

Access

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

HONORING OUTSTANDING DENTAL HYGIENISTS

2020 AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2020 AWARD WINNERS

Every day, dental hygienists across the nation are making a positive impact on oral health. As we continue to focus on the days ahead, we are taking time to honor the amazing achievements of our fellow hygienists. We hope you enjoy this Access special supplement and find their stories as inspiring as we do.

While this year has not been easy, it has presented an opportunity to make our community stronger. Together, we are advocating for improved health and safety and a continued focus on education. Join us in congratulating this incredible lineup of stand-out dental hygienists who are leading the way.



AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DENTAL HYGIENE

Catherine K. Draper, RDH, MS
San Jose, California

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Q: What is your response to receiving the Award for Excellence in Dental Hygiene this year?

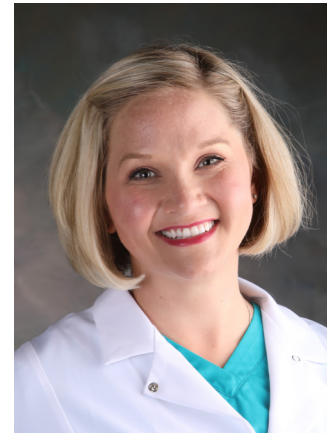
A: I am so honored to be one of the recipients of the Award for Excellence this year, coming the same month that I received my dental hygiene license 45 years ago! As I transition out of providing clinical care to my long-time patients and into devoting more time to teaching and writing, this recognition for my contributions to our profession is even more meaningful. It has been bittersweet this year, not being able to say goodbye to my patients personally due to the pandemic and now not being able to meet with my friends and colleagues from across the country at our Annual Conference. However, I am looking forward to celebrating this great honor virtually!

Q: How do you define professional excellence for yourself?

A: I am a committed lifelong learner and always try to apply the latest research and information to all that I do — whether it is patient care, teaching, writing or speaking. I try to hold myself to the same high standard that I would expect from others. I have always felt that leading by one’s own example has the biggest impact on others, whether it be students or colleagues. In my role as an educator, it has given me great pleasure to see former students pursue their professional goals in part due to experiences they have had in my classroom. It has been a real privilege to play a part in that process.

Q: How can the dental hygiene profession demonstrate excellence in responding to challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges and opportunities for all oral health care providers. On one hand, it is an opportunity to educate our patients and the public on the essential health care service that we provide and all the various steps that have been put in place to deliver safe care. On the other hand, many of the challenges around determining what is “safe” have created divisions across dentistry. It is important to have collaborative discussions with dentists to develop strategies based on the current regulations and guidelines for safe dental care. In my experience, this collaborative discussion component is often missing, leaving dental hygienists feeling unsafe in their work environment. Aerosols are not a new concern in dentistry; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a huge wake-up call that will change the way we practice for years to come — just as HIV-AIDS changed dentistry in the 1980s. As a 1975 graduate, I practiced without masks, gloves or gowns. Little did I know the changes I would see over the span of my career!



AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DENTAL HYGIENE

Emily Boge, CDA, RDH, MPA
Farley, Iowa

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Q: What is your response to receiving the Award for Excellence in Dental Hygiene this year?

A: In one word, my initial and continuous response to winning the 2020 Johnson and Johnson Award for Excellence in Dental Hygiene is “humbling”. I love being a dental hygienist, and I am so fortunate that the career found me. Receiving this award, for accomplishing what I enjoy, in many ways validates my life choices, and in my experience, not many things can do that for a person.

Q: How do you define professional excellence for yourself?

A: Professional excellence is caring for the greater good by utilizing the positive and negative experiences and knowledge one gains along the journey to make evidence-based decisions and balance those decisions with ethical integrity. Having the courage to say yes, even when I was not 100% sure I knew the entire process for doing something, has always been a blessing and a curse of my personality. One thing has held true through all of the “yeses” passed before my lips — there has always been a colleague I could call when I encounter challenges in a project. I truly believe we are only as smart as the company we keep, and the friendships I have made in dentistry are my life’s treasures.

I grew up in a small community that lacked diversity. In this profession I have gained many valuable skillsets by exposing myself to diversity, shifting from my sheltered mindset, and understanding the life experiences of those around me. A key lesson I learned early in my career is that I need to slow down and listen in order to hear. This process is not easy as I am a constant work in progress, yet I can say that once you truly hear someone it becomes difficult to judge them. My colleagues, too many to call out

“Bestowing me with this award has filled me with honor, and inspires me to continue my work spreading both kindness in the world and educational messages of prevention, ethics and safety.”

by name, have enlightened me with their wisdom, laughed with me until my tummy and cheeks ached, counseled me when I was down, lifted me up the next rung on the ladder rather than stepping on my fingers, and during this time of celebration they have overwhelmed me with messages of congratulations.

