

PITT DENTAL MEDICINE

Summer 20

23

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Showcasing the long history and bright future of the Pitt Dental Medicine Center for Patients with Special Needs as an environment to teach students, share knowledge, and provide compassionate care.





In this Issue

For more than half a century, the CPSN has been teaching students how to provide care for patients who are not able to receive care in a traditional dental office.

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Pictured on cover: Alayna Mickoloff (DMD Class of 2024) and Karman Masown (DMD Class of 2024) with Dr. Lynne Taiclet and a patient.

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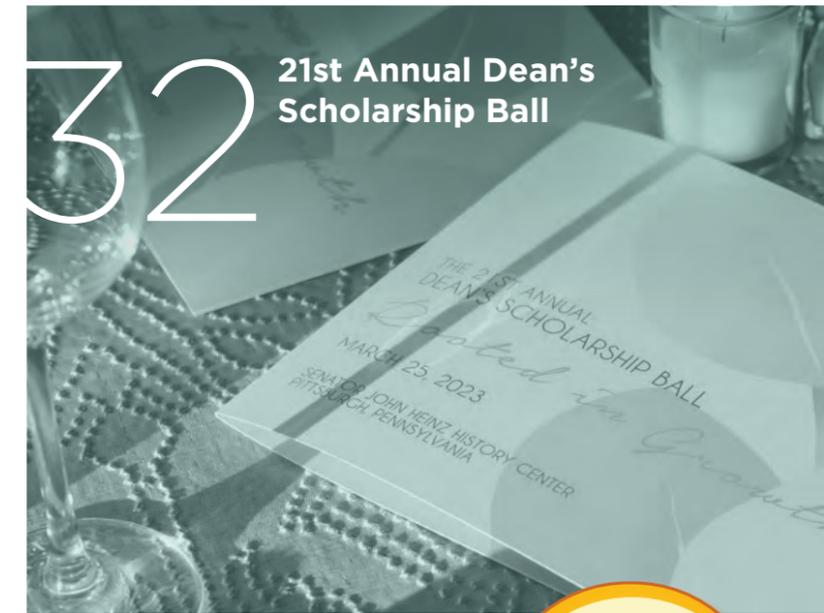


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Pitt Dental Medicine
Diploma Ceremony

Message from the Dean

SERVING the community has always been at the core of our mission at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. It is what drives us as faculty, staff, students, and alumni. We are proud of our long legacy of providing exceptional care with a focus on serving the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community.



In the coming pages you will get to experience just how remarkable Pitt Dental Medicine is.

We have a legacy of identifying needs for our community and creating solutions to deliver expert care. The Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN) is one example of the innovative ways we are meeting the needs of our community.

In 1965, our Department of Pediatric Dentistry identified the need to provide specialized dental care to patients with special needs because of the challenges they faced managing their own oral care and hygiene—coupled with the sparseness of regional providers who felt equipped to support their dental service needs. A new program led by Dr. Arthur Nowak was created in the Departments of Pediatric Dentistry and Dental Anesthesiology to train residents in both specialties while collaboratively treating these patients. This innovative partnership was unique to Pitt Dental Medicine because of our Dental Anesthesiology program, the first in the country and one of only nine similar programs in existence today.

Over the years, the program continued to grow and in 2008 the Center for Patients with Special Needs formally opened and is recognized as a University of Pittsburgh Center of Excellence. Today, the Center continues providing exceptional care and distinctive learning experiences for residents and predoctoral students alike.

This legacy of innovative care and service is what continues to propel us into the future. We are dedicated to listening to our community's needs and finding pathways to care for them. Our new Dental Assistant Apprenticeship program is doing just that, and expanding rapidly. We hope to have 60 students placed in the program by January 2024, and are continuing to explore partnership opportunities that will benefit our community beyond the Pittsburgh region.

Clinical efficiency, research, and service remain top priorities for our institution. We are always considering new ways to provide exceptional care to our patients and state-of-the-art learning experiences for our students, residents, and faculty. This commitment to remaining at the forefront of oral healthcare is one reason that we recently expanded our digital dentistry program. Two new directors have been named whose innovative work is aimed at harnessing the advantages of technology and the increased efficiency it brings to our profession.

The future is bright for Pitt Dental Medicine.

I am proud of our remarkable history of delivering care to those who need it most and I look forward to continuing this tradition. Our vision will remain focused on identifying the current and future needs of our patients, and our work will be rooted in developing innovative solutions to deliver care and enhance their oral health.

Marnie Oakley, DMD

Interim Dean

Center for Patients with Special Needs

What can dental professionals do when a person requires accommodations beyond the scope of ordinary dental care? How can they approach patients who, for one reason or another, aren't able to receive basic, vitally important healthcare? And how far can we push the boundaries of our own patience, humility, and compassion to help those most in need?



Dr. Sarah Ruby (DMD '04, PEDO '18), Dr. Elena Kureichyk (DMD '13) with Dr. Lynne Taiclet and a family.

"Dental treatment is considered the highest unmet health care need for individuals with disabilities," says Dr. Taiclet. "For this segment of the population, who are often unable to manage their own basic oral care and hygiene, the need for quality, compassionate dentistry is essential."

The CPSN treats patients with both developmental and acquired disabilities, both physical and mental, and across a spectrum of severity. Developmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida have all been treated at the Center. Likewise, victims of stroke, traumatic brain/spinal cord injuries, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and ALS have received treatment. Each and every patient has different abilities, barriers, and medical needs.

And there are far more people who require specialized care than might be readily apparent. Thanks to advanced chromosome testing and other medical advances, some people with special needs are living longer, healthier lives than ever. And where historically, those with disabilities often lived in special care homes or facilities, today, these same people live more independent lifestyles, but still require especially accommodating and empathetic dental care.

Historically, pediatric dentistry was the primary source of treatment for these patients. But for many reasons, pediatric practices are not sufficient to accommodate an uptick in patient volume, for which the dental profession is still struggling to catch up.

"That is what makes the work of CPSN so critical," says Dr. Taiclet.

Dr. Taiclet began working as a dental assistant at the age of 15. She received her undergraduate education



Lynne Taiclet, DMD

"We're kind of the end of the road for a lot of our patients," says Lynne Taiclet, DMD. Dr. Taiclet serves as the director of the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN). "Usually, they don't have anywhere else to go. They've already tried to be seen somewhere else, and they end up labeled as too 'disruptive' or too 'uncooperative'."

Late 19th Century

University of Pittsburgh dental students and faculty members provide free care for residents of Pittsburgh orphanages.



1924

Pitt's dental students, supervised by faculty members, provide free dental care at facilities in our region to serve the needs of children. Today, these institutions, which were founded in the 19th and 20th century, are known in our region as UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, The Children's Institute, Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, and Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children.

1952



Ellie Sniderman, Dr. Marvin Sniderman's wife, contracts polio (please see story on page 26 for more about Dr. Marvin and Ellie Sniderman).

at Allegheny College before attending the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, and subsequently spent 23 years working as a dentist in her brother's practice in the Sewickley area.

As CPSN director, Dr. Taiclet oversees all clinical and administrative activities in the Center and is also responsible for the special needs pre-doctoral curriculum.

She serves as assistant professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry and Comprehensive Care and is also on the American Dental Education Administration's (ADEA) Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. In 2022, Dr. Taiclet won the prestigious Special Care Dentistry Association Education Award, which honors teachers who educate providers on how to care for individuals with special healthcare needs.

For Dr. Taiclet and the CPSN, it's a legacy of service more than 60 years in the making at the School of Dental Medicine.

The beginnings of today's CPSN took root in 1965, when the Department of Pediatric Dentistry developed a formalized program for the treatment of patients with special needs. The program, directed by Dr. Arthur Nowak (DMD '61), trained pediatric dental residents to provide comprehensive care in partnership with residents from the Department of Dental Anesthesiology, chaired by the renowned Dr. Leonard Monheim (who established the country's first formal anesthesia residency program in 1949 right here at the School of Dental Medicine).

The program for the treatment of patients with special needs, at the time, was tucked away in a small area on the third floor of Salk Hall. And from such a humble start, this decades-long tradition of service was born.



Through the 1970s and the early 1980s, the program grew and evolved, while a generation of pediatric dentistry and anesthesiology residents was trained in the treatment of those with special needs under Dr. George Bentz, who served as the director of the special needs clinic. The predoctoral pediatric dentistry curriculum also saw the addition of lectures on the subject, highlighting the School's commitment to serving this underserved segment of the population.

Then, during the mid 1980s, the Department of Pediatric Dentistry expanded both its curriculum and scope of services for patients with special needs under the stewardship of Director of Special Needs Services Dr. Jay Reznik (DMD '72).

Dr. Reznik realized the significance of the growing number of patients with special needs who were living independently or in group homes, and made a number of changes to the department's curriculum reflecting the growing void in dental services. Dr. Reznik began an elective program for predoctoral students and doubled the required clinical workload for graduate pediatric dentistry and anesthesiology residents.

Dr. John Geary (DMD '91), a student of Dr. Reznik's, took up the torch by serving as the director of the Clinic for Patients with Special Needs and expanded the curriculum further and oversaw the program until 2008. A weekly rotation for fourth-year predoctoral students was now required.

