



Mega - Bites

A Quarterly E-Newsletter free to subscribers through the
Tennessee Dental Assistants' Association webpage at <http://www.tndaa.org>

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President's Message

Welcome to the Tennessee Dental Assistants' Association Newsletter. Our organization represents the dental assistants of the state of Tennessee, and there are more than 4500 registered and highly trained dental assistants in our state.

Tennessee is one of the few states in the country that requires education and a licensing examination for their dental assistants. This helps to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients and the highest quality of service to our dentist employers. Tennessee RDA's have already been delegated more duties than dental assistants in many other states. And soon there will be expanded functions for restorative and prosthodontic procedures.

We've come a long way. We have a dental assistant member on the Board of Dentistry. We are actively involved in legislation that regulates our profession. We promote education and we take every opportunity to elevate the dental assisting profession.

We are dental professionals! So, if your dentist belongs to the TDA and the hygienists belong to TDHA, don't you deserve to belong to "your" professional organization? We invite you to join our tri-part organization. When you join the American Dental Assistants' Association (ADAA), you join our state organization (TNDAA) at the same time. And each district in the state can have its own local society. Check with us to locate your district. Then begin to enjoy the benefits of membership, including our journal, discounted or free CEs and networking with other dental assistants to share your concerns. United, we can speak more powerfully than with individual voices. Find out more about membership in "your" professional organization at www.tndaa.org. Don't you deserve it?

Karen Castleberry, CDA, RDA
TNDAA President, 2005-2007

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Spotlight on.... Lynda Gooden

This edition of Mega-Bites spotlights Lynda Gooden, the immediate past president of the TNDAA. Lynda is a Certified and Registered Dental Assistant who has dedicated her professional life to the advancement of dental assisting. She has held every office in the NDAA and has been a delegate to the ADAA meeting. She has also been the driving force behind the Chattanooga Area Dental Assistants Society, actively encouraging student membership. Lynda is employed in the pediatric practice of Dr. Sidney T. Cox in Chattanooga. She has also served as an adjunct faculty member for Chattanooga State's Dental Assisting Program. One of Linda's most significant achievements was being appointed by the Governor as the first voting dental assistant member to the Tennessee Board of Dentistry. The TNDAA wishes to thank Lynda for her dedication to the profession and to wish her luck in her mission work in Africa!



**Board approved
Dental Assistants
Educational Courses
Sponsored by the
TNDAA**

TNDAA members receive a discount!

Coronal Polish \$195, \$165 for members

July 15, 16
December 2,3

Monitoring Nitrous Oxide \$125, \$100 for members

November 18

Sealants \$125, \$100 for members

July 22
November 19

Additional dates will be established to meet demand.
For more information regarding location and times, and
to register on-line go to www.dentedonline.com

**Continuing Education Requirements For
Registered Dental Assistants**

The Board of Dentistry reports that “all registered dental assistants are required to fulfill 24 hours of continuing education, in subject matters pertaining to the delegable or assignable registered dental assistant duties or additional certifications (coronal polishing, etc.), during the two calendar year cycle (January 1 of an odd year – December 31 of an even year) and keep a current C.P.R. card at all times. A minimum of 2 of the required 24 biennial hours must be obtained in the area of chemical dependency education.”

NOTE: The CE requirements for DANB’s CDA renewal differ slightly. Visit www.DANB.org for details

*Happy
Independence
Day!*



TNDAA Annual Session

The TDA/TNDAA Annual Session in Gatlinburg. May 19-21, was a great success! Over 150 dental professionals attended our 4-hour CE featuring Dr. Murray Marks, speaking on “Forensic Anthropology and all that Remains”.

The TNDAA booth in the exhibit hall of the Park Vista Hotel netted several new members and over 200 new e-mail addresses to add to our distribution list. Watch for mail from your President, Karen Castleberry, at TNDAA2005@yahoo.com. The T-shirts and polo shirts that were sold at the booth are now available via the website at www.tndaa.org. Order yours now.

Bettie Rogers, ADAA Fourth District Trustee, visited the TNDAA booth and spoke to a group of students at the Student Reception. She also attended the Board of trustees meeting and the General Assembly.