We each maintain the highest standards of care individually in our chosen roles of the dental hygienist, yet as a group we are united with one preventive voice for the health of all. During this difficult time in history, I believe dental hygiene has a unique opportunity to elevate the interest of public health and patient safety and become visible in our communities.

Bestowing me with this award has filled me with honor, and inspires me to continue my work spreading both kindness in the world and educational messages of prevention, ethics and safety.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AWARD

Tracy Laughner, PHRDH
Florence, Kentucky



Q: What is your response to receiving the Community Outreach Award this year?

A: Just after our local quarantine began, community service programs in Kentucky started being postponed or canceled. Our program had thousands of dental bags ready to go. Then I received the phone call with the news that I'd won! I was shocked and surprised. The last time I entered an award program, I was humbled by what some of the other entries were doing across the country. I have visions of this interactive lesson reaching children not just in Kentucky, but across the United States.

Q: What is your proudest achievement in the area of community outreach?

A: It is when I looked out across a gym of 200 students who are captivated about oral health. I don't consider myself a public speaker until you give me a subject that I have passion for. Because of my passion, I never have a program just like the other. While I teach, I try to have fun! I told a teacher in Grant County, Kentucky after the program that their school has well-behaved students, and she said, " I have never seen so many kids so attentive and captivated with any program — it is the program and your teaching." I laughed, knowing how I used to freeze in high school in front of people.

Q: How do you see community outreach by dental hygienists changing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Our program is very interactive, so for this fall, or until the vaccine, we will offer new ways of teaching. I will offer a fun science teaching without the children coming up into the program, doing it in smaller groups with social distancing and focusing on the third graders. Until life gets back to normal, I hope to roll the 12-foot mouth, 4-foot X-rays, and teaching supplies into the high school health classroom. This has been requested in the past but not possible while doing the large assemblies with the younger children.

"Because of my passion, I never have a program just like the other. While I teach, I try to have fun!"



ESTHER WILKINS FUTURE LEADER AWARD

Han-Na Jang, RDH, MSDH
Washington, District of Columbia



Q: What is your response to receiving the Esther Wilkins Future Leader Award this year?

A: I am honored and privileged to be considered for this award. I am so grateful to receive the award, but at the same time, I feel more responsibilities when I think about how I can contribute to the District of Columbia Dental Hygienists' Association (DCDHA) as the current president and to ADHA as a future leader. I would like to thank all of the ADHA and DCDHA leaders who have mentored me and believed in me during my leadership journey.

Q: What is your proudest achievement in the area of leadership?

A: In September 2019, I was installed as the president of DCDHA for the next two years. The first several months were extremely overwhelming because there were significant and unexpected leadership changes. Frankly, as the smallest constituent in ADHA, I found it challenging to cultivate members to serve in leadership roles. I feared, without a strong cohort of leaders in DCDHA, I would not be able to chart a way forward as well as meet my goals of furthering DCDHA's objectives. I spent my energies over the past eight months trying to communicate with members and other leaders in ADHA and DCDHA, and now I'm finally starting to see the stable leadership pipeline in DCDHA; the leaders have been fulfilling their roles and responsibilities wonderfully. During the process of building up the leadership pipeline, I was able to think deeply about my leadership style and learn lots of valuable lessons that I would not have been able to learn if I did not serve in the position. Since this was the most challenging time in my leadership journey so far, I am proud of myself to have overcome the difficult time.

"I would like to thank all of the ADHA and DCDHA leaders who have mentored me and believed in me during my leadership journey."

Q: How do you see leadership in dental hygiene evolving as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Under the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of joining and supporting the American Dental Hygienists' Association has been standing out more than ever before. The legislative efforts that the ADHA leaders at the national and local levels have shown to advocate for dental hygienists' interests and rights under the pandemic have brought lots of dental hygienists to realize the true meaning of having the association for the profession.



EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

Brenda Armstrong, RDH, MDH
Ivins, Utah

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Q: What is your response to receiving the Educator of the Year Award for 2020?

A: I am humbled and grateful. I was educated by wonderful mentors at the University of Minnesota, had a fabulous experience at Thomas Nelson Community College (Williamsburg, Virginia) helping to open a new dental hygiene program, and then came to Dixie State University (St. George, Utah) where I have been supported by department and College of Health Sciences colleagues. Importantly, it has always been about the student, and dental hygiene students are some of the best!