CPSN Named a Pitt Center of Excellence

The Center for Patients with Special Needs as we know it today opened in October 2008. Dean of the School of Dental Medicine, Dr. Thomas Braun, had a vision of a University Center that provided both specialized dental care for those patients who most needed it, and education for students and dental professionals alike, seeking to take up the tradition of service that started even before 1965.

And what better place than the third floor of Salk Hall.

The existing clinic was expanded and renovated to enable the treatment of patients with special needs, and the roots first planted in 1965, at last took hold. Dr. Braun appointed Dr. Erik Scheifele to serve as the Center's first director. Dr. Scheifele expanded the new Center's scope of services and developed a foundational lecture course for predoctoral students.

Prior to the creation of the CPSN, the School of Dental Medicine's annual capacity for treating patients with special needs was approximately 560 patients. Since 2008, the CPSN has accommodated several thousand patients every year, including almost a thousand children and adolescents.

Predocloral clinical rotations now include third- and fourth-year dental students. Pediatric dental, anesthesiology, and nurse anesthetist residents all rotate through the Center, and oral and maxillofacial residents perform complex surgical cases.

As part of this endeavor, Dr. Scheifele, whose experience was in primary pediatric dentistry, also needed to expand the staff. According to Dr. Taiclet, her name was on a short list of private practice candidates with experience in adult dentistry provided to Dr. Scheifele by Dr. Jim Avenatti, who was then the chair of the Department of Dental Anesthesiology.

"He told him my name and several other people's names. So they sent out letters. I'm the only one that answered," says Dr. Taiclet.

Dr. Taiclet soon went from a private practice dentist working part time at the Center to its current director because she simply fell in love with the patients. And when you hear about the care that they receive under her direction, that's easy to believe.

"Some patients just need extra time and extra providers, coaching and encouragement. We call it behavior guidance. You know, maybe music playing. Maybe somebody needs to hold their hand. Maybe mom needs to be in the room," says Dr. Taiclet.

And when providing care for individual patients with specific needs, each day presents a new set of challenges.

"Certain syndromes have cardiac problems. Other syndromes have swallowing problems, so they don't eat by mouth. They have feeding tubes. (Or they have) all of these other complicated things that your average dental patient doesn't have."

For some patients, the only requirement is the ability of the space to accommodate their specialized wheelchair or scooter. At many private practices, this is impractical. But at the CPSN, that's no problem at all. Some patients treated in the CPSN make specific requests, but generally don't ask for much—a pair of sunglasses for those with

1967



Dean Forrest begins construction on Salk Annex, which prioritizes new space for patient care clinics at the school.

Dr. C. Richard Bennett begins working with the Cleft Palate Center at Pitt Dental Medicine, administering anesthesia to patients to ease their dental fears. He champions the creation of a special needs clinic.

Under the leadership of Dean Forrest, a "dental clinic for the handicapped" is established.

Dr. Arthur Nowak is named the director of a formalized program at Pitt Dental Medicine to treat patients with special needs. The program partners with the Department of Dental Anesthesiology to facilitate treating patients and takes residence in a small area on the third floor of Salk Hall.

1970s

Dr. George Bentz further develops and enlarges the scope of the program for the treatment of patients with special needs, but clinical efforts are limited to only one half-day per week.

Lectures on the subject are added to the predoctoral pediatric dental curriculum

Early 1980s

Dr. Jay Reznik is named the director of the program to treat patients with special needs and the program begins to expand services and availability of care as clinical efforts expand to one full day per week.

People with special needs begin to live independently and in group homes within the community.

A predoctoral elective is added to the curriculum, available through the Pediatric Dentistry Department.

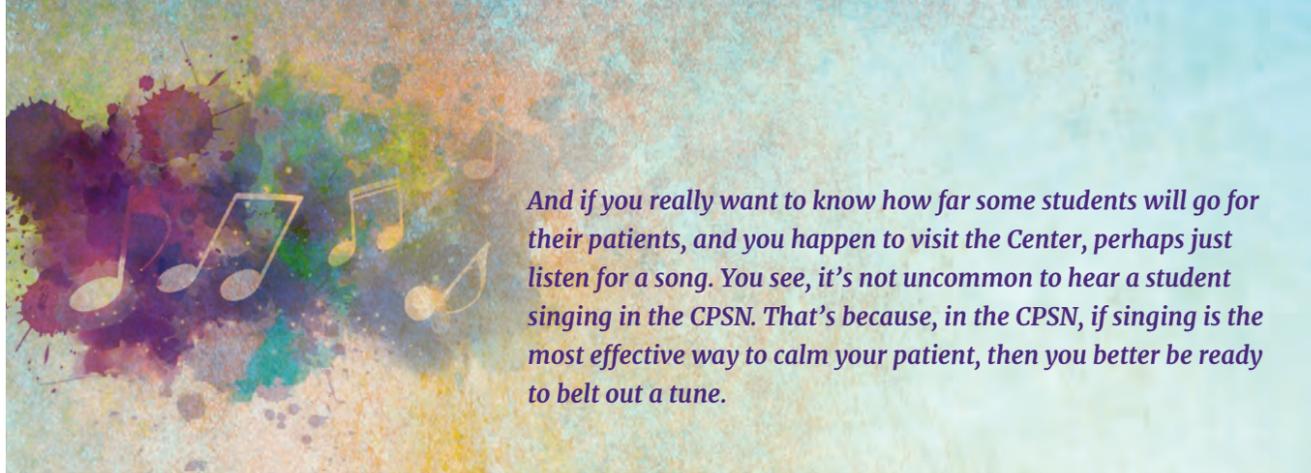
1990s and early 2000s

Dr. John Geary is the director of the Clinic for the Exceptional Patient from 1994 through 2008. He completes a fellowship in Dental Care for the Developmentally Disabled at SUNY-Stony Brook from 1991 to 1992.

A mandatory weekly rotation for fourth-year predoctoral students is added to the curriculum.

Treatment takes place in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry clinic all day on Wednesdays. Intravenous anesthesia is done in the clinic, but more complex cases requiring outpatient general anesthesia are done in the Department of Dental Anesthesiology.

Approximately 560 patients are treated per year through the program.



And if you really want to know how far some students will go for their patients, and you happen to visit the Center, perhaps just listen for a song. You see, it's not uncommon to hear a student singing in the CPSN. That's because, in the CPSN, if singing is the most effective way to calm your patient, then you better be ready to belt out a tune.

visual sensitivities, or providing treatment in a “quiet” room with as few practitioners as possible.

“Do you have a weighted blanket? Can I hold something? Those are easy patients when you just cater to their needs,” says Dr. Taiclet.

But others are resistant to dental treatment. Many don't even want to come in the door. The faculty and students of the CPSN, in these instances, have to be creative in developing protocols that cater to each patient's unique circumstances. Dr. Taiclet estimates that 70% of patients receive some sort of sedation, ranging from a mild sedative taken at home prior to their appointment to deep sedation under the supervision of an anesthesiology resident.

But for every patient, their individual needs inform their treatment. And when sedation is required to perform even the most basic health and hygiene related tasks, the treatment that day is not necessarily limited to dental needs.

“We do haircuts all the time. Yeah. Haircuts. We cut fingernails. If we can coordinate with their physician, they'll send us their flu shot. And we do blood draws all the time,” says Dr. Taiclet.

Dr. Taiclet and her students also teach patients with learning and developmental disabilities correct dental hygiene. You might say that the Center's

mascot is a stuffed turtle with a full set of plastic teeth— a prop often used in these hygiene demonstrations.

Providing necessary dental (and medical) care to these patients requires a tightly-knit, coordinated and dedicated interdisciplinary approach. The CPSN facilitates this treatment through cooperation with local and regional hospitals and the other University of Pittsburgh Schools of Health Sciences. In that respect, the University is uniquely positioned to provide these services, particularly as it relates to the Department of Dental Anesthesiology.

“It would be pretty hard to do what we do without them. We are able to do what we do because of them,” says Dr. Taiclet.

There are very few dental anesthesiology programs in the United States; according to the American Dental Education Association, only nine such programs are recognized by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). But the majority of those programs are hospital based, not dental-school based. The CPSN is one of only a few centers providing treatment for individuals with disabilities, and it is the only center in Pennsylvania directly involved with a 3-year dental anesthesiology residency program.

“We couldn't do this without the anesthesia support, but also the support of a clinical setting that's within a university,” says Dr. Taiclet.

The necessary coordination with other care providers is also a large part of the Center's function. For instance, the CPSN also coordinates with UPMC Presbyterian regarding any special needs cases that require a hospital operating room or postoperative care. The primary focus, at every turn, is “What is the best course of action for each patient.”

“You know, we might see a patient who has a mild disability and needs dental treatment. We can see the patient for the complicated steps in treatment like removing their bad upper teeth and for treatment that the patient will cooperate and tolerate, and then they may be able to schedule further care with another dental provider.” says Dr. Taiclet.



