

Welcome to the ADTA March 2025 newsletter! After a short period of reorganization, we're thrilled to reconnect with the Dental Therapy community. In this edition, we'll share updates on board changes, highlight open positions, briefly discuss national news, and outline ADTA's goals for the year ahead. Thank you for your dedication to your communities and your unwavering support for our organization. We truly appreciate everything you do!

- American Dental Therapy Association

ADTA Board Members on the Move



Kari Ann Kuntzelman, a member of the Chickasaw Nation, is stepping down as President of the ADTA Board but is excited to take on a new role within the organization; more information coming soon! Kari Ann has served as Board President from 2021-2022, Immediate Past President in 2023, and she served a second Presidential term from January 2024-February 2025. Throughout this transition, she remains committed to the ADTA in a new capacity.



After four years of service to ADTA, Minnesota-based **Claire Surges (Roesler)** has fulfilled her commitment as Board Director. A leader for dental therapy as both a licensed dental therapist and an advocate for the profession, she plans to remain an active ADTA member. We are grateful for her years of service and leadership, and wish her the very best as she embarks on new adventures. A dual licensed dental therapist, Claire lives and works in Cannon Falls, MN.



Couer d'Alene tribal member **Anna DeGraffenreid**, was voted in as Board President for the remainder of 2025, finishing out the position's current term. She's previously served as board secretary for ADTA from 2021-2025. Anna is a licensed dental therapist working for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Inchelium, Washington, at the Lake Roosevelt Community Health Center. We look forward to her leadership.



Raelene Cabrera, BSDH & Master of Dental Therapy student, now serves as board treasurer (Feb. 2025-Dec. 2028). Congratulations and thank you for your service! A University of Minnesota School of Dentistry 2024 graduate, she's passionate about serving rural communities. Raelene is a licensed dental therapist at Gentle Dental in Salem, Oregon where she resides. She is passionate about dental therapy and hopes to inspire the next generation of dental therapists. Raelene joined the ADTA Board leadership as Student Representative in 2024; Raelene was the ADTA's first Student Representative and served on the Annual Conference Planning Committee in 2024.



Kylie Anderson, dental hygienist and advanced dental therapist, now serves as board secretary (Feb. 2025-Dec. 2028). Kylie is a licensed dental therapist at Community Dental Care in Buffalo, Minnesota. She attended the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, receiving a Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene and a Master's degree in Dental Therapy. One of Kylie's favorite things about being a dental therapist is that she genuinely believes she can make a difference in people's lives by providing quality care, building relationships, and educating people about proper oral health. Kylie served on the ADTA Annual Conference Committee in 2023 and then co-chaired the Annual Conference Committee in 2024 before her new role of Secretary. Thank you, Kylie, for your service to the ADTA!

We're recruiting!

Joining the ADTA Board of Directors is a great way to help shape the future of dental therapy while growing your leadership skills. We're at our best when we're fully represented by providers and students who are committed to excellence, advocacy and growth. Learn more [here](#).

Still have questions? **Contact us** and we'd be happy to talk more in-depth about ADTA board member roles and responsibilities.



Help strengthen our profession. Support providers and the patients they serve by sharing your time and talent with us.

We're recruiting new board members

Vice President (2025)

At-large board member (2 seats open)

Dental Therapy Student (2 seats open)

"I wanted to be on the foreground of helping move dental therapy along in other states. By being on the board I stayed in tune with what was happening across the country. It's rewarding to get to see dental therapy beyond our day-to-day time in clinic, and it's important to advocate for our profession and connect with other professionals."

- Claire Surges, ADTA board member 2021-2025

Visit the ADTA website to learn more about each role:
www.americandentaltherapyassociation.org

Or contact board member Kari Kuntzelman at:
ed@americandentaltherapyassociation.org

In the News

Fluoride in drinking water

Utah is close to becoming the first state in the nation to **ban fluoride in public water systems**. House Bill 81 passed the legislature late last month and now awaits the signature of Gov. Spencer Cox. If approved, the ban is set to take effect on May 7, 2025. With several other states also considering fluoride bans, Politico has a good article on **how the national debate over fluoride gained so much traction**. States with pending legislation include Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, **Louisiana** and **Florida**. Speaking of Florida, when public radio station WUFT looked recently at fluoride levels in drinking water across the state, it discovered **several water utilities had stopped adding fluoride for a year or more**. The majority of utilities told WUFT that equipment issues were to blame. With so much current discussion on this topic, ADTA has issued a **statement in support of water fluoridation**.

Florida, New York lawmakers push to authorize dental therapists

In December, Florida lawmakers filed **House Bill 21**, which proposes **a three-year dental therapist certification to ease the state's dentist shortage**. The Senate is considering similar legislation under **Senate Bill 82**. According to **Floridians for Dental Access**, 7.1 million Floridians live in a dental Health Professional Shortage Area, and dental care is Florida's top unmet healthcare need. A 2023 **report from the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health** found high rates of emergency visits for non-traumatic dental conditions among youth 14 and younger in the state.

The New York State Senate is considering a bill that would provide licensing of dental therapists

and advanced dental therapists. According to [an article about the measure by Newsday](#) (which has a paywall), published in Dec. 2024, "supporters say that bringing the profession to New York would expand dental access, lower costs, shorten waits, and improve oral health. But dentist associations caution of a two-tiered system and inferior care."

Wisconsin's first dental therapy degree program

Wisconsin Public Radio has a nice article on how [Northcentral Technical College in Wausau is preparing to train new dental therapists](#) through the state's first dental therapy degree program. The program is moving quickly. The school completed constructing a dental therapy classroom in January, is developing curriculum, and can begin enrolling students as soon as the Commission on Dental Accreditation approves its application. Also new this year, the state started making statewide dental therapy licenses available in January "as part of an effort to redress the shortage of dental professionals in rural areas of Wisconsin."