Q: What is your proudest achievement as an educator?

A: Most notable for me is to watch my students succeed. Whether it is when a student grasps a concept, presents an evidence-based decision in a research poster or demonstrates advocacy at the state capitol, I rejoice when students successfully reach their goals. My goal as an educator has been to help the future generation of dental hygienists see themselves as vital participants in improving access to care and responsible professionals in the total health of the community they serve. My desire is to prepare students for a future with improved scope of practice that includes medical-dental integration.

Q: How do you see the role of dental hygiene educators evolving as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Our role will be to continue to act as advocates for both the students and the profession. During this pandemic, I have found it important to reassure students, our community partners, and patients that though we are in a position of health recovery in our nation, the next step is return to a state of prevention. Now more than ever the profession and the preventive therapies provided by dental hygienists are vital. Importantly, we will need to advance the profession and prepare students to be included in health care delivery for total patient care and well-being, in many types of settings that increase access to care.

“My desire is to prepare students for a future with improved scope of practice that includes medical-dental integration.”



PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP ACHIEVEMENT

Tammy Filipiak, RDH, MS
Mosinee, Wisconsin

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Q: What is your response to receiving the Professional Membership Achievement Award this year?

A: It is an honor to receive the Professional Membership Achievement Award and truly feels like one of those mile markers in my professional journey. I started my involvement with ADHA as a dental hygiene student and have had the privilege to work and lead with some fantastic colleagues along the journey at the local, state and national level. I certainly did not think about all of the many opportunities that I would have over the 30-plus year journey. I am thankful for the first person at the component level who asked me to serve in a leadership role. She had confidence in me when I was new to the profession. This is truly one of the most important things as leaders that we can do: ask and support someone else who is not as far along in their journey.

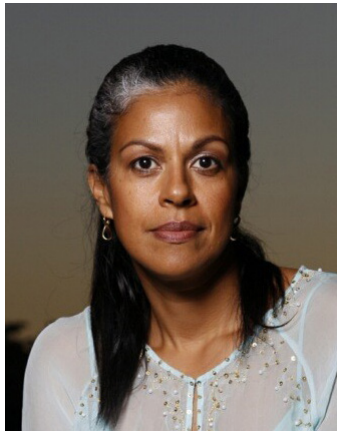
Q: How do you see the role of ADHA in dental hygienists' professional achievements?

A: ADHA has been an ever-present part of my professional journey. I've often talked about how, as I now look back, I find that some type of connection I made through my involvement in ADHA was a part of each opportunity that came to me. Having supportive professional colleagues along the way is also something that has come with my ADHA membership. I want to especially thank all of my colleagues in Wisconsin — they've inspired, supported and encouraged me at each step along the way, including my installation as ADHA president in 2017.

“I am thankful for the first person at the component level who asked me to serve in a leadership role. She had confidence in me when I was new to the profession.”

Q: Considering the profound effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the dental professions, why is it important for a dental hygienist to be an actively engaged member of ADHA?

A: ADHA has always had resources for dental hygienists and been the voice for the profession. Now more than ever we have seen that ADHA has been a resource for dental hygienists and responsive to the changing needs with regard to information, advocacy and support. As the profession evolves, it is my hope that dental hygienists recognize the importance of professional membership and involvement so we can continue to advance the profession.



IRENE NEWMAN OUTSTANDING CLINICIAN AWARD

Ana Paula Mata, RDH
Staten Island, New York



Q: What is your response to receiving the Irene Newman Outstanding Clinician Award this year?

A: I feel happy and excited to receive the Irene Newman Outstanding Clinician Award. Recognition is not the reason I do what I do, but it's exciting to be in the company of others who give their best to our profession. One of my professors texted me to congratulate me, and I was surprised. She said I made New York City Tech proud.

Q: What is your proudest achievement as a clinical dental hygienist?

A: My proudest achievement as a clinical dental hygienist is seeing the changes in my patients. I see children come in to our practice with no fear of being in a dental chair and leave smiling. They are the reason I enjoy my profession, and having a positive impact on their health is awesome. I am proud to be a dental hygienist and love what I do as a person. As a profession, clinical dental hygiene is fulfilling career.

Q: Considering the profound effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the dental professions, what are some positive changes you envision for clinical dental hygiene practice?

