

AAPHD President's Remarks at the Opening Session: Maslow's Hierarchy Applied to the American Association of Public Health Dentistry

Jane Weintraub, DDS, MPH

We all go through different life stages. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare described the seven ages of man. In some cultures, there is another popular version:

- ♦ Stage 1:
You believe in the tooth fairy
- ♦ Stage 2:
You don't believe in the tooth fairy
- ♦ Stage 3:
You are the tooth fairy

I've gone through different stages in this association – from my first AAPHD meeting as a student, to the current privilege of serving as President. From my perspective, our Association has also been going through different life stages. We have begun implementing the strategic plan that we developed about 18 months ago. In the process, we have gotten more members involved in the organization, participated in more collaborative activities with other organizations, enhanced the infrastructure and raised our national profile.

I see the growth and activity as analogous to moving up the levels of Maslow's hierarchy*. This classic model, developed in the 1940's, is still used to explain people's motivation and behavior. According to this model, a person must have their basic level of needs satisfied before focusing on the next stage or level. This five-level framework can also be applied to AAPHD's development (see Figure 1). I would like to use this analogy to highlight some of our accomplishments and directions.

At the first level, we have basic physiologic needs – food, clothing, and shelter. AAPHD's founding fathers provided these needs in 1937 when they established the organization. They brought together interested members, basic resources, and devel-



AAPHD President Jane Weintraub

oped a democratic process with a constitution and bylaws.

At Level Two, humans are concerned with safety and security; needs related to self-preservation. For our organization, we need sustainability and an effective infrastructure. Thanks to the efforts of the finance and development committee led by Mark Macek and Mark Greer, our current and past treasurers, we have developed multiple ways to increase non-dues revenue and keep our financial reserves sound. With the help of the membership committee, led by Jim Sutherland and Mary Foley, we have 87 new members so far this year. The AAPHD national office staff, under the direction of our Executive Director, Pam Tolson, has developed a sophisticated and technologically advanced infrastructure, and 21st century electronic databases. Our Association is on strong footing. For the

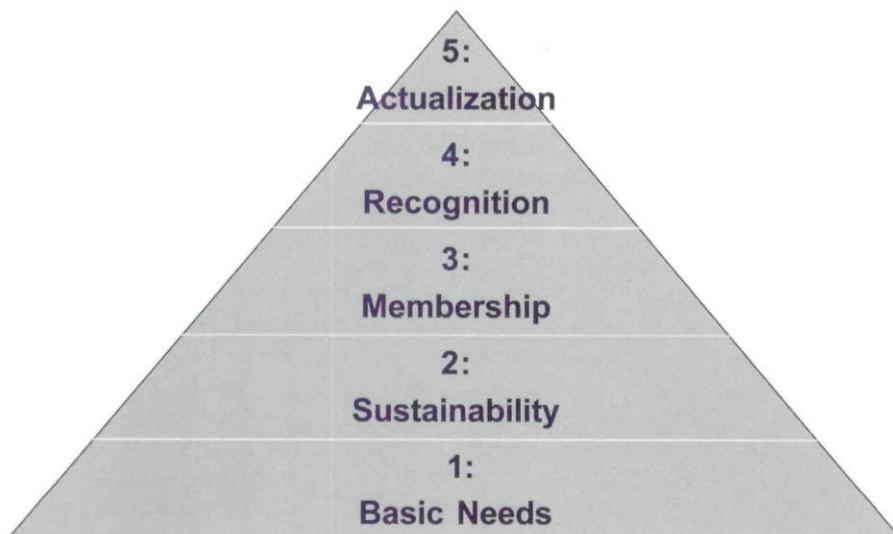
first time, we can announce the location of future NOHC meetings more than one year in advance. The 2006 NOHC will be in Little Rock, Arkansas and in 2007, in Denver, Colorado.