The Education Aspect

While the patients are always the primary focus of the CPSN, it's the students who are its core. Most dental services performed at the Center are provided by third- and fourth-year DMD students. Dental hygiene students and residents from other disciplines at Pitt Dental Medicine are active in the Center, as well. This hands-on experience is invaluable toward their professional and personal development.

Sometimes, it's difficult work. But the students routinely answer the call. She says, “They're doing it! They're doing it really well! And I think it's really valuable.”

Of course, if a patient is too challenging, an instructor may step in. But the Center's focus on providing learning experiences for its students isn't just for academic reasons. Given the ongoing surge of patients with special needs who require specialized dental care, preparing the next generation of dental professionals is an absolute necessity.

“One of my goals is to teach the students to discern the patients that they can and can't treat in private practice, because some patients just need extra time and extra providers and coaching and encouragement,” says Dr. Taiclet. “Those are the patients you can treat in private practice. And our students have fun with those patients. They're not 'scary' patients. Most general dentists don't treat them because it takes extra time and takes extra personnel.”

And so, the importance of the required rotations in the CPSN is not only to provide the students with clinical skills enabling the safe and effective dental treatment of these individuals, but also to teach that most critical virtue: patience. Some people can only tolerate having three or four teeth cleaned at a time before they need a break.

2008

With the support of the dean, Dr. Thomas Braun, the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN)—in its current location on third floor of Salk Hall—is officially opened as a University of Pittsburgh designated Center of Excellence, recognizing more than 50 years of providing multidisciplinary specialty care for both adults and children with special health care needs.

Dr. Erik Scheifele is named the director of the CPSN; Dr. Joseph Giovannitti is named the Director of Anesthesia for the CPSN.

A one-term lecture course, DENT 5310 Special Needs Dentistry, is added to the predoctoral dental curriculum for third-year dental students and second-year dental hygiene students. Course instructors are Dr. Erik Scheifele and Angelina Riccelli.

Clinical efforts in the Center are expanded to two and a half days per week, and include dental anesthesia, pediatric dental, AEGD residents, and fourth-year dental students.

2010

Dr. Lynne Taiclet is appointed interim director for the CPSN to replace Dr. Scheifele.

She also is named course co-director of the CPSN didactic course. The course is required for all third-year dental students and second-year dental hygiene students.

Clinical treatment days are increased to three days per week as part of the required rotations for fourth-year dental students in the CPSN clinical course.

The predoctoral elective course for fourth-year dental students is moved into the CPSN curriculum.

June 2011



Dr. Taiclet is appointed Director for the Center for Patients with Special Needs.

Clinical rotations are expanded to include required rotations for third-year dental students and second-year dental hygiene students.



Drs. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, Joseph Giovannitti, and Margaret Elliot, retired associate professor in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, 2016. See more about Drs. Gio and Deb on pages 12 and 16.

and coordinate all facets of each individualized care and treatment plan. With an effective plan in place and a multidisciplinary team of providers, the students and faculty of the CPSN routinely perform tasks that family members and care providers did not previously believe could be done, improving the quality of life for this segment of our population that is being historically underserved.

Being Involved Beyond the Classroom and Clinic

And the students do more than simply answer the call to service within the CPSN. In fact, if they take anything from Dr. Taiclet's example, it's the willingness to go above and beyond what is expected. For example, take the Pitt Dental Medicine student chapter of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD), for which Dr. Taiclet also serves as the faculty advisor.

The chapter, affectionately known as the Special Needs Club, began as aspiring physicians and dentists who were passionate about caring for people with disabilities. Today, it accepts aspiring nurses, nurse practitioners, and other medical professionals involved in the treatment of patients with special needs. The club is actively involved in the *"Spread the Word to End the Word"* campaign. It also has been and continues to be actively involved in local and regional Special Olympics activities, providing dental screenings, exams, making mouth guards, and teaching dental hygiene.

The sum of this effort, and, indeed, of these results, has not gone unnoticed in the academic community. The School of Dental Medicine was the recipient of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Gies Foundation 2018 William J. Gies Award for

Vision, Innovation and Achievement. This honor, which recognizes outstanding innovation by an academic dental institution in support of dental education, was awarded in large part due to the work of the CPSN.

And, perhaps more importantly, the CPSN is changing the educational landscape. Other dental institutions have modeled their own special needs dental centers on the success of the Pitt CPSN. Administrators and faculty members from New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, and many other states, as well as representatives from dental schools in Europe and China, have toured the CPSN in order to collect ideas as they establish their own centers.

"It is actually now a CODA requirement that every dental student has to show that they are capable of assessing and treating a patient with disabilities," Dr. Taiclet notes.

But when it comes to filling the void in care for special needs patients, Dr. Taiclet says that the CPSN can only do so much. As word spreads of the Center's amazing results, largely via word-of-mouth within local community groups for people with special needs, more and more prospective patients seek to avail themselves of CPSN's services.

"When the Center first opened in 2008, I was told that the waitlist was about two years for a new patient. And we worked our butts off and got it down to six months. And now [after COVID-19 shutdown] it's back up to a year."

And while some private practices partner with the Center, allowing Dr. Taiclet to ease a bit of that influx, there simply aren't enough private practice dentists willing to or capable of treating even the less challenging patients, who often make use of medical assistance programs for financial support.

Dr. Taiclet shares this reminder, "This is about treating patients, providing service, and teaching students."

The demand on the CPSN already is higher than ever and continuing to mount.

"Someday, I need to retire," says Taiclet, for whom 12+ hour days are the norm, but not until she can find a successor willing to tackle the challenges, and selflessness, that the work requires: "I'm rewarded by the gratitude I see from most of the students and patients," she says, "and from the family members that don't know what else to do to get the right kind of care for the patients."



2014

Two general anesthesia suites are added in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry to facilitate the treatment of children and adolescents with special needs, marking the sixth anniversary of the opening of the CPSN.

2018



The CPSN / School of Dental Medicine receives the William J. Gies Award from the American Dental Education Association. Recognition was awarded in the area of innovation by an academic dental institution in support of dental education.

2020

Dr. Elena Kureichyk is named as course co-director of CPSN didactic course with Dr. Taiclet.

2022

Dr. Taiclet receives the Education Award from Special Care Dentistry Association.

2023

Predoctoral clinical rotations include third- and fourth-year dental students and dental hygiene students. Dental anesthesiology and pediatric dentistry residents and student nurse anesthetists routinely participate in treatment in the CPSN. Oral and maxillofacial surgery and endodontic residents contribute to CPSN patient treatment on an as-needed basis. Several thousand patients with special needs are treated annually, including more than 700 children and adolescents.



Anesthesia Department Chair Reflects on a Home Run of a Career

By Keightley Amen

When **Joseph A. Giovannitti Jr., DMD**, began his career in dental anesthesiology, the specialty was practically nonexistent. It wasn't recognized by the field's professional societies, and most dentists had no idea what it was.

"When I said I was a dental anesthesiologist, people looked at me like I had three heads. They had no education about it or experience with it. And dentists were afraid to use the service because they had no idea that it existed," he said.

He—and his profession—have come a long way. Dr. Giovannitti retired this year as professor and chair of the Department of Dental Anesthesiology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, as well as anesthesia director for the school's Center for Patients with Special Needs. In the years since he studied his craft, the specialty has become officially recognized and much more widely used.

"Dental anesthesia has been a very rewarding and exciting career, and there's a huge niche for dental anesthesiologists to practice within dentistry," he said. "There are a lot of people who need this service—people with phobias, medical complexities, special needs, pediatric patients."

Deciding on Dentistry

Born and raised in the Pittsburgh area, Dr. Giovannitti knew from an early age that he wanted to pursue dentistry.

"My father always wanted to be a dentist himself, but he served in World War II and never had a chance to go to college. After he got out of the military, he started our family and needed to make some money, so he joined the phone company and had a nice career with them. But, still, he always wanted to do dentistry, so he kind of persuaded me in that direction. Of course, I always wanted to play professional baseball, but that didn't work out for me," he quipped.

Dr. Giovannitti was intrigued by the opportunities to be his own boss, make his own decisions, run a practice, and work in an independent environment. So, after graduating from Pitt in 1974, he enrolled in the School of Dental Medicine.

"We had a really great class with a lot of camaraderie. We played football and softball together—we had dental school teams that competed against other schools in the university. And we did social things that were a lot of fun. As an undergrad, I just went to school and tried to study and work hard, but dental school was more of an experience where I could relate to my classmates and develop lifelong relationships and friendships," he said.

As he made his way through the curriculum and explored the different specialties, he was drawn to anesthesia. At the time, Pitt had one of the only fully functioning dental anesthesia programs in the country. Leonard M. Monheim, DDS, had founded the Department of Anesthesiology at Pitt's School

of Dental Medicine in 1949, and it was the first such program in the country.

Dr. Monheim's innovative program included a resident training program, and one of his residents was Dr. Richard Bennett. When Dr. Bennett was in the last year of his residency, Dr. Monheim passed away, and Dr. Bennett took over as chair of the program. He was chair for many years, training many residents, writing classic textbooks, and lecturing about the new specialty all around the world.

