificant, and I continue to maintain DANB certification to this day.

In this same year, I also received a fax from Heather Colicchio, AADOM founder and president, asking if I was a dental office manager seeking peer support. Well, yes, that was me! Becoming a member of AADOM and attending my first management conference was an easy decision, which has made all the difference.

Then in 2010, I invested more in myself professionally and completed AADOM's Fellowship program. It was so rewarding to be inducted into the first class of Fellows in 2010 ... and then in 2017, to be nominated by my doctor and team for the prestigious AADOM Practice Administrator of the Year Award — which I won! It was an honor just to be nominated then, but to actually receive this award has been one of the most fulfilling moments in my career.

### **Would you recommend dental practice administration to those considering the change?**

Yes! While the move to practice administrator was huge and scary, it also has been life-changing for me. I love my career and can't imagine doing anything else. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities I was given early on in my career to become a dental assistant, and then to move to office management. Now, being cross-trained to work in both areas of the dental office is so rewarding; I do still keep my dental assistant license current through the state of Iowa, since I help out in the clinical area occasionally.

Whatever career path you choose, I simply say, embrace the change and enjoy the journey! And remember, AADOM and your peers (including me) are always here to support you.

## Ready to Become a Dental Office Manager?

The DALE Foundation offers several courses on a variety of dental office management topics. Visit [www.dalefoundation.org](http://www.dalefoundation.org) to learn more.

## Explore AADOM's Resources

AADOM offers a variety of resources, education and networking opportunities for dental office managers. AADOM is offering a complimentary membership "test drive" to see what being an AADOM member is all about. For more information, visit [www.dentalmanagers.com](http://www.dentalmanagers.com).





# PATIENT CARE MAKES DENTAL ASSISTING MEANINGFUL



Whitney Greenleaf, CDA, COA, CPFDA (center), and dental assisting students at the Arizona School of Dental Assisting volunteering at a Team Smiles event.

Being a dental assistant is rewarding in numerous ways. For many, working with patients is at the top of the list.

**S**ervice to others is at the heart of dental assisting — and it goes beyond helping the dentist with procedures and preparing exam rooms. As Brenda Macias, CDA, puts it: “We are dental assistants — not only to assist doctors, but patients as well.”

According to Whitney Greenleaf, CDA, COA, CPFDA, the patient–dental assistant relationship is “everything.”

“I’ve had so many patients end up asking for me for future appointments. It kind of hits a different heart zone,” explains Greenleaf. “Not everybody likes going to the dentist. If they’re OK with going and they’re asking for you because you make their time at the office more valuable, special, or easy, then then you’ve done your job.”

A dental assistant is often the main touchpoint for a patient during their appointment. And the job is multifaceted. Dental assistants can be tasked with everything from explaining procedures and post-operative instructions to providing oral health education and answering questions.

But perhaps the most important thing a dental assistant can do is help a patient feel comfortable during their appointment.

“As an assistant, we are a friend, offering a hand to hold if needed, a voice for the patient, and reassurance to the patient on behalf of the dentist,” explains Angel Jones, CDA.



“We are dental assistants — not only to assist doctors, but patients as well.”

— Brenda Macias,  
CDA

Lessette Lantigua, CDA, agrees: “I love working with people, taking care of them, serving them the best way I can, and making them happy and comfortable. That’s why I work.”

Denise Hall, CDA, RDA, FADAA, EFDA, who is a dental practice administrator, says turning a patient’s mindset around was especially meaningful to her when she was a dental assistant.

“We had a patient years ago who hated to come in — she always told us that,” shares Hall. “One day, while we were working on her, she stopped us to say that she was having so much fun listening to us that she no longer dreaded seeing us! That meant a lot to me.”

Macias has seen both sides of the impact a dental assistant can make. Not only has she been a dental assistant for over 15 years, but she also made a special connection with a dental assistant while she was a patient receiving extensive veneer and crown work.

“I will never forget the dental assistant for helping with shade selection, holding my hand throughout the procedure and follow-up appointments, and handing me the mirror on the final day. We were in tears together,” says Macias. “This was a milestone in my life. I vowed that day that I would do the same for others during their appointments.”