Several items of business were conducted during the General Assembly including

- The unanimous vote to retain our lobbyist, Jennifer Albrecht (Refer to her Legislative Update on page 4 of this newsletter)
- A vote to adopt the acronym TNDAA as the official abbreviation for the association, since it is consistent with the website.
- The selection of a logo for our website, letterhead and business cards was selected from among three designed by Michelle Oliver, of *MLO Graphic Design*. (See new front page of newsletter). Soon, personalized stationery will be available at the TNDAA store at www.tndaa.org
- The election of officers
President – Karen Castleberry, Chattanooga Area
Vice President – Elsie Henderson, 8th District
Secretary – Mary Ellen Vaughn, 2nd District
Treasurer – Marcia Sivley, Chattanooga Area

*Plan now to attend the
2006 TNDAA Annual Session in
Chattanooga, May 19-21.*



Dental Assisting: A Worthy Career

Submitted by Dr. Leon E. Stanislav, DDS

While legally and practically, dentistry must start with the dentist, the very next individual to enhance our service to the public is the dental assistant. Even in the early days with pump up chairs and belt driven handpieces, the doctor employed someone to help him chairside along with other office duties. We all know this has evolved into a dynamic team of highly skilled individuals including dental assistants, receptionists, office managers, hygienists, and laboratory personnel.

Today's dental assistant has multiple career options.

While some who enter the field will be content to be valuable chairside assistants, others may wish to add modifiers to expand their duties. One of the first of those modifiers is coronal polishing. Some 35 states avail themselves of this provision to promote additional access to quality care for patients. In Tennessee this procedure may be performed under the direct supervision of the dentist. However, it greatly enhances the dental practice's ability in establishing preventive services where it might otherwise be difficult. That may include expanding the dentist's efforts in remote or underserved areas, specialty practices that involve a larger number of pediatric patients, or simply supplementing the hygiene department enabling better production by the hygienists. This can give the hygienist more opportunity to focus on the challenges of more difficult cases, periodontally related procedures, and other duties which a hygienist is qualified to provide.

Additionally, assistants in Tennessee can monitor nitrous oxide after appropriate coursework. Again, while this is under direct supervision, it can allow a dentist or hygienist to leave the operatory for a moment to check a patient or handle another task while the patient is observed by a trained assistant. Such delegation can greatly help the day move efficiently and safely for patients and the dental team.

Sealants may be applied by a trained and credentialed dental assistant. Again, this valuable preventive service greatly helps in providing access to care for dental patients in Tennessee, especially children.

Continued same page, next column

"A Worthy Career", continued from previous column

Finally, Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) is on the horizon. The University of Tennessee reported to the Board of Dentistry that course criteria and staffing could be ready for a Fall 2005 class pending approval by the board and the attorney general. This is an exciting new modifier for the highly motivated assistant. These duties have been allowed in many states for years and allow the trained assistant or hygienist to place, carve and finish amalgam and composite restorations. Also, dental assistants and dental hygienists may be trained to take final impressions.

In summary, the dental assistant has a varied career ladder to follow depending on desire and ambition. Assistants are invaluable, regardless of license modifiers, in providing primary care to our patients. On the dental team they will always be the first and the last to share with the dentist in patient care. The path to career enhancement and greater remuneration is increasing productivity. There are as many or more options available to the dental assistant as any member of the dental team. Let us work together to preserve those procedures we as dentists can delegate to our very worthy care givers –the dental assistants!

Finally, I would encourage all assistants to be members of their respective local and national associations. Join the ADA, TNDAA, and any local chapters or districts and it does not matter if you are in a specialty practice or general practice. Be proactive and an integral part of your profession. There are many hard working people in associations doing a lot for you and it would be nice if you'd make a small contribution yourself. Just being a member and staying aware of current events is better than sitting idle. Take pride in yourself and your colleagues by being a part of your organizations. I know it is the intent of the TDA to partner with you all in furthering our common goals. The more we are all represented, the more valid our mission.

Editor's note:

Dr. Leon Stanislav is the Legislative Liaison for the Tennessee Dental Association and the Tennessee Academy of General Dentistry. His private practice is in Clarksville, TN. The TNDAA thanks Dr. Stanislav for his support of the dental assisting profession, and for this article.

TDAA 2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Submitted by Jennifer Albrecht

**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR
DENTAL ASSISTANTS**

Legislation aimed at eliminating the current examination and test requirements for registered dental assistants was once again introduced by the Tennessee Dental Association (TDA) for the 2005 legislative session. If passed, this proposal would require dental assistants to only become registered after successful completion of a Dental Board approved or ADA Accredited training program and payment of a registration fee. Currently, dental assistants have the option of becoming registered by passing a state examination or by being currently certified by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). This legislation would seriously undermine the professional standards that currently exist with the registration process. The TNDAA fought this proposal in 2004 resulting in the withdrawal of the bill. The TNDAA retained a lobbyist in 2005 to oppose this legislation and monitor other proposed legislative proposals and rules aimed at our industry. The TDA legislation was taken off notice for this legislative year.

**DENTAL BOARD CONSIDERS RULE CHANGE
FOR ORAL PROPHYLAXIS**

The Tennessee Board of Dentistry proposed rules last winter that would have developed a definition for oral prophylaxis. As proposed, the definition would have limited the procedure to a licensed dentist or dental hygienist (as already required). But the terms of the definition were general and included language which would have been interpreted to include polishing. If passed, this new definition could have prohibited dental assistants from polishing.