Dr. Giovannitti was one of Dr. Bennett's first residents. "That training really changed my life. It showed me the need for anesthesia in dentistry and what can be done to help people who aren't willing or able to go to the dentist," he says.

A Pioneer in a New Specialty

Upon completion of his training in 1979, he joined the faculty at Pitt for a few years before taking an opportunity to practice in Dallas, Texas, and teach at Baylor College of Dentistry.

"I was really the first dental anesthesiologist in the Dallas-Fort Worth area who developed a private anesthesia practice for dentistry. And there were maybe two or three in the entire state. When I went there, they didn't know what to do with me because they'd never heard of anybody who practiced anesthesia and dentistry like that. It took me a little while to acclimate and indoctrinate people into my field, but teaching at the school was very helpful because I was able to educate the faculty and the students, as well as work in the community," Dr. Giovannitti said.

Twenty-two years later, when he left Dallas to return to Pittsburgh, the specialty was catching on: There were about 15 dental anesthesiologists practicing in the area, and even more throughout the state. "It shows that, if you're persistent and you like what you do and you want to educate people, you can be very successful in this field."

His persistence helped to advance the entire field. Anesthesia was recognized by the American Dental Association (ADA) as a distinct specialty in 2019. It took Dr. Giovannitti and his colleagues 25 years and five application processes.

In recognition of his contributions to the field, he has received both the Leonard M. Monheim Distinguished Service Award from the American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists (ASDA) for outstanding contributions to the discipline of anesthesiology benefiting the dental profession and the Jay A. Heidbrink Award from the American

Dental Society of Anesthesiology (ADSA) for significant contributions to the advancement of anesthesiology in dentistry. He has received a Presidential Citation from ASDA and is a Diplomate of the American Dental Board of Anesthesiology.

He has shared his expertise on the local, state, and national levels as a consultant, member of the editorial board of the Anesthesia Progress Journal, and author of many peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and a textbook on sedation.

Returning to Pitt to Culminate a Career

In 2003, Dean Thomas Braun recruited Dr. Giovannitti to come home to Pitt to help develop the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN).

"Pitt Dental Medicine had been seeing patients with special needs for many, many years but not on a really formal basis. Dr. Braun envisioned a new center and hired me to develop the anesthesia component. I helped with the construction, the design, the equipment, and functioning. I wanted to make sure that we were able to provide just about any anesthetic services that can be done," he says. The Center is now a prototype for other institutions that want to serve this population. "We're helping patients who can't have these procedures done otherwise. It's so rewarding to work with patients who have significant intellectual disabilities, when they're unable to cooperate in the usual fashion, and to be able to provide a service that enables them to have dental treatments done—it is extremely rewarding. Those things make it exciting to go to work every day."

Among Dr. Giovannitti's other accomplishments on the Pitt faculty, he updated the doctoral curriculum and worked to make the specialty more visible and accessible to dental students. He created externships and opportunities for students to shadow dental anesthesiologists to increase exposure to the career option. He also worked to elevate Pitt's profile nationally.

"I wanted to make sure that people across the country understood the accomplishments of our program, the people who've trained here, and the things we have to offer," he says. "As a result, our program has grown. In years past, people wouldn't bother applying to our program because they just assumed that we were going to take students from Pitt, but now we have students from all over the country applying to our program. We take four residents per year, and we get 60 to 80 applicants every year for those four slots."

He tries to model for students a good work ethic, as well as both the hard and soft skills needed to succeed in anesthesiology. “I lead by doing my job and expect people to do the same thing. To be an anesthesiologist, you have to make decisions on the fly. You have to be decisive, you can’t hesitate, and you have to be capable of handling adversity. So you have to have confidence in your abilities. You have to feel like you’re the best at what you do. Otherwise, you shouldn’t be doing it,” he said. “I’ve done thousands and thousands of anesthetics, and each one is a little bit different. You have to individualize your technique to the patient. It’s not a rote thing.”

The Changing Face of His Field

The field of dental anesthesia has changed drastically over the course of Dr. Giovannitti’s career. The biggest changes have been technological advancements, as well as awareness of and demand for the service. He feels like he no longer has to explain or justify what he does. Now the challenge has become increasing the number of training programs and graduates to meet an increased demand.

“There’s a huge need for this, but there’s only a handful of areas in the country that have dental anesthesiologists,” he says. “We have to get dental school deans on board. Dental schools need to be made more aware of this specialty and hire dental anesthesiologists as faculty members so that they can provide these types of services and teach students.”

A Dream Come True

Looking back on the phases of his career, Dr. Giovannitti is appreciative of so many individuals.

“I was able to have a successful, long-term clinical practice, then I joined full-time academics, I helped establish an important clinic to treat an underserved population, and I ended up being chair of the department. It was a dream come true for me,” he says. “I really appreciate my former chairs, Drs. Richard Bennett and Paul Moore. They really helped me shape my career. And I couldn’t have done anything without my faculty, especially my



I was able to have a successful, long-term clinical practice, then I joined full-time academics, I helped establish an important clinic to treat an underserved population, and I ended up being chair of the department. It was a dream come true for me.”

staff—I rely on them heavily. And the students are fantastic. I love the students, and I can’t say enough about my relationship with them. That’s really why you go to work every day—because of the students.”

The students have reciprocated this appreciation, awarding him with the Pitt Dental Medicine Faculty Appreciation Award multiple times.

“I’ve had a great career, and I have no regrets. It’s time to let someone else take the reins and move the department into the future,” he said. He said he will remain busy by finally cleaning out his desk; learning to fly fish; and visiting his daughters in Austin, Texas; New York City; and Asheville, N.C. He also has agreed to help the department on a short-term, part-time basis as the anesthesia program prepares for its accreditation site visit in the fall.

Plus, he added laughing, “I’m still a die-hard baseball fan, and I think the Pittsburgh Pirates could probably use me. Back in my prime, I was a pitcher, and I had a wicked curve ball.”

A short history of treating patients with special health care needs

By Arthur Nowak

In the **1960s**, the challenge to address the oral health needs of children and adults with special health care needs was not being undertaken by the dental profession.

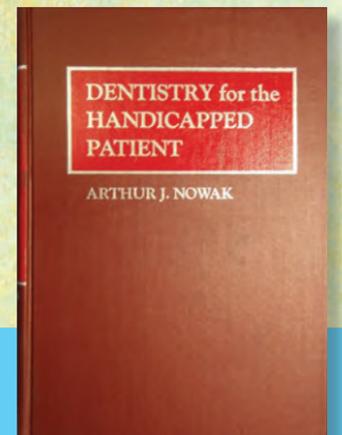
Historically, a small number of educational institutions provided didactic and clinical experiences but, without mandated standards from the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), most dental school curricula did not include experiences to prepare undergraduate students to provide oral care for patients with special health care needs.

In 1961, the Division of Dental Health, USPHS, initiated pilot studies in ten U.S. dental schools to determine the feasibility of training dental students to care for patients with special health care needs. The very positive results prompted the recommendation for every dental school to establish a department that will focus on providing oral care to special needs patients by first professional students.

In the early 1960s, under the leadership of Dean Forrest, Salk Hall renovations began for the new location for the School of Dental Medicine. A space in the newly constructed Salk Annex was designated for a new Clinic for Exceptional Children. At that time, I was completing my three-year NIDR-funded residency in pedodontics with an emphasis on children with special health care needs and was interested in an academic position. I was invited by Dean Forrest to consider an opportunity at Pitt to be the director of the new clinic.

I accepted the position as director and in 1966 opened the clinic for patients. Being a new concept in healthcare—a dedicated clinic for patients with special health care needs—we met with area advocacy agencies and informed them of our services and requested that they inform their clients. Educating our dental and medical colleagues about the importance of oral health was another opportunity for patient referrals. Proximity to the Cleft Palate Clinic at Pitt provided another referral base and its director, Betty Jane McWilliams, was very supportive.

My three-year tenure as director ended in 1969 and although we never were able to routinely include undergraduate students in the clinic, we did provide lectures and seminars. The pedodontic residents were rotated through the clinic throughout their two-year program.



During my early academic experience at Pitt, I realized that teaching others about special needs patients would be greatly enhanced by a textbook. I therefore invited colleagues to join me, and in 1976, the first text on the subject was published, *Dentistry for the Handicapped Patient (CV Mosby).*”



Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich Plans Retirement from a “Privileged Career” in Pediatric Dentistry

By Keightley Amen

Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich's esteemed career in dentistry started out as something she describes as a lark.

Originally an undergraduate pharmacy major who switched to chemistry, she made an impromptu decision to take the dental admissions test. And the rest, as they say, is history. Dr. Studen-Pavlovich, professor, interim chair, and residency program director in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine, will retire this year on September 30.

“Pharmacy just wasn’t a good fit for me. At that time, there weren’t large pharmacies like CVS and Rite Aid, and I just couldn’t see myself owning and managing a small pharmacy, having a fountain with sodas and ice cream and all that stuff. I always liked healthcare, and I wanted to help people directly, so I switched to chemistry in the hopes that I would find my niche,” she says.

