

The AAWD Chronicle Quarterly

Building Bridges



Connections that Last

Inside: Student Leaders • Chapter Highlights • Professional Insights • Community Connections

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From the President-Elect

As graduation season comes to a close, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our AAWD student members and to all graduating dental students, residents, and dental hygiene students. Earning a degree in the dental field represents years of hard work, perseverance, and dedication. This milestone marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another filled with opportunity, growth, and new possibilities.

The theme of this issue, *Building Bridges: Connections That Last*, resonates deeply with the mission of AAWD. As women in dentistry, we cross many metaphorical bridges throughout our careers. We move from student to practitioner, from mentee to mentor, and from participant to leader. These bridges are built through genuine and meaningful relationships.

Many of the opportunities, friendships, and leadership experiences that have shaped my own career began with a simple conversation. Curiosity has a way of opening doors. It encourages us to introduce ourselves to someone new, ask questions, listen to different perspectives, and say yes to projects we may not have considered before. Those small moments often become the foundation for lasting professional relationships.



AAWD thrives because of the cohesion our members create with one another. I encourage each of you to find a new way to engage, whether through a local chapter, committee service, mentoring, or attending an event. Invite your colleagues and welcome new members. The bridges we build today will support the next generation of women in dentistry.

To those attending the AAWD + Dandy cruise, I wish you a wonderful time of community and camaraderie.

As we continue building on the strong foundation established by our Board of Directors, chapter leaders, volunteers, and members, I am excited about the future of AAWD and the connections that will last for years to come.

Dr. Suzie Bergman

AAWD President-Elect

Honoring a Legacy, Paying It Forward

How two pioneering women helped shape periodontology — and how their legacy continues through the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation.

By Dr. Judith Fisch

APRIL 8, 1913.

pharmacy, as well as that of nursing, offer inducements to women who desire to lessen the suffering of humanity. Dentistry is becoming increasingly popular for women. Women dentists are found in every large city, many of whom are earning good incomes. Some of them make a specialty of the teeth of children and the correction of natural defects. The movement for the inspection and care of the teeth of children in the public school has been originated largely by the women dentists, and many are giving liberally of their time and service to this work.

Imagine it is 1914. World War I had just begun, the Panama Canal had officially opened, and women in Illinois had won the right to vote for President and local officers. It was also a remarkable year for dentistry: at a time when women made up only about 3% of practicing dentists in the United States — roughly 800 women total — two determined women founded what is known today as the American Academy of Periodontology. Originally, the organization was named the American Academy of Oral Prophylaxis and Periodontology.

What do we know about these trailblazing founders?

Dr. Gillette Hayden was born in 1880 in Florida, but her family later relocated to Columbus, Ohio, where she grew up and eventually practiced dentistry. She was the third woman to graduate from the dental department of Ohio Medical University (now The Ohio State University) in 1902 and opened her practice in 1904.

Dr. Hayden built her practice around the care and treatment of gums, emphasizing that gum health was just as important as caring for teeth. Between 1905 and 1908, she traveled extensively to introduce methods for the prevention and treatment of periodontal disease, ultimately devoting her practice exclusively to this specialty. She also served as the third president of AAWD.



Honoring the women whose leadership continues to inspire future generations.



Dr. Grace Rogers Spalding, born in Ohio in 1881, graduated from the University of Michigan in 1904 and joined a private practice with her future husband in 1905. An early advocate for preventive dentistry, she shared Dr. Hayden's passion for oral prophylaxis and periodontal care. Together, they founded the American Academy of Oral Prophylaxis and Periodontology, later renamed the American Academy of Periodontology. Dr. Spalding went on to become the first editor of the *Journal of Periodontology* and held leadership roles at the state, national, and international levels.