Just talking to patients and learning about their lives can make a world of difference, says Jones. Asking a patient about their day, plans, and interests can get them to relax and take their mind off the procedure.

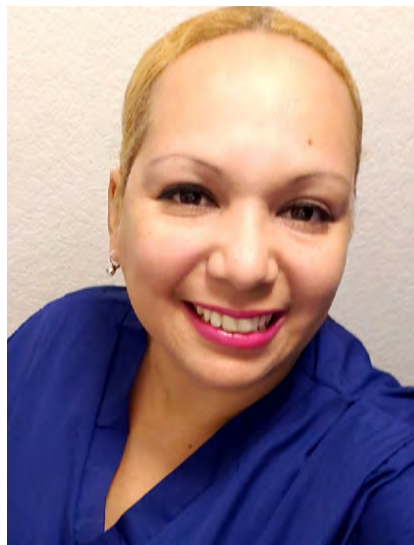
“It’s really an opportunity to be there for them, whether just for that appointment or for future appointments where you can build on the relationship,” explains Jones.

And when patients have a dedicated, compassionate dental assistant, they tend to remember it.

Jones recalls helping one patient whose smile had been affected by drug addiction and was anxious about the treatment. As Jones got to know the patient over a series of appointments, their anxiety eased. By the end of the treatment, Jones said the patient was sad to end her weekly appointment routine.

“It is so rewarding to see a patient grow and get through their anxiety or fear of the dentist. Just knowing that you changed their life a little bit ... makes the job so worth it,” says Jones.

Hall remembers a 99-year-old woman who lost an anterior bridge just before her 100th birthday party. Hall went to the office with her dentist on a Saturday afternoon to help repair the patient’s



“I love working with people, taking care of them, serving them the best way I can, and making them happy and comfortable. That’s why I work.”

— Lessette Lantigua,  
CDA

dentures. The patient wrapped Hall in a big hug when she saw her new teeth.

“She was so appreciative, and so was her family,” says Hall.

While people of any age may feel nervous about visiting the dentist, it can be especially important for pediatric dental assistants to know how to comfort their patients. When children feel at ease and have pleasant experiences at the dental office early in life, they can be more willing to visit the dentist as the years go by, leading to better oral health outcomes.



“As an assistant, we are a friend, offering a hand to hold if needed, a voice for the patient, and reassurance to the patient on behalf of the dentist.”

— Angel Jones, CDA

Greenleaf recalls a young girl who was “terrified” to visit the dentist for a sealant placement. The first appointment was unsuccessful, and the patient had to return a second time. Greenleaf spent 30 minutes talking to the girl and explaining the procedure in kid-friendly language, but it didn’t help ease her anxiety.

Eventually, Greenleaf noticed the girl had a Hatchimals toy. It proved to be the ticket to calming the patient down and completing the procedure.

“She instantly got more comfortable with me because I knew what her favorite thing was and she started talking about them all,” explains Greenleaf. “She let me start the procedure and actually end it successfully. She came back a few weeks later and had drawn me a picture of the Hatchimals that she was able to get as prizes for completing the procedure.”



“It’s really an opportunity to be there for [patients], whether just for that appointment or for future appointments where you can build on the relationship.”

— Denise Hall, CDA, RDA, FADAA, EFDA

Ultimately, just seeing a patient’s smile and renewed confidence can make dental assisting worthwhile.

“With that smile, we know we did our best by them,” says Macias.

“I love it when we give someone a new smile and they’re so happy that when they leave, they can’t stop smiling,” says Hall. “It makes you feel good about your entire office and co-workers, because we all know it’s a group effort to get to that point.”



## FIRST GROUP EARNS DISIPC CERTIFICATION

New DISIPC certificants share how the certification will impact their careers.

Infection control knowledge is vital for dental assistants, hygienists, and dentists. But it's highly valuable for other professionals in the dental industry, too — even those who aren't directly providing care to patients.