After she received her bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., and started thinking about what was next, a friend suggested that she consider dentistry. “I was a walk-in for the dental admissions test—they wouldn’t even do that now! I had to bring my headshot, my driver’s license, and my Butler University ID. And that’s how I ended up in dentistry. I have been very fortunate that the career was well suited to me and that it has brought me a lot of personal satisfaction and reward.”

The field of dentistry is also fortunate that Dr. Studen-Pavlovich and her friend had that fateful conversation that day. Her career has made an extensive impact on the field of pediatric dentistry, the careers of many dentists, and the smiles of countless kids.

Why Pitt?

Dr. Studen-Pavlovich was born and raised in Midland, Beaver County, went away to college for four years, and returned to Pittsburgh for dental school. She made that decision because Pitt was highly ranked, even then, and it was “a real bargain.”

“In this day and age, you could not say this, but I graduated from all of my schooling with no debt. I had a generous scholarship to Butler University. And when I started dental school, it was \$1,500 a year in the fall of 1976. If you put that into today’s dollars, that’s about \$7,931. Now, annual tuition is close to \$60,000,” she says.

Her early experiences in dental medicine were shaped largely by mentor Dennis Ranalli, DDS, MDS, a longtime professor, chair, and graduate program director of Pitt Dental Medicine’s Department of Pediatric Dentistry.

“He made us feel welcome at the school, but he also worked us hard, and I’ll always appreciate that. I owe him a lot for being a good mentor,” she said. “There are a lot of specialties in dental school which I had

no propensity for. But I always liked children—they were spontaneous, they made me laugh, and there’s probably a part of me that’s always a child anyway. So I gravitated toward pediatric dentistry and worked hard in that specialty. I learned that when you discover that you have passion for something, you really have to go after that.”

Early on, she joined the Pitt student chapter of the American Society of Dentistry for Children. The club organized trips to local schools, where the students gave presentations about the importance of dental health. The club brought in speakers to talk about different aspects of pediatric dentistry. Members also did community outreach at health fairs and other community events, passing out toothbrushes, performing dental health screenings under the supervision of a faculty member, and encouraging members of the community to take care of their teeth and gums.

After graduating from the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in 1980 and obtaining certification in pediatric dentistry in 1983, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich moved to Michigan, where she practiced and served as an assistant professor at the University of Detroit Mercy.

She returned to Pitt in 1988 as a faculty member where she has been the advisor for the same club she was part of as a student—now a local chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). She is proud of the fact that she has been at Pitt for many years, contributing to and building upon its mission. “I’ve been in the department for 35 years. It has a really strong, community-based mission, and it really attempts to try to correct some of the disparities that children may have in getting dental care. One of the many good things about our school is that it’s a safety net for underserved and vulnerable populations.”

Give Kids a Smile Days

A shining example of her commitment to pediatric dentistry and Pitt’s community-based mission is the Give Kids a Smile Days program, which offers free dental care to uninsured children at the Salk Hall pediatric dentistry clinic.

“The Give Kids a Smile Days program is in its 21st year. When the program started, we would have one day in February (Children’s Dental Health Month) when we’d bring in 50 to 60 children who were uninsured and provide them with an exam, cleaning, fluoride, X-rays, and preventive services—free of charge. As the program grew, we expanded it to two days. On the second day, scheduled in March, we did restorative work, such as fillings and extractions.



And that kept growing until March 2020 and the pandemic...” she said. At that point, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich had to figure out how to continue serving the community without assembling large crowds. The result was to expand the event to five clinical days a year, 12 patients a day, the model that continues today.

The program also expanded thanks to a generous donation from a 1978 graduate, Dr. Edward Korenman, and his wife, Jan. They provided funding for Pitt Dental Medicine’s Summer Smiles program, which brings kids into the clinic for necessary exams before the back-to-school season. The overall result is a program that provides dental exams to uninsured children twice a year, just like insured kids. The program also gives dental students a unique hands-on learning experience.

“One of the most rewarding accomplishments of my career has been building the Pediatric Dental Care Fund and the Smiles program,” Dr. Studen-Pavlovich says. “There’s an endowed arm now, and Pitt has made the fund one of the (priority) designated funds for the Pitt Day of Giving (pittdayofgiving.com). In the past five years alone, we have given away about \$55,000 worth of dental care to children.”

A Career of Notable Achievements in Teaching, Research, and Service

“If I had to look back at my career of teaching, research, and service, I think I’ve been an effective teacher and a good mentor. I assist predoctoral students, dental hygiene students, and residents to get to the next level,” she says. Her dedication to teaching has been recognized by awards such as the University of Pittsburgh Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award and the Lewis A. Kay Excellence in Education Award from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

As an administrator, she’s tried to lead the department by example, focusing on collaboration and team-building, rather than an autocratic style. “You are only as good as the team that’s backing you, and you’re only as successful as the weakest link in your group.”

Also benefiting from her leadership were many local, state, and national professional organizations, including the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), and the American Dental Association (ADA). Dr. Studen-Pavlovich also has served as referee and editor for peer-reviewed journals, including Pediatric Dentistry and the Journal of Dentistry for Children. In addition, her resume includes many publications, presentations, and research grants.

A particularly notable accomplishment is a \$2 million grant, on which she and Robert Weyant, MS, DMD, DrPH, served as co-investigators, from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to expand the dental public health program. The funding allowed more residents to graduate with a multidisciplinary dual degree in public health and a certificate in pediatric dentistry.

Evolution of Pediatric Dentistry

Over the course of her career, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich has witnessed many advancements in the field of pediatric dentistry—but she also can identify areas that remain challenging.

“The materials we use have gotten much better, especially the switch from amalgam fillings to composite fillings. And there is a much better focus on preventive dentistry,” she said. “In addition, dentistry for women has changed drastically since I entered the profession. Now our graduating classes are 50:50 men and women, but when I started school, there were 18 women out of 135. Although I never found my gender to be a barrier and discrimination was never voiced publicly, I did have people say to me, ‘I hope you’re not wasting this space in dental school,’ because some people thought women were there to look for a husband.”

Unfortunately, she said, some things have not improved and remain as challenges for the next generation of pediatric dentists.

“The one area that has not changed is the amount of early childhood caries in children under 6 years of age,” she said. “Being a parent of a very young child is a challenge, and life is more hectic now than when I was growing up—both parents are working, families are eating on demand, a lot of kids aren’t getting three square meals. It’s a different lifestyle, a lot more processed food, sticky food, juice in a cardboard box that’s pretty much pure sugar. The bottom line is that children are dependent on their parents to clean their teeth, take them to the dentist, and provide them with good food. And that’s something that I really

don’t feel has improved as much as it should have in the 43 years since I graduated.”

To help educate children and families on the importance of dental health, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich appeared as a featured pediatric dentist in an episode of the famous children’s show “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.”

Children in the United States also suffer from a lack of insurance and access to care, she added, especially those with limited socioeconomic circumstances and those who live in rural areas.

Dr. Studen-Pavlovich would like to see the field work toward increasing the number of active pediatric dentists. “There are 73 million children in the United States, and general dentists still treat a majority of them. Some of them need a higher level of care, such as moderate or deep sedation. But the country’s dental schools and hospitals only graduate about 470 pediatric dentists per year.”

Plans for a Fulfilling Retirement

In retirement, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich might be almost as busy as she was on faculty. She is planning a trip to Italy, time riding her bicycle, classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and volunteerism.

“I’m not making any decisions on volunteer work or other commitments until January. I just want to kind of chill. I’ve always been busy, and I’m sure it’s going to be a transition,” she said. “And there are so many books on my Goodreads list that have not been conquered!”

Choosing Pediatric Dentistry

To those considering pediatric dentistry as a career path, Dr. Studen-Pavlovich suggests they possess the qualities of adaptability and kindness, and that they be passionate about the work they will do every day.

“One day, I didn’t want to go to work. It was cold outside, and I wished I could just stay in bed. And my husband, George, said, ‘Deb, you’re pretty lucky. You have a job where every day you have an opportunity to help someone directly, whether it’s a patient, a parent, a student, a resident. That is really powerful.’ That was very profound for me. Sometimes you don’t sit back and reflect on what really makes you want to come to work in the morning,” she said. Despite the challenges, she added, “This is a privileged career. You have a chance to help people, and they look up to you. I was given an opportunity for a life of good, and a lot of people can’t say that. So you can’t take it for granted.”

Rock Your Socks 2023

Annually, the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine and the Pitt student chapter of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine & Dentistry (AADMD) recognized World Down Syndrome Day.



March 21 (3/21) is a symbolic date because people with Down syndrome have three copies of chromosome 21. To recognize this day, students and faculty convene for the annual Rock Your Socks event, which encourages people to wear zany, fun, brightly colored socks to raise awareness and celebrate community members with Down syndrome. Pitt Dental Medicine students actively support John’s Crazy Socks, a company started by John, a man with Down syndrome, and his father. The company donates 5% of its profits to Special Olympics and employs many people with disabilities.

The Pitt student chapter of AADMD is committed to learning about ways to improve healthcare for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Members are involved in events to learn more about providing effective and personalized care, such as oral hygiene demonstrations, lectures from self-advocates and organizations such as Achieva, and local Special Olympics events. Find out more about AADMD on page 22.