Dr. Hayden became president of the AAP in 1916 and served continuously in the association until her death in 1929 at the age of 49. Beyond her work in dentistry, organized dentistry, and the AAP, Dr. Hayden was also active in the suffrage movement. She was affiliated with the National Woman's Party and was a strong advocate for women's voting rights at every level of government. Dr. Spalding died in 1953 at the age of 71.

What these pioneering women accomplished in 1914 is extraordinary. They advanced the future of dentistry — and specifically periodontology—while navigating a male-dominated profession during a period when women were still fighting for the right to vote.

Honoring a Legacy

continued

In 1930, AAWD established the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation in Dr. Hayden's honor. Today, the Foundation supports the future of women's dental leadership through scholarships that expand access to education and professional growth.

What better way to pay it forward than by supporting the Foundation that carries forward Dr. Hayden's passion for women in dentistry? By investing in the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation, we continue her mission to uplift the next generation of women leaders in the profession.

Learn More about GHMF

To find out more about the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation click [HERE](#) and to donate click [HERE](#). To learn about the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation Scholarship opportunities click [HERE](#).

AAWD Leaders Join Founding Board of AHEADD Consortium

AAWD is proud to recognize three members of our leadership team who have been appointed to the founding board of the Artificial Intelligence, Haptics, Education, and Advanced Digital Dentistry (AHEADD) Consortium, an international collaborative focused on innovation in dental education, digital technologies, and interdisciplinary research.

AAWD President Dr. Roya Zandparsa, AAWD President-Elect Dr. Suzie Bergman, and AAWD Assistant Director of Academic Affairs Dr. Hiroe Ohyama will serve as Vice Presidents of the consortium, joining colleagues from around the world to help shape the future of oral health education and technology integration.



AHEADD brings together educators, researchers, clinicians, engineers, and industry leaders to advance emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, haptic simulation, digital workflows, immersive technologies, curriculum innovation, and translational research. Its mission is to support the ethical integration of advanced technologies into dental education and patient care while expanding access, encouraging global collaboration, and strengthening workforce development worldwide.

Building new connections through global collaboration.

Within AHEADD, Dr. Bergman will help lead education and curriculum integration efforts and is recognized for her work in interdisciplinary education, orofacial pain, orthodontics, and emerging technologies in dental education. Dr. Zandparsa brings extensive experience in digital dentistry, biomaterials, implant dentistry, and academic leadership, while Dr. Ohyama's work has focused on student learning, self-assessment, and the evolving landscape of dental education.

We congratulate Drs. Bergman, Zandparsa, and Ohyama on their appointments and look forward to the impact they will make through this new global collaboration.

AAWD Leadership and Strategic Growth: An Exciting New Chapter



By Roya Zandparsa, AAWD President

AAWD is entering an exciting new chapter of growth, leadership, and connection. With all board positions now filled, our organization is well positioned to expand its impact and continue building meaningful opportunities for women in dentistry at every stage of their careers.

Building on our strong national foundation, AAWD is also expanding in new ways. We are thrilled to launch our **first AAWD pre-dental chapter in Massachusetts**, creating an opportunity to connect with and support future women dentists even earlier in their professional journeys. We hope this initiative will inspire additional chapters and supporters to help grow AAWD's pre-dental network in other communities as well.

At the same time, AAWD is strengthening partnerships with sister societies and women-led dental organizations worldwide. These collaborations will help us expand resources, share ideas, and create meaningful opportunities for women across the profession — from pre-dental students and dental students to faculty, practitioners, researchers, and innovators.

This moment reflects AAWD's continued commitment to empowering women in dentistry through leadership, mentorship, connection, and community. We look forward to sharing more details about these initiatives in the months ahead and are grateful for the support of our members as we continue building together.

Leading this work is a dedicated team of volunteers committed to advancing AAWD's mission.

