

President's Welcome and Address

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It is my pleasure to welcome you to the second Joint Annual Meeting of the American Association of Public Health Dentistry and the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, and the 64th AAPHD annual meeting. The theme of this year's National Oral Health Conference is "Enhancing Health, Access, and Partnerships." The AAPHD and ASTDD Executive Councils met yesterday afternoon to discuss the pilot format of the joint meeting and how things are going. Please complete the meeting evaluation so that you can share your perspective on the joint meeting process.

I want to thank the exhibitors and sponsors who provide financial support for our meeting. Without them, we would not be able to bring the high quality of continuing education, combined with the opportunities for relaxation and entertainment, which we continue to do. Please visit the exhibits and tell our sponsors and exhibitors how much you appreciate their support. There is a list of sponsors and partners on the front cover of the program and a list of exhibitors one page in from the back of the program booklet. Several of these have supported us for many years and are truly part of our dental public health family.

I want to thank Kim McFarland (AAPHD) and Kneka Hayward (ASTDD), co-chairs of the meeting, who worked with Jim Toothaker and Dean Perkins in the AAPHD and ASTDD National Offices, the staff at Chesapeake Health Education Program, Inc., and the rest of the program planning committee for putting together a fabulous program for us this week. Thanks to Alice Horowitz for planning the preconference continuing education course and Jim Bader for giving the course, to Kathryn Atchison for reworking the abstract process, to Sena Narendran for organizing the student awards and poster sessions, to Dushanka Kleinman (AAPHD) and Tommy Ivey (ASTDD) for chairing the Awards committees. Would all those

who worked on the program please stand for recognition?

And in the final thank you category, I would like to thank the AAPHD Executive Council for all they do to make this organization run. I would like the Executive Council to stand. At the end of the Town Hall meeting tomorrow, we will have the installation of the new Executive Council members. But I want to give a special thanks to all of the members who agreed to be on the ballot to run for office. As I reviewed the ballot and prepared to vote, I was struck by the strength of the slate of candidates. We work hard to have a strong slate, to give the membership good choices. I appreciate the willingness of our members to run for office, even though they know that they only have a fifty-fifty chance of winning.

At this meeting last year, I made the comment that, after serving as program chair for two annual meetings, I thought being president would be easy—well, I was wrong. It has been a very busy and very exciting year, and I will take the next few minutes to highlight some of the year's activities. Several of these topics will be discussed in more depth during symposia and at the AAPHD Town Hall business meeting tomorrow at 3:15 PM. I urge AAPHD members to be at that meeting to provide input and vote on issues of importance to the organization.

Of course, a major occurrence last year was the release last May of the Surgeon General's first "Report on Oral Health." The release was followed in June by the Surgeon General's Conference on Children and Oral Health: "Face of a Child" in Washington, DC. A great many of our members were involved in one way or another with these two events, and hopefully everyone in this room has been impacted by this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have the Surgeon General of the United States support the messages that we bring on a daily basis. Next, the Healthy People 2010 Objectives were released in January,

giving us measurable objectives from which to select as we strive to eliminate disparities in children's oral health.

The American Dental Association Task Force to Study the Specialty Recognition and the Re-recognition Process of Existing Specialties conducted a "comprehensive review of the dental specialties" to see if a more formal re-recognition process was in order. Beginning under the leadership of then-President Dushanka Kleinman, Skip Collins cheerfully accepted the task of compiling the required pieces for the comprehensive review and editing the report. Tremendous thanks are in order to Skip, Dushanka, and all of the members who developed portions of the report. The task force has twice called for comments from the communities of interest, including the dental specialties, regarding this process, and seems to be heeding the recommendation of the specialties that, based on the information from the comprehensive review, a re-recognition is not in order. A recognized specialty, as is dental public health, cannot be called forward to be reviewed for re-recognition unless the ADA House of Delegates directed such action. While this process will not be complete until it goes to the House of Delegates in October 2001, I feel optimistic that the specialties will fare well and not be required to go through the intensive re-recognition process unless there is a problem.

Bob Weyant hosted the third annual HRSA funded workshop for dental public health residency directors and, for the first time, we had money to allow some of the dental public health residents to attend. In March, HRSA called a meeting of the residency directors who receive HRSA funding to support residents to brainstorm ways to increase the number of applicants seeking advanced training in the specialty of dental public health.

Last year at the 2000 AAPHD annual session, we heard Leslie Seldin, chairman of the oversight committee, give an overview of the planning proc-

ess for the ADA's Future of Dentistry Report. The final report, to be presented to the House of Delegates in October 2001, is to provide a framework for the profession and its allied agencies to follow over the coming years. AAPHD and dental public health have been well represented on the project and had opportunity to provide input at a national meeting in March.

This has been a year of transition for AAPHD. Kim McFarland led a search committee to replace Gary Rozier after eight years as the editor of the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*. Scott Tomar assumed the duties last fall and is doing a wonderful job as the new editor. In addition, Stuart Lockwood led a search committee to find a replacement for Marsha Cunningham, who after 18 years asked to be replaced as editor of *Communiqué*. Becky DeSpain has accepted the position and will work with Marsha during the transition period. In the final transition cate-

gory for AAPHD, Jim Toothaker and Jill Mason have fulfilled their three-year contract to serve as the AAPHD National Office and asked not to renew. Bill Maas led a search committee for a replacement. The search committee's recommendations have gone to the Executive Council for the final decision and we are in the process of considering candidates. We hope to have a decision shortly after this meeting.

One more relevant transition occurred at the national level with the new administration and the changes that have happened and will continue for a while. These changes may present some challenges as we strive to educate the members of the new administration who may not be as knowledgeable or supportive of oral health as some of our previous supporters. We need to look for opportunities to develop this support.

In the area of organizational growth, Kathryn Atchison and George Taylor have provided leadership in

taking the next step in the ongoing development of AAPHD's strategic plan. They led the Executive Council in setting short-term and long-term goals and setting priorities. Linda Niessen, Joe Doherty, and Steve Corbin are moving the Dental Public Health Foundation along.

These are wonderful times to be involved with oral health and I am proud that I have chosen this as my profession. Never have the opportunities for visibility—or the challenges—been greater. The sessions this week should jump-start us with ways to increase this visibility and suggest innovative ways to address some of the challenges.

Thank you for the honor of serving as the AAPHD president over the last year. In keeping with the opening of my President's Messages in *Communiqué*, I will now say, "If I were king, I would let the meeting begin!" Enjoy the wonderful upcoming National Oral Health Conference!