Dental Specialties: Providing Expert Care for Patients with Special Needs

The Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN) offers many opportunities for Pediatric Dentistry and Dental Anesthesiology residents at Pitt. The residents work collaboratively to ensure the best care for their patients with special health care needs. Several of our Pediatric dentistry and dental anesthesia residents share their experiences in the CPSN in the following.

Collaboration between pediatric and anesthesia residents begins the night before their patients' appointments, when the residents call their patients to remind them of their appointment and to make sure they follow the necessary appointment guideline—nothing to eat or drink after midnight. During these calls, they also cover important information, such as the type of anesthesia the patient will be receiving and whether or not the patient will need medication prior to the appointment. On the day of the appointment, the anesthesia residents arrive around 6:30 or 7:00 a.m. and prepare their rooms, making sure that their machines are functioning properly and that they have the necessary drugs for a general anesthesia case. When the patient arrives, the anesthesia and pediatric residents meet them in the waiting room and interview them together, checking to see if there are any changes in the patient's medical history, or if they have ever had any anesthesia complications in the past. They also conduct a brief physical exam and assess the best way to induce general anesthesia for the patient.

Every patient is unique and residents emphasize that the process of being a patient in the CPSN is flexible and customized to the needs of the patient. One of the goals of the residents is to keep the patient feeling comfortable and safe throughout the process, so the manner in which anesthesia is administered will differ from patient to patient. Anesthesia can be administered through an IV,



Dental anesthesia residents, left to right: Dr. Zameer Dhanani, Dr. Michael Feurstein, Dr. Shruti Mukkamala, and Dr. Joe Browning

through a medication that the patient drinks, through the inhaled anesthetic gas, or through an injection in the arm. Both pediatric and anesthesia residents are present for the induction, where pediatric residents help the process by utilizing behavioral management skills they gain from working with pediatric patients. Often, the anesthesia resident will have the pediatric resident start an IV or perform mask inductions. The pediatric resident is present for the wake-up process as well. In addition, the pediatric residents will consult with the anesthesia residents if they believe a patient is suitable for general anesthesia and want more feedback on the options that are available to their patients. Once the patient is under anesthesia, the pediatric residents begin treating the patient while the anesthesia residents monitor the patient throughout the appointment. At the completion of treatment, patients are awakened and discharged when it is safe to do so. The residents follow up with the patients later that day or the next day to make sure everything went well. The residents enjoy the collaborative nature of their work at CPSN involving several dental specialties, occasionally including oral surgery.

Both faculty and residents agree that anesthesia is an important factor for patients with special needs accessing quality care. Typically, appointments that require anesthesia are more invasive procedures, but less invasive procedures, such as a cleaning, can require anesthesia for some patients with special needs. Although not all appointments at CPSN are conducted with anesthesia, having anesthesia as an option is crucial—both pediatric and anesthesia residents emphasize how special needs dentistry can be difficult to accomplish without some form of anesthesia.

Many patients who have tried behavior management, going to an outside dental specialist, or used CPSN services without anesthesia, found it difficult to obtain quality care. Anesthesia serves as a final option for them in getting the care that they need. Dr. Kannan says this is especially important if a patient is non-verbal, saying, "They can't always express that something is wrong, so these appointments are really the first time we can look properly in their mouth." Other basic health-care that the patient might otherwise find difficult to obtain or experience can be done while under anesthesia at CPSN. While the patient is asleep, a physician or gynecologist can perform an exam, or the patient can even receive a haircut or get their fingernails clipped. The majority of CPSN patients have routine appointments every six to nine months that are essential in maintaining the patient's dental and overall health.

Both pediatric and anesthesia residents working in CPSN agree that giving patients access to care is what makes their work rewarding and special, and is what appealed to them from the beginning. Beyond the importance of offering anesthesia as

an option, CPSN provides care to a population who may have complicated medical histories or behavioral challenges, and because of this, other general dentist offices may not be able to treat them due to a lack of resources or training in that area. Working in CPSN equips residents with the skills to treat any patient who walks through their door. Dr. McKenzie says that the training at CPSN will leave residents with "so much more experience working with patients with special needs within their community. Instead of having to refer some of these patients to large academic centers or hospitals, they can treat the patient right in their office." The work at CPSN allows residents to think outside of the box, as they often use non-traditional methods in order to safely treat patients and adapt to their specific needs.

CPSN is the only center in the state that sees patients with special needs in an educational setting. Many special needs patients who receive care at Pitt Dental Medicine come from neighboring states and may drive several hours for an appointment, highlighting the scarcity of this specialized care. Because the quality and training at CPSN is so rare, it is a special needs clinic on which other dental schools base their programs. Dr. Kelly says, "With the anesthesia portion and the dental portion being so well integrated," and that other schools "look at our Center as the pinnacle of what a special needs center could be." The residents see the Center grow each year and hope that in the future, more patients are able to receive care at CPSN. As more residents work in CPSN, more patients with special needs around the country will have accessible quality dental care that is suited to their comfort and safety.



Pediatric Dentistry residents, left to right: Snigdha Arora, DMD, MBA; Sidharth Kannan, BDS, DMD (2018); Pitt Dental Medicine professor, Dr. Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, (DMD 1980, PEDO 1983); Erin Kallsen, DDS; and Kathleen Buchbinder, DMD.

Making a Difference: Student Organization Positively Impacts Patients' Lives

By Delaney Martin



Pitt students are making a difference in the lives of others, as well as their own personal lives and careers, by participating in a student group on campus that works with and serves patients with developmental disabilities. The American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD) is a national group dedicated to providing better medical care for patients with disabilities regardless of the challenges they may face in receiving quality medical and dental care. AADMD has many student chapters in schools throughout the nation, and students at University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine formed a cooperative chapter at Pitt during the academic year 2013-14.

Dr. Lynne Taiclet, director of the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN), recalls when a first-year student approached her about starting a student group at Pitt. The club began its affiliation with Special Care Dentistry Association (SCDA) and then transitioned into AADMD.

First-year students are exposed to the great work that AADMD does in the CPSN early in their time at Pitt. Some of Pitt's Student Community Outreach Program and Education (SCOPE) requirements may be fulfilled through the AADMD, incentivizing first-year students to join the group. Dr. Taiclet hopes that the students who join because of SCOPE will see the value of being a member of AADMD and continue as members beyond their first year.

Participating in Special Olympics

AADMD members are involved beyond treating patients in the CPSN. The group participates with a number of outside organizations that work with and support people with special needs, such as the Special Olympics (SO).

Pitt Dental Medicine students cooperate with organizers at SO to ensure the athletes are in top physical and emotional condition, and also can be

involved in activities that don't involve dentistry or healthcare. This is especially important for first- and second-year students who are not yet able to treat patients. For instance, AADMD members take part in various SO competitions where they provide water bottles, escort athletes, help with scoring, set up games such as bocce, and help athletes go through their tournaments. While students may not be providing dental care at any of these events, they do provide general support to the athletes and become more comfortable communicating with those who have special needs, ensuring that they also are comfortable with patients in the CPSN.

Occasionally, AADMD will attend regional Special Olympics games. While the athletes participate in these events, AADMD student members are able to perform dental screenings, provide oral hygiene instructions and fluoride applications, make sports mouth guards, and sometimes provide dental treatments. The biggest event that AADMD participates in is a trip to Virginia to help with the Virginia Special Olympics games in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) students. This event involves the same care as the regional games, but there is an opportunity for further treatment through a Mission of Mercy event. Mission of Mercy provides the dental equipment that is needed for dental care beyond screenings, allowing athletes in need of dental treatments (such as cleanings or extractions) to receive the necessary treatment on the same day from VCU and AADMD students.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SO events and in-person lectures had to be canceled, so the students in AADMD focused on virtual events and lectures, as well as worked with Special Olympics' virtual activities, in one instance, recording a virtual workout for the athletes to perform at home.

The Virginia SO event is a highlight for many AADMD students, including Brian Schafer, who recently served as a president for the group. Regarding his time at the Virginia SO, he says, "We get a lot of good work done and it is nice to see the patient is really appreciative of the care we are able to provide." Being able to provide real, hands-on care to patients is something Schafer especially appreciates about the Virginia trip. He also emphasizes the importance of providing care in areas where there is less accessibility to care for patients with special needs, noting that patients in the Pittsburgh area are especially fortunate to have access to the CPSN right here on campus. But many patients have no access to care outside of Southwestern Pennsylvania and many patients travel great distances for this expert care.

AADMD also collaborates with Leadership Education in Neurodevelopment Disabilities and Related Disorders (LEND), which provides education to family members and caregivers of individuals with disabilities on topics like oral hygiene and proper nutrition and diet. Like AADMD, LEND includes members from multiple health care disciplines and has chapters across the country that are affiliated with different universities. AADMD and LEND plan lectures for their members where speakers include public policy advocates, individuals involved in direct treatment of patients, parents of patients with special needs, and self-advocates.

AADMD further works on campaigns such as "Spread the Word to End the Word," which advocates ending the use of the R-word. This type of campaign allows for involving the whole dental school.