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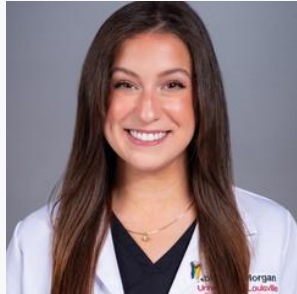
Rosario Alvarez
Dir. Global Affairs

2026 AAWD Eleanor J Bushee Awardees

Named in honor of Dr. Eleanor J. Bushee, this award recognizes outstanding graduating women dental students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and a commitment to advancing women in dentistry. All 2026 awardees received complimentary AAWD Early Career membership, so be sure to welcome them in the AAWD Member Portal.



Anna Thompson
The Dental College of Georgia



Abigail Morgan
University of Louisville
SoD



Claire Martin
University of Buffalo
SoDM



Elizabeth Earl
University of Nevada
Las Vegas SoDM



Hallie Craig
Virginia Commonwealth
University SoD



Tabetha Clark
University of
Washington SoD



Linda Chen
University of the Pacific
Arthur A. Dugoni SoD



Ariana Sarkhail
University of Florida
CoD



Brianna Brown
Midwestern University
CoDM - Illinois



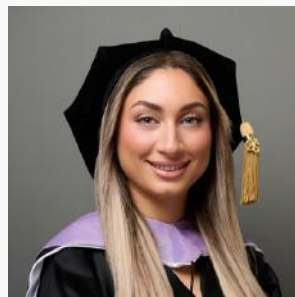
Karen Hayes
Rutgers University
SoDM



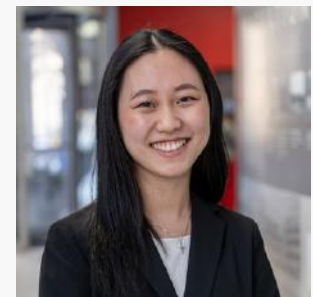
Maggie Currie
Creighton University
SoD



Pamela Shehu
Boston University Henry
M. Goldman SoDM



Netaliya Zora
Western University of
Health Sciences CoDM



Christina Pan Xu
Harvard University
SoDM

Alexis Vasciannie University of Connecticut SoDM	Betty Birbo University of California San Francisco SoD	Jamie Buchanczenko A.T. Still University Missouri SoDOH	Sabba Givi A.T. Still University Arizona SoDOH
Hannah T Ryan Texas A&M University CoD	Meredyth Simpson Alvarez University of Puerto Rico	Emily Silman New York University CoD	Emma O'Shea University of Maryland SoD
Jessica Hao University of Pennsylvania SoDM	Isabel Kennedy University of New England CoDM	Jane Rich University of Utah SoD	Olivia Schmitt Stony Brook SoDM

Dental Implants and the Aging Patient

By Karessa Kuntz, DDS, & Asha Pandya



Dental implants have been successfully used for decades. Today, we are treating the healthiest and longest-living older generation in history. As clinicians, we are increasingly caring for implants placed decades ago that remain functional as our patients age, creating new clinical considerations.

In evaluating patients over age 70 with anterior implants, we observed changes similar to those reported in younger populations. Over a 10-year period, implants frequently demonstrated shifts of approximately 0.5 mm, with some exceeding 1 mm. Pang et al noted average 50% mesial drift of natural teeth (1). Kim et al. noted over 50% contact loss with implants over 10 years (2)

Our patients are showing these same patterns — changes in implant position, open contacts, and altered incisal edges. Depending on the clinical situation, treatment options may include recontouring incisal edges, microetching ceramic restorations and adding resin to close contacts on appropriate screw-retained restorations, or replacing implant crowns when necessary.

The Baby Boomer generation represents the largest and healthiest older dental population we have ever treated, and implants remain an excellent tool. As clinicians, understanding how implants age alongside our patients will help us develop treatment strategies that maintain function, stability, and oral health for years to come. Continued observation of this growing patient population will provide valuable insight into long-term implant care and future treatment planning.

Clinical Pearl: Aging implants often require monitoring for open contacts and positional changes—not just implant stability.