A: A positive change in clinical dental hygiene practice is the coming together of the dental team to hold each other accountable and to maintain a safer environment for our patients. We have strategized and implemented more stringent protocols for patient visits, disinfecting operatories, and reducing patient scheduling to reduce the spread of the virus. With so many unknown factors, we are safeguarding the health of our patients and staff.

“I am so proud to be a dental hygienist and love what I do as a person. As a profession, clinical dental hygiene is fulfilling career.”



HYGIENIST PROUD AWARD STUDENT AWARD PROGRAM

QuinTess Bond
Washington, District of Columbia



Q: What is your response to receiving the Hygienist Proud Award this year?

A: I only think about teeth 23/6, so I was taken by surprise yet completely elated to receive the Hygienist Proud Award this year. I want the world to understand the importance of preventive care and start to make it the forefront of our health care system.

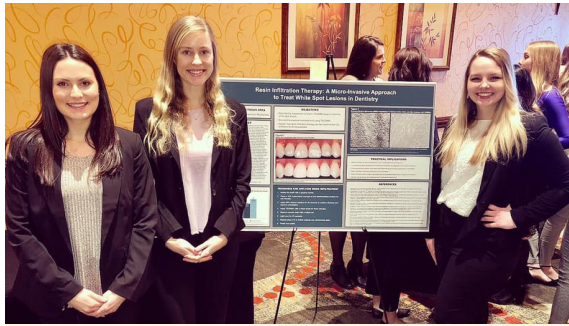
Q: What makes you proud to be a dental hygienist?

A: The pride of being a dental hygienist comes from knowing my patients are healthy and happy.

Q: How do you see dental hygienists leveraging their professional pride in addressing some of the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Even though we specialize in oral hygiene, overall health is the ultimate goal. At Howard University, they teach us to lead with competence, confidence and compassion. I aim to use my knowledge and skills learned there to ensure the safety of my patients in the midst of and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The pride of being a dental hygienist comes from knowing my patients are healthy and happy.”



2020 SIGMA PHI ALPHA EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM UNDERGRADUATE AWARD WINNERS STUDENT AWARD PROGRAM

Danielle Allen, Courtney Fine and Malorie Newton

Caruth School of Dental Hygiene at the Texas A&M College of Dentistry
*Resin Infiltration Therapy: A Micro-Invasive Approach to Treat White
Spot Lesions in Dentistry*

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2020 SIGMA PHI ALPHA EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM GRADUATE AWARD WINNER

Krista Beaty, RDH, MS

Keno, Oregon

*The Oral Health Experiences of the Limited Scleroderma
[Formerly Known as CREST Syndrome]
Patient: A Mixed Method Study*

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Q: What is your response to receiving the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism Award?

A: As a group, we feel very honored to have received such a prestigious award at the national level. We have put so much work into our research and it is the best feeling when it begins to pay off. We are thankful for the opportunity to apply for this award and can't thank everyone enough who participated in making this a reality for us.

Q: Why did you choose resin infiltration as a topic for research?

A: One of our group members, Malorie Newton, was presented with the idea by a friend who also works in the dental field. As a group, we looked into this topic and decided it would be an exciting and interesting treatment to research. We wanted to be able to go into practice as experts in a preventive and micro-invasive treatment that is practical in the dental office and can help many patients with esthetics.

Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your hopes and plans for your dental hygiene career?

A: Though COVID-19 has given us an extensive detour in our path to licensure, we have overcome many obstacles and have grown as future clinicians. The pandemic has further evolved infection control in dentistry, increasing the need to continue to educate ourselves. This will make us more adaptive and open-minded to learning as new protocols are introduced. We are excited to implement our education and clinical experiences once we are licensed and able to practice!

"We have put so much work into our research and it is the best feeling when it begins to pay off."

Q: What is your response to receiving the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism Award?

A: I am humbled and honored to have received the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism award. Research in dental hygiene is essential to inform evidence-based practice and practice guidelines. I have long admired the research contributions of dental hygienists and am amazed to count myself among them. I am grateful to Professors JoAnn Gurenlian, RDH, PhD and Ellen Rogo, RDH, PhD, for their mentorship and support. I am also grateful to Idaho State University Dental Hygiene Faculty for their nomination.

Q: Why did you choose limited scleroderma as a topic for research?

A: When I was working in general dentistry, a patient with limited scleroderma came in for routine preventive care. During my review of her health history, she indicated she had "CREST Syndrome." I had never heard of this autoimmune condition before and asked the patient many questions. She was very patient and informative. Her symptoms included tightening of the skin of the face, microstomia and a lack of dexterity due to sclerodactyly. I immediately thought that this would impact not only my treatment plan, but also her own oral care abilities. This began my interest in serving this patient population to improve their oral health related quality of life and to provide resources for oral health care professionals.