Constructing Leadership Skills

The student members have many opportunities to interact with special needs populations as well as work on their treatment skills. Another aspect of AADMD that students can take part in is honing their leadership skills.

AADMD student members elect two representatives to the executive board who then can progress through the organization, becoming officers such as secretary or treasurer during their second year, and president in their third. Members of the group voluntarily attend lectures and events, but executive positions require more commitment because they work in the background coordinating with different individuals and advertising for events. By the time the class representatives get to their third year, they have had sufficient experience—learning from the previous presidents and helping to organize the group. It is a solely student-led group, with Dr. Taiclet acting only as their faculty advisor to guide them on the right track. Dr. Taiclet hopes that there can be more participation of second- and third-year students in the coming years. She says, "If a student can realize that they can feel comfortable interacting with somebody with an intellectual disability at a Special Olympics event, then they can feel more comfortable with them in the dental setting." One of Dr. Taiclet's goals for the future of the group is that it does not become stagnant and that it can still foster excitement within the community and dental school.

Pitt Dental Medicine Surplus Materials Helping the People of Bolivia to Improve Dental Health



Recently, three 40-foot-long shipping containers were sent to health care facilities in Bolivia that included University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine surplus dental instruments. The instruments will be used in dental facilities similar to the hospital in Camargo, Bolivia, pictured below.

Global Links, a Pittsburgh-based organization that finds new life for surplus materials, coordinated this shipment. Their mission is to provide U.S. surplus to under-resourced international and domestic communities.

Find out more about Global Links at <https://globallinks.org>.

Global Links team with some of the doctors at a health care facility in Bolivia.

Mobile dental clinic van in Bolivia.



The dental room in the hospital in Camargo, Bolivia

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EVENTS

2023

August 21

White Coat Ceremony
Pittsburgh, PA

September 21

AAOMS "Meet the Chair"
Hilton San Diego
Bayfront

October 6

ADA SmileCon
Alumni Reception
Hilton Orlando

October 13-15

Health Sciences
Reunion Weekend/
Homecoming
Pittsburgh, PA

November

Alumni Reception at
American Academy of
Periodontics (AAP)
Conference
Austin, TX

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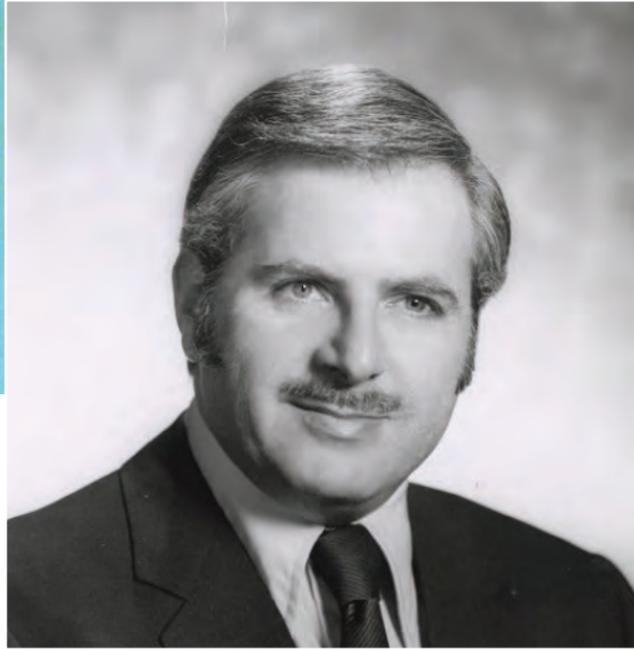
2024

March

ADEA Reception
New Orleans, LA

April 19

22nd Annual Dean's
Scholarship Celebration
Heinz History Center
Pittsburgh, PA



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Dr. Marvin Sniderman received his dental degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1947 and was best known for caring for patients with special needs, a genuine passion inspired by personal experience.

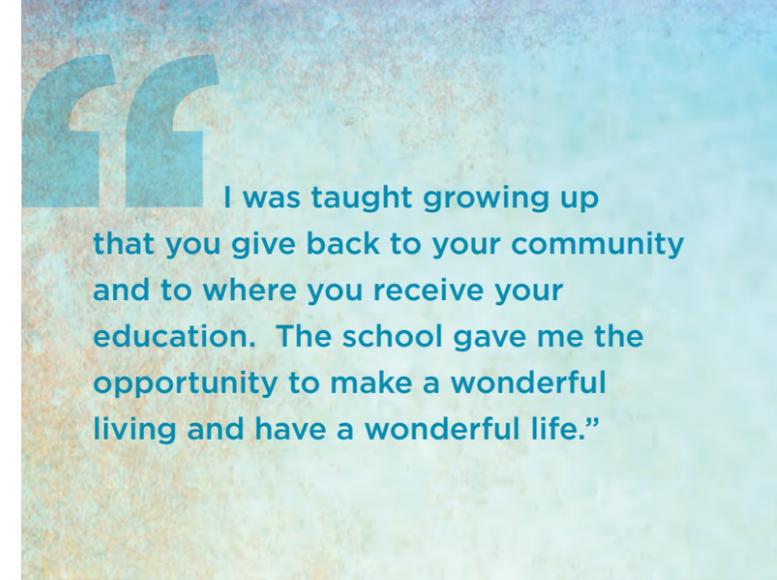
Dr. Sniderman's wife, Ellie, contracted polio in 1952, at a time when the couple had a one-year old daughter, Abby. Initially, Ellie's prognosis was tenuous. Finally, after 18 months of care, she was able to return home from the hospital, but unfortunately, she did so as a quadriplegic. Dr. Sniderman and Ellie were determined to continue living a normal life, despite being at a time when the world was less than welcoming to disabled people. One of their first outings together was to the downtown Kauffman's Department Store because they knew everyone would see them there and they wanted the world to know they didn't plan on staying home and hiding. Dr. Sniderman had a big personality and was able to utilize his positive attitude and skillful use of humor to diffuse tense situations when they occurred. The couple was so determined to live life to the fullest, that when they were together at a dental meeting in Paris, they went to see the Eiffel Tower. They intended to go to the top, but the elevators did not quite reach the top. Dr. Sniderman did not believe Ellie's experience should be limited by her disability, so he carried her up the final remaining stairs to reach the top of the Eiffel Tower.

Dr. Sniderman used the passion from his personal experience to help patients with special needs and University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine students. Every Friday for over 40 years, he donated his time to the Memorial Home for Cripple(d) Children (which later became the The Rehabilitation Institute of Pittsburgh and is now The Children's Institute) providing dental care as Chief of Dental Services. He was skilled in behavioral management and often was able to avoid putting his patients under general anesthesia. An associate professor at the school for 30 years, fourth-year dental students would come to the clinic to learn patient management while working with him. Passionate and adept in the care of special needs patients, he also was a strong advocate for the creation of dedicated clinical space with an enhanced capacity to serve this population.

During his more than 45 years in dental practice, his accomplishments were many. He was active in the Pitt Alumni Association Board of Directors, serving as president. He served as the editor of the Pennsylvania Dental Journal for 22 years, a task he referred to as his "second occupation," and also served as editor of the Odontological Bulletin of Western Pennsylvania for 10 years. A distinguished dental journalist, Dr. Sniderman was aided by his wife, Ellie, who would assist by proofreading his articles and instructing their daughter, Abby, to mark the needed corrections. He served as an expert witness for the Drug Enforcement Agency. His awards included the Gies Editorial

Award, the University of Pittsburgh Bicentennial Medallion, and fellowships in the International College of Dentists and American College of Dentists. He was a long-time friend and benefactor of the School of Dental Medicine, bestowing a generous gift toward the renovation of the Dean's Office Suite. He said, "I was taught growing up that you give back to your community and to where you receive your education. The school gave me the opportunity to make a wonderful living and have a wonderful life." Additionally, the ambulatory treatment suites within the Center for Patients with Special Needs (CPSN) are dedicated to Dr. Marvin Sniderman.

Using both his undergraduate degree in pharmacy and his doctorate from Pitt Dental Medicine, Dr. Sniderman lectured all over the world on pharmacology and special needs care in dentistry. But the greatest impact he had on the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine was his advocacy for special needs dentistry and the generations of general dentists that benefited from the training they received because of the passion and commitment of Dr. Marvin and Ms. Ellie Sniderman.



I was taught growing up that you give back to your community and to where you receive your education. The school gave me the opportunity to make a wonderful living and have a wonderful life."

UNIVERSITY DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Service

The Pitt Dental Medicine UDHS Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service has provided consultation and tissue diagnostic services since the 1970's to the dental and medical communities of Western Pennsylvania and our alumni, dentists, and physicians across the United States. Our board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologists provide rapid, accurate diagnosis of your biopsy specimens.