The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP) developed a new certification just for that purpose. In June, the two organizations officially launched the Dental Industry Specialist in Infection Prevention and Control (DISIPC) certification for dental sales and practice management professionals.



Tonja Bowcut, CDA,  
CDIPC, DISIPC

Tonja Bowcut, CDA, CDIPC, DISIPC, was among the first group of certificants announced on April 1, 2022. She says she “jumped at the chance” to earn the new certification.

“There’s so much information that comes from so many different sources,” says Bowcut, who is the dental assisting director at the College of Southern Idaho. “It’s nice to know that there’s one place where dental offices and staff are all going to get the same information.”

Fellow certificant Gaylene Baker, DISIPC, is a national sales manager for Monarch by Air Techniques, an infection control and prevention product brand. She feels that having extensive infection control knowledge helps her understand the policies and procedures dental offices adhere to. As a result, she can better establish credibility with practices and answer questions they have about products.

“Clinicians often feel that sales representatives who are selling certain product lines have a really deep understanding of not just the product

they’re selling, but of what they do as a clinician. That’s not necessarily the case,” says Baker. “This certification will really help to set sales representatives apart and put them into a whole new category.”

Daren Huey, DISIPC, agrees. As a territory sales manager for Patterson Dental — a dental and medical supplies company — he believes DISIPC certification has given him a competitive advantage over other sales representatives in the industry.

“I thought it was important from the get-go because it was drilled into me how important infection prevention and control was,” says Huey. “When COVID hit, it just became more important. I was getting calls from dental offices every day that were struggling, trying to keep up with what they should be doing.”

When Huey told customers he was working toward the DISIPC



Gaylene Baker, DISIPC

certification, it helped him establish better rapport and earn new customers. He has also received positive feedback from colleagues and clients after adding the new certification to his business cards and sharing his digital badge on social media.



Daren Huey, DISIPC

“With everything on a doctor’s plate, it can be hard for them to keep up with infection control protocols,” says Huey. “They really appreciate that I was taking that extra step to help them out.”

Baker echoes a similar sentiment.

“You can go into an office and say, ‘I have this certification. I know my product line, but I also have a deeper understanding of infection control in a dental facility,’” says Baker.

Bowcut feels the new certification helps not only sales professionals, but also the technicians who service dental equipment and marketing professionals who advertise it.

“Infection control is one of the foundational things within a dental office,” she explains. “I just feel like we all need to be on the same page there.”

Bowcut encourages others to pursue the DISIPC certification, too.

“Taking a little extra effort is always worth it,” she says. “You’re going to set yourself apart from others, and I don’t think that anybody should allow themselves to go stagnant in their learning process.”

Huey agrees, saying offices he hadn’t previously worked with took notice and have done more business with him.

“Anyone thinking about [earning the certification] should do it,” he says. “Talk to your manager and see if they’ll help pay for it.”

For Baker, her pursuit of infection control knowledge won’t end with earning DISIPC certification.

“With infection prevention, we must always attempt to do our best,” she says. “The learning doesn’t stop with a certificate. It’s just a destination point along the road we’re traveling to the safest dental visit.”

## How to get started

The DISIPC certification exam officially launched in June 2022. Candidates must fulfill education and experience requirements to be eligible for the exam, which can include holding the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate.

To learn more and view the eligibility requirements, visit [dentalinfectioncontrol.org/certification/disipc](https://dentalinfectioncontrol.org/certification/disipc).

## DISIPC Certificants – April 2022

Opal Anderson	Holly Houck
Gaylene Baker	Daren Huey
Deidra Bankston	Natalie Kaweckyj
Tonja Bowcut	Robert Keedy
Kristen Burns Spaccaforno	Jennifer Kohlmeyer
Beneta Caples	Benette Labrie
James Clair	Tara Larkin
Allison Clay	Philip Melangton
Karen Comisi	Nicole Miller
Joan Curcio	Joyce Moore
Jorja Demuth	Mark Morris
Jenae Fonseca Moreen	Amy New
Lorri Fucile	Daniel Newman
William Giblin	Paulette Paulos-Carr
Lora Graetzer	Heather Pflieger
Brittany Gray	Alma Reyes Herrera
Tami Grimes-Mead	Sheila Saylor
William Hale	Sara Swift
Natalie Hardy	Patricia VanZweden
Marc Holsborg	Ami Ward

## CELEBRATING CERTIFICATION MILESTONES



Sara Rowse (inset), CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, AZEFDA-RF, works as Expanded Functions Lead Dental Assistant at Riggs Family Dental in Arizona. Above, second from right, Rowse is shown alongside peers from the Phoenix College EFDA course she completed in 2021.