The rule was brought by the hygienists to address a matter of insurance fraud. Allegedly, claims were being filed for prophylaxis, when only polishing had been performed. The TNDAA opposed this rule, stating that it did not address the fraud issue, but instead restricted the practice parameters of a dental assistant by prohibiting the treatment of polishing. Further, the proposed rule contradicted a current statute that allows dental assistants to perform polishing.

The Board deferred action on the rules, asking instead that the dentists, hygienists and assistants define practice parameters for their respective groups and report this information back to the Board.

Continued same page, next column

“ Update”, continued from previous column:

TDAA CALL TO ARMS

The TNDAA will be asking all members to participate and assist with a membership drive and a grassroots campaign to prepare for the next legislative session. Our organization is only as strong as the voice of our membership. **WE NEED YOUR VOICE!** Stay tuned for future announcements of membership/legislative receptions in your area, a plan of action and a call for commitment to sign up new members.

***Greetings from the Tennessee Academy
of General Dentistry****Submitted by Dr., Richard Dycus, Pres. Elect, TN AGD*

It is that time again for the Annual Meeting in Nashville. The Tennessee AGD invites you to visit our web registration brochure and take a look at our fabulous C.E. lineup, wonderful entertainment, and great hotel accommodations. As a dental assistant you know the importance of quality CE. This meeting allows you to get hands on participation credit and recognition that you deserve.

We would really like to see you at this years annual session. It is sure to be one of the best meetings ever! And you won't want to miss the MONTE CARLO PARTY which is included in the registration fee. Make sure that you get your whole office to attend.

After you look at the annual meeting brochure, [Http://www.tnagd.org/register.htm](http://www.tnagd.org/register.htm) I am sure you will want to visit Music City USA and participate in TN AGD AnMeet 2005. August 19 & 20, Hilton Suites, Nashville, TN. We look forward to seeing you there!

AnMeet 2005**Annual Meeting of the
Tennessee Academy of General Dentistry**

- 40 hours of CE
- Photography in Dentistry
- 3 days of participation Courses
- Dentist of the Year Gala
- Monte Carlo Evening

August 19-20 * Hilton Suites * Nashville, TN
For more information
call 615-591-0294 or go to www.tnagd.org

Join the  Today!

www.dentalassistant.org

The ADAA's statement of professional commitment:
 "As a professional dental assistant, I will promote the advancement of the careers of dental assistants and the dental assisting profession in matters of education, legislation, credentialing and professional activities which enhance the delivery of quality dental health care to the public."

TENNESSEE DENTAL ASSISTANTS' ASSOCIATION

The Tennessee Dental Assistants' Association's objectives shall be:

- To share in the responsibility for quality dental health care delivery to all;
- To advance the practice of dental assisting toward the highest standards of performance obtainable by supporting and encouraging formal education and in providing quality continuing education;
- To support educationally-based national and/or state credentialing for the dental assisting profession; and
- To communicate effectively with all members of the health-related professions.


Subscription information

For a free subscription to this quarterly newsletter, send a blank e-mail to tndaa2005@yahoo.com with the word "subscribe" on the subject line. We welcome your comments.

Disclaimer: The views reflected in this newsletter are the views of its editor and contributors and are not necessarily intended to be official statements of the Tennessee Dental Assistants' Association. However, the TDAA Board and/or the managing editor prior to publication and/or distribution must approve all content. You DO have permission to print, photocopy, FAX, e-mail, or otherwise distribute this newsletter provided it is done so in its entirety.

Michelle Ehmling, CDA, RDA wildcat315@comcast.net
 Managing Editor, Mega-Bites Newsletter

General information

To contact the Tennessee Board of Dentistry
 Regarding Registration, license verifications, license renewal, CE requirements, proposed rules, to file a complaint, delegable duties, etc.

Call 615-532-3202 local or 1-800-778-4123 or visit [Http://www2.state.tn.us/health/Boards/Dentistry/index.htm](http://www2.state.tn.us/health/Boards/Dentistry/index.htm)

To contact the Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.
 Regarding Certification, renewal requirements, etc.
 Call 1-800-FOR-DANB or go to www.danb.org

To contact the Tennessee Dental Assistants' Association
 visit www.tndaa.org or e-mail tndaa2005@yahoo.com

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Mark your Calendars

- July 14-17 – AGD/ADAA Annual Conference, Washington, DC
- August 19-20 - TN AGD meeting, Nashville
- September 1 – deadline for submissions to "Mega-Bites"
- September 21-23 – TBD Meeting, Nashville
- October 1 - Fall edition of "Mega-Bites" e-mailed
- October 8 – TNDAA Fall Conference in Lebanon, TN - Check www.tndaa.org for details