Workforce development

The American Dental Hygienists' Association has criticized recent [workforce development resolutions](#) approved by the American Dental Association. The resolutions address the dental workforce shortage by allowing internationally trained dentists to obtain U.S. licensure, enabling dental students and residents to practice hygiene with specific competencies, and expanding allied dental education programs. The American Dental Hygienists' Association has [objected to the changes](#), raising concerns about potential impacts on patient safety and educational standards.

Don't Miss



ilikemyteeth.org

The Campaign for Dental Health, a program of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is dedicated to providing the public and policy makers with the evidence-based information and tools they need to promote and protect [community water fluoridation](#) as an important public health measure. The easy-to-navigate and aptly named website, ilikemyteeth.org, has facts about oral health and [preventive strategies like fluoride](#).



[Oral Health Learning Café](#)

The [Oral Health Learning Café](#), part of the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, is a group of stakeholders working on medical-dental integration. An informal, supportive space where professionals can engage with others and learn. the café includes a discussion list and monthly webinars that provide information about oral health programs and services (e.g., integrating oral health care and primary care) throughout the country and share strategies, challenges, lessons learned, and resources.

Opportunities

WE ARE RECRUITING

Dental Health Aide Therapy Students

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
High School Diploma or GED Pass background check and drug testing

APPLY AT:
<https://www.anthc.org/anthc-job-openings/>

Position listed as:
Dental Health Aide Therapist, Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program

EMAIL US
akadhat@anthc.org

CALL US
907-729-5600

DEADLINE: March 14, 2025



Faculty, Dental Therapy Instructor

Apply by:
March 24, 2025
<https://www.ntc.edu/careers>

This full-time faculty position will support instruction for Northcentral Technical College's (NTC) Dental Therapy program. This position will supervise and teach Dental Therapy students in NTC's on-site dental clinic through clinical enrichment experiences while staying familiar with the program's objectives, content, instructional methods, and evaluation procedures. The individual hired in this exciting role will work 44 weeks out of 52 weeks per year.

Education: Bachelor's degree or higher required.

Faculty must have completed a CODA-accredited Dental Therapy program.

Experience: 2 Years

Voices of Dental Therapy

** Our feature publication by dental therapists for dental therapists **

Share your expertise and experiences with our vibrant community by contributing to ADTA's Voices of Dental Therapy publication. This special feature gives you a glimpse into the lives of your colleagues from around the nation, and we'll continue to introduce you to new faces throughout 2025.

In "[Claire Surges Bids Farewell to ADTA Board](#)," former ADTA board member Claire Surges talks about her career development from her days as a student in Minnesota to practicing in Maine and then making her way back to the Midwest. Her perspective on the magic of relationship building shows how powerful the people around us are, whether in the clinic or through professional networks. And she talks about why she's a passionate advocate for expanding dental therapy training programs to new regions.

In [Wilber's Journey](#), ADTA board member Wilber Ramirez-Rodriguez shares his career journey, which began as a dentist working in the jungles of Peru. In 2002 he moved to the United States and undertook new challenges. He's now a licensed dental therapist in Oregon, a licensed dental hygienist in Oregon and Washington, and an assistant professor at Pacific University. These complimentary career paths have allowed him to continue bringing oral health care to underserved populations.

In [Dental Therapy Runs in the Family](#), sisters Leandra Beech and Mek Apangalook of St. Lawrence Island in Alaska, share how they found their way into the profession, currently as teacher and student. Both Leandra and Mek trained and worked as dental assistants before moving into the field of dental therapy. They especially appreciate being able to connect meaningfully with children and elders, providing needed care with a deep cultural connection. It's not uncommon for them to speak in Yup'ik with patients and their families. Qu yana Leandra and Mek!

Feeling inspired? Use our [article submission form](#) to send an entry to us Dental therapists may

submit an article, interview, photo, innovations in dental therapy, dental therapist stories, research, global or education program updates, upcoming events, and more. (Note: please complete the form in its entirety.) Still have questions? Please [email us](#). We're happy to help.

On Demand Webinars



ADTA Learning Management System - ADTA Members and Education Subscribers receive access to On Demand Webinars with CE credit as part of their membership benefits, excluding specialty webinars and online workshops.

If you are a current ADTA member or education subscriber, [click here](#) to login to your member account. Once you have logged in, click on the Learning Management System button to gain access to online programs.

Non-Members can purchase individual webinars using the registration form below. Interested in saving money? Join the ADTA as a member or Education subscriber. [Click here](#) to review pricing and benefits.

To access on demand webinars, click
here.

More Resources

Arcora Foundation has a new 1.5- CDE course (Oct. 2024) on [Minimally Invasive Dentistry: What It Is and Why it Works](#). Minimally Invasive Dentistry (MID) is focused on preventing and healing tooth decay without removing any tooth structures. In this 90 minute online course, participants will learn about what MID is, the research and evidence supporting MID; when, why, and how to implement MID; and about dental teams that successfully use MID to manage and treat a variety of patients. [Access the course here](#).

The National Coalition Of Dentists for Health Equity has developed a [webinar series on the most accurate information on Dental Therapists](#). Knowledgeable and experienced researchers, practitioners and program administrators share findings regarding the education, supervision and quality of patient care provided by dental therapists. They also delineate financial information that dental practices need to use to determine whether dental therapists would be an asset to their clinical operations. [Access the webinar series here](#).

Elevate Oral Care's products provide valuable tools for implementing preventive measures and managing caries, which align with the principles of minimally invasive dentistry. [Sign up here](#) to schedule a staff meeting to learn more about what they offer.

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