- (1) Pang et al. / other retrospective studies and systematic reviews report PCL incidences after long follow-up typically in the 40–60% range and note mesial drift of natural teeth as main mechanism; periodontal/ tooth condition (mobility, pocket depth, plaque/ bleeding) is consistently associated with higher PCL.
- (2) Kim et al., J Periodontal Implant Sci 2026 (implants >10 years): proximal contact loss observed in 53.7% of adjacent sites; mesial PCL 65.6% vs distal 28.3%; no statistically significant association between PCL and patient age.

Member Spotlight: Sarah Walsh



Sarah Walsh is a third-year dental student at Harvard School of Dental Medicine and has been an active AAWD member for the past three years.

She serves as Treasurer of the HSDM AAWD chapter and is also a member of AAWD's Membership Committee, supporting the Student Rep and Chapters teams. Originally from Bellevue, Washington, Sarah enjoys running, hiking, and visiting family.

From Classroom Story to Published Book

How one dental hygiene school project inspired generations of healthy smiles



Nearly 50 years ago, a classroom assignment changed the course of Patricia Cherney's career in oral health education. While studying dental hygiene, Patti, RDH, was assigned to teach first-grade students about oral health. She created a simple flip-chart story featuring a curious monkey named Mikey, and what began as a classroom project quickly became a favorite with elementary students.

After completing her education, Patti continued bringing Mikey into classrooms during National Children's Dental Health Month, helping generations of children feel more comfortable about visiting the dentist and caring for their teeth. Years later, when it was time to teach her own children about oral health, Mikey returned once again.

Today, Patti serves as faculty at Creighton University School of Dentistry alongside her daughter, Dr. Nikki Muelleman, faculty advisor for the AAWD Creighton Chapter. Encouraged by her husband and inspired by decades of classroom visits, Patti transformed those original lessons into the children's book *Mikey the Monkey Meets the Dentist*, bringing Mikey's story to a new generation of young readers.

The story follows Mikey as a visit to the dentist becomes a positive learning experience. Through a kind female dentist, children learn what to expect during a dental visit while building healthy habits such as brushing, flossing, eating nutritious foods, and visiting the dentist regularly. Written by a practicing dental hygienist, the book reflects Patti's lifelong commitment to prevention, education, and making dentistry less intimidating for children.



Looking back, Patti says one of Mikey's greatest success stories may be closer to home. As a child, Nikki eagerly joined classroom presentations dressed as the dentist. Today, mother and daughter teach side by side at Creighton University, inspiring future dental professionals together — a fitting next chapter for a story that has been connecting children with healthy smiles for nearly 50 years.

Resource Spotlight

New IEC Dental Toolkit Supports Inclusive Patient Care

The Institute for Exceptional Care (IEC), an AAWD sister society, has launched a free Dental Toolkit designed to help dental professionals, patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), and their support teams communicate more effectively and create more positive dental experiences.

The toolkit includes practical guidance, communication strategies, and downloadable resources that can be used by dental teams and caregivers alike. Whether you're looking to improve patient interactions or build a more inclusive practice, these free resources offer a great place to start.



[Download the free toolkit on the IEC website.](#)

Student Leadership in Transition

As AAWD closes another academic year, we are celebrating a meaningful transition within our student leadership team.



This spring, we congratulate Dr. Christina “Chris” Xu as she graduates and begins the next chapter of her journey in dentistry. As AAWD’s Student Representative, Chris helped strengthen communication and connection across our student chapters while representing student members on the national board. We are grateful for her leadership and all she contributed to AAWD, and we look forward to seeing all she accomplishes as she begins her orthodontic residency at Tufts University.

As Chris transitions out of the role, Keaton Wilczynski will step into the position of Student Representative. Keaton has already been actively engaged in AAWD leadership and will continue supporting connection across student chapters nationwide.