Level Three pertains to belonging and social needs. For me, that translates to meeting our membership's needs and providing high quality services. This conference and the pre-conference workshops offer increasing opportunities for professional development. For example, last night, the AAPHD policy and advocacy committee sponsored advocacy training by the excellent ADEA legislative staff. Members deserve timely access to information. We have a terrific newsletter thanks to Becky DeSpain and an improved website thanks to the national office. We have a new journal Editor, Alex White, and Publications Manager, Linda Lenzini. They welcome your suggestions about new directions for the journal. We are currently exploring strategies to make the journal available online to increase timely access to the science and evidence base for our public health programs.

The Executive Council is recommending two bylaws changes for your consideration tomorrow at the business meeting. One is to expand voting privileges to affiliate and student members to become a more inclusive organization. The second is to increase the number of Executive Council members from six to nine to increase representation of our increasing membership, and increase opportunities for participation and leadership as the breadth and depth of our activities expand.

Level Four addresses self-esteem. For AAPHD, this level is about recognition and collaboration, both within and outside our organization. At this point I would like to recognize the

**FIGURE 1:
Maslow's Hierarchy applied to AAPHD**



*Source: Maslow, A, *Motivation and Personality*, 2nd ed., Harper & Row, 1970.

AAPHD Executive Council members and officers. AAPHD honors those who have provided exceptional service and accomplishments; whether they are students recognized for their first public health projects or those being recognized for lifetime achievement and distinguished service. Please join us for the awards luncheon later today, always one of my favorite conference events.

Our empowerment is reflected by the increasing number of loyal supporters who have contributed to the AAPHD Foundation, helping us build for the future. This year, in memory of Herschel Horowitz, the foundation has awarded the first \$25,000 scholarship to a dentist, a UCSF graduate, currently enrolled in the MPH program at the University of California, Berkeley. It is my pleasure to introduce Lisa Chung as the first Herschel Horowitz scholarship recipient. Please join us tonight at the Carnegie Museum for the second annual Foundation event. The recipient of next year's scholarship will be announced then.

This year, AAPHD continues to forge collaborations and partnerships

with other dental organizations while strengthening its external relationships. AAPHD has been an active participant at many venues throughout the year, increasing our visibility nationally. We welcome all the officers from other organizations who are here with us today, sharing this time of learning and networking with us. Finally, we get to the peak, Level 5, or what Maslow calls "self-actualization." As an organization, we strive to be the best we can be and maximize our potential. For me, that means having the ability to successfully advocate for public health causes, influence public policy and improve the health of the public. With AAPHD providing the basic needs and organizational infrastructure, meeting membership needs, providing recognition and developing collaborations, we can focus on our vision, "Optimal Oral Health for All."

I challenge you to be a participant, not a spectator. This may be your first meeting, and you feel like you are at Level 1 figuring out your basic needs, or you may be a long-time veteran actively involved at Level 5. (If this is your first meeting, please stand and

be recognized and welcomed.) Regardless of which one of these five levels may apply to you, there is a place for you in our association. You can be a tooth fairy and bestow the gifts of your time and talent. Contributions to the Foundation are welcome too, no tooth or pillow required. Decide how you will help advance the organization, our mission and our vision. There are too many people with oral disease, infection, pain and discomfort, to sit on the sidelines. Together we can work to accomplish our goals.

Now, I would like to remember those colleagues who have passed away this year. Polly Ayers was the first woman to be a Diplomate of the ABDPH, and the first woman to be President of AAPHD as well as the ABDPH. I read in the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*, and learned from Stuart Lockwood, that Polly, among many activities, initiated a series of Alabama county high school championship football games. The proceeds were used to purchase a trailer to provide dental services to the same schools. She was indeed a role model and trailblazer. I met Herb Hazelcorn at my first AAPHD meeting. He developed and became the director of the Program in Dental Public Health at the University of Illinois, School of Public Health. Saul Kamen was a leader in developing the fields of geriatric dentistry and special care needs. He was on the faculty at the Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine, my *alma mater*, and I remember vividly a field trip to his office to see his state of the art equipment for geriatric populations. Please join me for a moment of silence for those who have contributed so much.

Many thanks go to the planning committee for their efforts in putting together a very full and exciting program for us. I would also like to thank the MRSI staff. AAPHD and ASTDD contract with them for all the support services required organizing this meeting. Have fun, learn a lot and enjoy the meeting.

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.