"I have long admired the research contributions of dental hygienists and am amazed to count myself among them."

Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your hopes and plans for your dental hygiene career?

A: Cancellation of professional conferences has prevented me from sharing my thesis research as I had hoped. My focus as an educator has primarily been the impact of changes related to COVID-19 on my students. In an effort to clarify guidelines and procedures for faculty and students, I have been researching COVID-19 extensively. I have been disappointed in the reactionary nature of reporting on COVID-19 and the lack of sufficient guidelines from state authorities related to dentistry. I'm proud of ADHA for providing clear guidance, and I would like to see continued leadership from hygienists in this area.



2020 SIGMA PHI ALPHA
EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM
UNDERGRADUATE HONORABLE MENTION
STUDENT AWARD PROGRAM

Melanie Patterson, Abbigale White, and Kimberlynn Patzold
Caruth School of Dental Hygiene at the Texas A&M College of Dentistry
*Infectious Disease Disclosure by Dental Health Care Providers:
A Patient's Right to Know*



2020 SIGMA PHI ALPHA EXCELLENCE
IN JOURNALISM
GRADUATE HONORABLE MENTION

Heather Morse, RDH, BS, MSDH
Battle Creek, Michigan
*Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems Education
in US Dental Hygiene Programs:
Results of a National Survey*



Q: What is your response to receiving honorable mention from the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism program?

A: We are honored and humbled to even be considered for this national award. Our group put in countless hours researching infectious disease disclosure by dental health care providers. We have grown exponentially as researchers and clinicians throughout this endeavor. We plan to continue our research into this topic and aspire to publish our findings in a peer-reviewed journal.

Q: Why did you choose infectious disease disclosure by dental health care providers as a topic for your article?

A: As a group, we realized we were passionate about infection control following a lecture in our Ethics course. The discussion on the Texas state board website of whether or not a dental health care provider with an infectious disease should disclose his disease status to his patients sparked an interest in researching. After digging for an answer to our own questions, we discovered this was a topic very seldom discussed among dental providers across the nation. As a team, we wanted to gain knowledge of the protocol for disclosure of an infectious disease and the impact it held for both the dental health care provider and the patient.

Q: How do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the practice of dental hygiene in the future, in general and specifically related to disease status disclosure?

A: We think the COVID-19 pandemic will increase dental office compliance with PPE requirements and sanitation procedures, which will, in turn, lead to reductions in all forms of disease transmission. With any change, the adjustment period comes with its own set of challenges. However, we think the new updates in PPE and infection control have been a good reminder for dental professionals to stay up to date with their state's rules and regulations and continue adapting and implementing new clinical protocols and services for the safety and well-being of our patients. This era of change could provide the opportunity to reconsider existing policies, such as requiring dental health care providers in Texas to disclose their infectious disease status to their patients.

Q: What is your response to receiving honorable mention from the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism program?

A: I am truly honored to be receiving honorable mention from the 2020 Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism program. I feel very proud that my work is being recognized and appreciate the opportunity to share my research with the dental hygiene community. I would like to thank the Sigma Phi Alpha Excellence in Journalism program, sponsor Johnson & Johnson, the American Dental Hygienists' Association and my thesis committee at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry.

Q: Why did you choose electronic nicotine delivery as a topic for research?

A: I chose electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) as a topic for research due to the large percentage of ENDS users in the population, the negative health risks associated with ENDS use, and the contradicting opinions regarding ENDS as helpful harm reduction strategies and smoking cessation aids. I wanted to explore how dental professionals have long been identified as front-line deliverers of smoking cessation education; however, there is no standardized smoking cessation education, including ENDS content, in U.S. dental hygiene education programs.

"I feel very proud that my work is being recognized and appreciate the opportunity to share my research with the dental hygiene community."

Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your hopes and plans for your dental hygiene career?

A: My hopes and plans before COVID-19 were to continue to gain clinical and educational experience in order to pursue my goal of becoming a full-time dental hygiene educator. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has delayed these plans and it created a feeling of uncertainty about what the future of my profession and the future of dental hygiene education look like. I'm hopeful that I'll be able to overcome the obstacles COVID-19 has created, explore new opportunities and ultimately reach my goal.

If you know an outstanding dental hygienist you'd like to see recognized, the 2021 Awards Program will open this fall. Details to be announced and posted at adha.org.