We are also pleased to welcome Whitney Dye as AAWD’s new Assistant Student Representative. Whitney is a student at Kansas City University College of Dental Medicine and currently serves in student chapter leadership at her school. We are excited to welcome her to the team and look forward to all she will bring to this role.



Please join us in thanking Chris and welcoming Keaton and Whitney to their new leadership roles.

Building Connections Beyond Dental School

By Keaton Wilczynski, AAWD Student Representative



As a dental student, it is easy to become focused on coursework, exams, and clinical responsibilities. While these experiences are essential to our growth, some of the most valuable lessons I have learned have come from building relationships beyond my own dental school through my involvement with the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD).

AAWD membership has given me opportunities to connect with dental students, residents, faculty, and practicing dentists from across the country. Those relationships have broadened my perspective on the profession and reinforced the importance of mentorship, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

One of the most rewarding aspects of AAWD membership has been learning from accomplished women leaders who generously share their experiences and advice. Their stories of perseverance, professional growth, and service have inspired me to pursue leadership opportunities, embrace challenges, and remain committed to supporting others along the way.

National membership extends far beyond networking; it creates a community of women invested in one another’s success. As students, we often focus on where we are today, but organizations like AAWD remind us to think about the professionals we hope to become. By building connections early and learning from those who have paved the way before us, we strengthen not only our own careers, but also the future of our profession.

UMSOD: Building Community Through Every Opportunity

As AAWD's 2025 Student Chapter of the Year, the University of Maryland School of Dentistry (UMSOD) chapter continues to demonstrate what an engaged student organization can achieve. From professional development and mentorship to wellness and service, the chapter creates meaningful opportunities for students to connect, grow, and lead. Members also played an important role in welcoming attendees and supporting the 2025 AAWD Conference in Baltimore.

With 72 active members and 38 chapter events this year, UMSOD offers something for everyone. Students connect with faculty, alumni, residents, and practicing dentists through Lunch & Learns, career panels, networking events, and study sessions.



The chapter also prioritizes community beyond the classroom. Wellness activities, volunteer service, fundraising initiatives, and social events help strengthen relationships across all four class years while supporting the Baltimore community.

Whether participating in CorePower yoga, Safe Smiles outreach, hygiene drives, or a Lunch & Learn, UMSOD members are building a chapter culture rooted in connection, leadership, and service — one that continues to inspire student chapters across AAWD.



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Rockville, MD 20850



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Mentorship in Action at HSDM

By Piper Boswell, DMD Candidate 2027

Harvard AAWD hosted its third annual Mentor–Mentee Social on April 9, bringing together more than 50 students, residents, faculty, and alumni for an evening centered on connection, mentorship, and community. The event marked record attendance and highlighted the continued growth of one of the chapter’s signature programs.

Through Harvard AAWD’s mentorship initiative, students are paired with practicing dentists and dental specialists based on shared interests and career goals. Throughout the year, mentors and mentees connect over coffee, meals, and conversations between clinic sessions, building relationships that extend beyond the classroom and clinic.



This year’s event featured AAWD National President Dr. Roya Zandparsa as keynote speaker. Her remarks, “Leading with Purpose: Advancing Women in Dentistry, Together,” reinforced the chapter’s commitment to mentorship, leadership, and supporting women in dentistry.

Second–year dental student Noura Abousy shared that the event “filled my cup” and reminded her of the value of being surrounded by ambitious and inspiring women in dentistry.

As the program continues to grow, Harvard AAWD hopes these mentorship relationships will not only support students today, but also inspire them to become mentors themselves in the future.

A Day in the Life of a General Dentist

On May 22, the **University of Washington AAWD chapter** hosted “A Day in the Life of a General Dentist,” welcoming 68 students for a career-focused conversation featuring Dr. Tiffany Lamberton and Dr. Sarah Davis.