Dental assistants with advanced DANB credentials are proud to make a greater contribution.

**A**s the dental assistants who hold DANB Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA) and Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA) certifications already know, reaching these certification milestones is a rare achievement to be proud of.

Sara Rowse embodies the spirit of professional commitment and going the extra mile. Within less than a year, she earned DANB's Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification and then quickly went on to earn CPFDA and CRFDA certification. She also became an expanded functions dental assistant in Arizona, with a certificate in restorative functions.

"I am currently one of eight dental assistants in the state of Arizona to hold DANB's CRFDA certification, and one of 13 in my state to hold CPFDA certification," Rowse specifies with pride. "This is a huge accomplishment."

Melanie Regan, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, CDIPC, agrees wholeheartedly that earning multiple certifications is a big reason to celebrate. Most recently, Regan earned Certified in Dental Infection Prevention and Control (CDIPC) certification, and she is one of only approximately 125 dental professionals to have done so.



For Regan, the importance of earning certifications in dental assisting — particularly in areas of specialization such as expanded functions and infection prevention and control — cannot be overstated.

“My employer wants our team to be educated and the best we can be, which really has inspired me to earn and maintain all the DANB certifications I have,” elaborates Regan, who has been Clinical Lead Dental Assistant at Jovan Prosthodontics in Texas for the past decade.

“I’m always wanting to achieve more, to show my employer I’m dedicated, concerned for the practice and patients, an awesome leader, and an awesome chairside assistant,” Regan continues. “The more I know, the more I can help patients.”



Melanie Regan, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, CDIPC

## The benefits of going the extra mile

Those who hold DANB’s CPFDA and CRFDA certification demonstrate advanced knowledge and skill sets, which can make them especially valuable members of the dental team.

Rowse believes that by holding multiple DANB certifications, she’s now able to do more with patients in the dental office. She explains: “This frees up the doctor to be more available.”

Sara Harrison, CDA, CRFDA, Lead Dental Assistant at Arlington Dentistry by Design in Virginia, agrees that holding two DANB certifications has elevated her career, hands down. “I sought certification to be able to do more and learn more. I’m always continuing to learn, even though I’ve spent 28 years in the profession and have studied dental assisting.”



Sara Harrison, CDA, CRFDA

Harrison looks forward to making a difference for her peers and patients not only as a DANB certificant, but also as president of the Virginia Dental Assistants Association. “I am hoping DANB certification prepares me for even greater, rewarding things in the profession!” adds the alumna of Clover Park Technical College in Washington.

Regan, who has worked in the dental assisting profession for 25 years, also knows that DANB certification has helped her stand out among her colleagues, including those up-and-coming dental assistants who now look to her as a leader. “DANB certification is prestigious,” Regan emphasizes. “Earning certification shows the care and concern I have for the patients and the team. Having the up-to-date knowledge to pass on to other assistants, to train them correctly, is very important to me.”

Rowse, a dental assistant for five years, has seen firsthand the benefits of mentorship and learning in dental assisting. She believes knowledge can propel a dental assistant’s career forward. Even in the short time she’s spent in the dental assisting profession, Rowse has reached the position of Expanded Functions Lead Dental Assistant at Riggs Family Dental in Arizona, thanks to her motivation, training and earned DANB certifications. Long-term, one of Rowe’s top goals is to become a clinical manager and educator.

She knows the path forward is through maintaining DANB certification.

“I absolutely feel DANB certifications will continue to help me to accomplish all my goals,” Rowse says with confidence. “My career is just beginning, and I’m excited to see where the journey takes me!”

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