

# AAPHD President's Remarks at the Opening Session

**Candace Jones, RDH, MPH**

Good morning and welcome to the fifth annual National Oral Health Conference. This meeting is a collaboration of the American Association of Public Health Dentistry and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors and its partners. It is quite a testament to public health to see so many people here today to learn and to network so that we can continue to meet the oral health needs of the underserved populations in this country.

As we begin this conference, I would like us to pause to reflect on the lives of seven great people in dental public health who have passed on this year: Dr. Herschel Horowitz, to whom this conference is dedicated; Dr. E. Walter Wolford; Dr. Lee Joseph; Dr. Viron Diefenbach; Dr. William T. Johnson; Dr. Samuel Wycoff; and Dr. Keith Heller. Their years of service with the US Public Health Service and the dental public health community have had a great influence on the oral and overall health of many Americans.

I want to welcome some of our colleagues representing dental and dental hygiene professional organizations this morning. As I read your name, please stand and then we will welcome you all as a group. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry: Scott Litch, deputy executive director. American Dental Association: Dr. Albert Guay, chief policy advisor. American Dental Education Association: Dr. Frank Catalanotto, president. American Dental Hygienists' Association: Ms. Tammi O. Byrd, president. American Public Health Association, Oral Health Section: Ms. Jane Steffensen, chairperson. Hispanic Dental Association: Dr. Gustavo Cruz, Executive Council. International Association for Dental Research/American Association for Dental Research: Dr. Robert (Skip) Collins, deputy executive director. National Dental Association: Dr. Leslie Grant, vice president. Oral Health America: Robert Klaus, president and CEO. Special Care Dentistry: Dr. Paul Glassman, president. Ms. Kristen Smith, executive director.

Thank you all for being here. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to our guests today.

I also want to thank the planning committee for this year's conference led by Dr. Jane Weintraub, Dr. Bob Weyant, Dr. Nick Mosca, and Ms. Chris Forsch, as well as the entire planning group. Please stand up so we can thank you for all your hard work. I know that we are really looking forward to a wonderful conference. Thanks also to Dr. Steve Geiermann for developing the preconference slide presentation—you deserve an Oscar for this show!

I would also like to recognize the AAPHD Executive Council, the Executive Director Ms. Pam Tolson, and the National Office staff. Would you all please stand and be recognized.

I want to thank Dr. Scott Tomar for serving as the editor of *JPHD* these past four years. Scott will be stepping down as our editor in September and I would like to thank him for his contributions and leadership. Dr. Gary Rozier has served as the chair of the Search Committee and we will be announcing a new editor very soon.

It has been a pleasure serving as the president of AAPHD over the past year. At times I felt as though I were running a marathon and as my year comes to a close, I am even more convinced that I have! As I have the time now to look back over the year, I have the same euphoric feeling of accomplishment as completing a marathon. A feeling that is separate from where you place in the finish of the race—but the feeling of accomplishment that comes because you completed the race.

As most of you know, I have been a runner in my past life! I ran my first marathon in Dallas, Texas, in 1981. I developed a plan and a vision to prepare me to finish the race. I set a goal to increase my training mileage from 20 miles a week to 60–70 miles a week. I had two good friends with whom I trained and together we accomplished our goal of finishing the race. I have

often thought about the similarities of my first marathon and serving as president of AAPHD. They both required setting goals, overcoming barriers, pacing, and having a support system or team to meet the challenge.

Together, we have accomplished much this past year—and we still have many challenges ahead of us, because, truly, our work is never done. I want to share some of these accomplishments with you.

I consider the strategic planning process and the involvement of the many dedicated people who were involved to be the highlight of my year. Over 80 people participated in the planning process, representing almost every state and Saudi Arabia. Thanks to each of you for your assistance and leadership. Please stand so that we may recognize you and thank you.

You worked hard during the Town Hall meeting last year and then continued this effort this past year through conference calls, a face-to-face meeting in October, and many e-mail discussions. You prioritized the strategies and identified the resources needed. The challenge we face today is to secure the resources and now implement the plan with the commitment of your time and talent.

I am pleased to see that our AAPHD membership has increased in the past several years despite an increase in our dues structure (currently we have 791 members). We have identified several strategies to expand our membership to 1,000 paid members by 2008, as well as to increase member participation at meetings and on committees. AAPHD can only grow in strength as an organization through the commitment and leadership of its members.

The AAPHD Foundation has reached a significant milestone this year by passing the \$100,000 mark in contributions. I want to thank all of you who have contributed to the foundation and especially Drs. Joe Doherty and Linda Niessen for their leadership. The foundation funds will be used to support education training op-

portunities in dental public health.

The launching of the Herschel S. Horowitz Scholarship has been another significant event of the past year. The generosity of AAPHD members and dental public health people from around the world has contributed approximately \$25,000 to the AAPHD Foundation in honor of Dr. Hersh Horowitz. With the support of Dr. Alice Horowitz, these funds will be used to offer a scholarship for dentists who choose to pursue public health education. This scholarship will assist one dentist each year for the next 10 years to complete a master's in public health degree or support the first year of a two-year advanced education in dental public health. Alice, we want to thank you for your vision, effort, and

insight in creating this testimonial to Hersh and a legacy to an outstanding dental public health scientist and educator.

I encourage all of us to continue making contributions to the AAPHD Foundation to continue to promote the future growth of dental public health.

In addition to our *Communiqué* quarterly newsletter led by Becky DeSpain Eden and our quarterly *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, the Web site is a critical means of communicating with our members, our partners, and the public. Over the past year, the AAPHD Web site has been redesigned so that we can find information online more easily. Thanks to Dr. Jim Sutherland, the communications subcommittee, and to Ms. Tamiko Kinkade and

the National Office for their efforts, the Web site now has a new look. We launched the site last Friday and what better place to announce its facelift than here in Hollywood! I encourage each of you to visit the site and provide us with your feedback so that the Web site can continue to improve and meet the information needs of you—our members.

On Tuesday I will cross the finish line of this year-long marathon as your president and will pass the baton (purple, of course) to Dr. Jane Weintraub.

Thank you for all your support during this past year. I am very proud of what the association has achieved and I look forward to working with you to continue achieving the goals of AAPHD.

Copyright of Journal of Public Health Dentistry is the property of American Association of Public Health Dentistry and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.