Dr. Davis shared her journey through military dentistry and her current role as a Navy Captain, while Dr. Lamberton discussed how she has combined physical therapy and dentistry in a practice focused on TMJ and airway care. Sponsored by Nobel Biocare, the program reflected the chapter’s commitment to exposing students to diverse career opportunities in dentistry.



AAWD Student Chapters in Action!



UAB



IUSD



Midwestern - IL



OUCOD



VCU



UPR



UNE



SIUSDM

Three Places to Invest Your Money

Sponsored Insight from Dentist Advisors

As women dentists move through different stages of practice and life, financial planning becomes an important part of building long-term stability and flexibility. Investing doesn't have to be complicated. While there are countless places to invest, most opportunities fit into three broad categories: your practice, public markets, and real estate.

Private markets.

If you own a practice, you're already investing in private markets. Your practice isn't just your income source—it can also build long-term value and wealth.

Public markets.

Stocks and bonds are the foundation of public markets and can be accessed through retirement and brokerage accounts. While there are many ways to invest, they all fall under the same public market umbrella.

Real estate.

Real estate can take many forms, from your home to rental or commercial property, duplexes, or REITs. Like any investment, it offers both opportunities and trade-offs.

The goal is to move from thinking about investing to getting started. It also helps to remember that no single category is objectively better than the others.

Rather than searching for the "best" investment, focus on finding the investments that best support your financial plan. Each category has its own strengths and weaknesses, and the right mix depends on your goals, priorities, and time horizon.

Investing doesn't have to be complicated. Keep it simple, understand your options, and build a strategy that supports the life you're trying to create.

The right investment mix depends on your goals, priorities, and timeline. Understanding your options is the first step toward building a strategy that supports the life and practice you're creating. [Schedule a free consultation with a CFP® professional who specializes in working with dentists.](#)

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Financial Planning & Investment Management



Estate Planning



Tax Planning & Accounting



Practice Financial Strategy



Retirement & Savings Strategy



Debt & Liquidity Strategy

Building Connections, One City at a Time

AAWD is growing beyond the screen. Through local meet-ups, members are connecting in their own communities to build relationships, share experiences, and strengthen the network of women in dentistry.



This spring, members gathered in New York City for a casual brunch, and just this week, AAWD partnered with Dandy to host a harbor cruise in Boston, bringing members together for an evening of conversation and connection.

Whether you're looking to expand your professional network, reconnect with classmates, or simply spend time with colleagues who understand the unique experiences of women in dentistry, we'd love to help you build connections in your own community.

Interested in hosting or attending a local meet-up? [Complete our interest form and let us know where you'd like to connect next.](#)

Help Shape AAWD's 2027 Education Program

AAWD's educational programs are strongest when they're built around the needs of our members.

We're currently gathering feedback to help guide planning for 2027 webinars and conference programming, and we'd love to hear from you. Whether you're interested in clinical topics, leadership development, practice management, wellness, or emerging technologies, your feedback will help shape AAWD's 2027 webinars, conference programming, and future educational initiatives.

[Take the Education Interest Survey and help shape AAWD's future educational programming.](#)

Upcoming Events

July

16: [AAWD Webinar - Endo Consults](#)

August

Breastfeeding Month
12: Biannual Student Chapter Check-In Meeting
20: [AAWD Webinar - The 4 Foundations of Financial Health](#)

September

Ovarian Cancer & PMOS Awareness
18: [AAWD Webinar - Practical Tools for Treating Patients with IDD](#)
TBD: Bridge to Brilliance AAWD [Mentor Kickoff Meeting](#)


We want to hear from you! What events would you like to see AAWD host? [Click here to share your feedback!](#)



Where Connections Become Community

Every connection has the power to shape a career. At AAWD, women dentists, students, educators, and leaders come together to mentor, collaborate, and inspire one another. Through education, leadership, and lifelong relationships, we're building a stronger, more connected future for women dentists.

 Not a member yet? [Join Now](#)

 Questions? Email us: membership@aawd.org

 @aawd1921

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