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- Your patient will be billed directly

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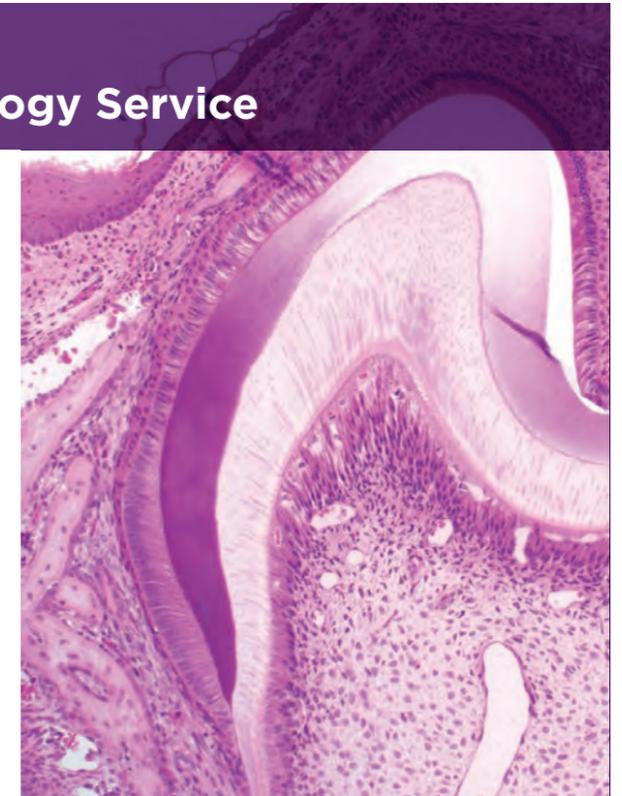
PittsburghOralPathology@dental.pitt.edu
dental.pitt.edu/biopsy-service

Oral Medicine/Clinical Pathology Services: **412-648-9100**

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We accept Medicare and many commercial insurance programs, including Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield and UPMC insurance.

Visit dental.pitt.edu/dental-professionals to see more of the services we provide to dental and medical professionals.



Pitt Dental Medicine Schweitzer Fellows 2023

Dr. Sindhu Gopaldaswamy

Dr. Gopaldaswamy's project will address the management of the oral healthcare needs in the special needs population.

"I am always in admiration of the tenacity and the strength displayed by people with special needs and their families. Therefore, this project envisions enabling them to more effectively and independently manage their oral healthcare needs.

As dentists, oral health education is an imperative part of any dental treatment plan. During my time in the Pitt Oral and Craniofacial Sciences program, the significance of multifactorial inheritance in oral healthcare was emphasized. My project stems from these two terms. The aim is to educate the targeted group to understand and address the impact of systemic health on oral health, and vice versa.

At the end of my fellowship, I hope that the people I work with will be able to ask the right questions to receive the care that they deserve."

—Sindhu Gopaldaswamy, BDS, MS

Dr. Shobena Jeevan

Dr. Jeevan's project will address the impact of nutrition on the dental care needs of children in underserved areas. The scope of the project goes beyond oral health literacy to include the five core principles of social justice and to include parents in identifying the impediments to their child receiving appropriate oral healthcare. Dr. Jeevan will further curate resources and individualize the help that each child will need.

"As the author Paulo Coelho said in his book, *The Alchemist*, 'every person on the face of this world has their own personal legend; he/she should strive to achieve it; because one's personal legend is a person's only real obligation.' With his strong words echoing in my mind, I believe that my childhood—the school of hard knocks—has prepared me to be the person I am today. I aim to be the person who helps a child in dismay—the person who is fond of children and yearns to be of service to them, in any way I can."

—Shobena Jeevan, BDS



Message from our Dental Alumni Coordinator



Gianna Pitrone

Alumni Coordinator
School of Dental Medicine
University of Pittsburgh
412-641-0744 | gmp83@pitt.edu

Dear Pitt Dental Medicine Alumni,

My name is Gianna Pitrone and I am the new alumni coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. I joined the team in January 2023.

The University of Pittsburgh is an institution that is near and dear to my heart. As a native of Western Pennsylvania, many of my family members earned degrees from Pitt, and my family spent countless hours cheering on the Panthers.

In my time at Pitt Dental Medicine thus far, I have enjoyed meeting you, our Pitt Dental Medicine alumni community, at our signature school events such as the 21st annual Dean's Scholarship Ball and the many alumni receptions around the country.

In the coming months, there are exciting things happening at the School of Dental Medicine. Keep an eye out for our electronic newsletters, which will provide you with up-to-date news about innovative research, student-led initiatives, and new faculty members joining our team. On August 21, 2023, we will welcome our new advanced standing, dental hygiene, and dental students at our annual White Coat Ceremony. We will round out the fall with our Health Sciences Alumni Reunion Weekend at Homecoming, October 13-15. This will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with your classmates and colleagues.

I look forward to connecting with you!

All the best and Hail to Pitt,

Gianna Pitrone

Dr. Jeffrey Slone: Why I Support Pitt Dental Medicine



There is an ancient Greek proverb: “Society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” No matter the source or form it takes, the idea of past generations sowing the seeds of opportunity for future generations is indeed a mark of selfless virtue.

Today, we shine a spotlight on an extraordinary alumnus, who for his own unique and special reasons has decided to bestow generously upon his alma mater, to provide an opportunity to inspire those who will in turn plant trees for subsequent generations, building upon the wisdom accumulated by those who came before him.

Dr. Jeffrey Slone is 40 years old—provided you are an adherent to the maxim that one is only as old as one feels. If instead you choose to go simply by the pesky calendar, which recorded his birth here in Pittsburgh 80 years ago, then you simply won’t get an accurate sense of the man.

Dr. Slone lives by his own maxim: *live every day to the fullest.*

Born to a large Polish-Jewish family in the Pittsburgh suburb of Squirrel Hill, Dr. Slone’s father graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine in 1937. He ran a small dental practice in Pittsburgh’s Hilltop neighborhood of Allentown, on the second floor above his brother’s clothing store.

Dr. Slone followed his father’s path to dental school but during his second year, his father passed away suddenly. It seemed inevitable that Dr. Slone would have to drop out of dental school.

But something unexpected happened: through the intervention of the school’s dean at the time—the late Dr. Edward J. Forrest—Dr. Slone received scholarship money to pay for the remainder of his schooling.

Dr. Slone recalls the old dean as an “enlightened dentist and educator,” a renaissance man who went out of his way for students who didn’t necessarily fit the prevailing demographic at the time, such as working class Jews like himself.

Even with his tuition covered by the dean’s unforeseen beneficence, he still had to work to make dental school happen. He took a position sorting mail at the Grant Street post office Downtown. He especially remembers the strength of his mother, who two weeks after her husband’s death took on a job at the People’s Bank Downtown to sustain her family.

Dr. Slone subsequently completed periodontal training, studying under Dr. Henry Goldman at Boston University School of Dentistry. He eventually settled in the Boston area, where he practiced for 41 years and also served on the board of the Eastern Dentist Insurance Company. Additionally, Dr. Slone was the Massachusetts state political action chairman for ten years.

Today, Dr. Slone resides happily in Denver where he enjoys biking, golfing, and spending time with his

grandchildren, all with the vigor of a man half his age.

On his most recent trip to Pittsburgh, Dr. Slone went to dinner with Dean Forrest’s son, Tom, with whom he feels as close as a half-brother. The pair chose one of Pittsburgh’s finer Italian restaurants, Alla Famiglia, and while looking out from the dining room’s second floor—to Dr. Slone’s shock and delight—he realized that the store across the street from them was none other than the location of his father’s dental practice above the former Slone Department Store.

He was in tears. It was kismet, a full-circle return to his origins in the city he grew up in, back to the place where a dean’s unexpected generosity and the mother “who had the cannolis” to ask that dean for the financial assistance, enabled him to pursue the career that has marked his life’s work since.

“If it wasn’t for Dean Forrest, I would not be where I am today,” Dr. Slone says.

It was with that gratitude in mind that Dr. Slone went on to establish a scholarship fund for students from Southwestern Pennsylvania looking to complete their own education, passing on the legacy of charity once shown to a promising young dental student who would otherwise be without the means to grow into his or her potential.

University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Continuing Dental Education Courses

Please plan to join us for the following CE Courses

2023

August 19

Bench Testing Preparatory Course in Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry

September 1

Fellowship Program in Periodontics and Implant Dentistry - 12 Month Module / Session 2

September 1

Fellowship Program in Periodontics and Implant Dentistry - 6 Month Module / Session 2

September 29

A Continuum In Sleep-Related Disorders and Health Solutions - Hands-on / Limited Attendance

October 13

Efficient Fundamental Dentistry – Pathways to Procedural Mastery in “Bread and Butter” Dentistry - Limited Attendance

November 3

Infection Control is Not Optional: Dental Practitioners Need to be Involved AND Risk Management & HIPAA Compliance in the Dental Office: 2023

November 18

Endodontics Made Simple - Limited Attendance

2024

January 1-2

Fellowship Program in Periodontics and Implant Dentistry - 12 Month Module / Session 3

January 1-2

Fellowship Program in Periodontics and Implant Dentistry - 6 Month Module / Session 3

March 8

The Esthetic Revolution

To learn more about our continuing education courses, and to see a complete schedule, please visit dental.pitt.edu/ce

2023 21st

Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball Rooted in Growth

Please plan to join us for the 22nd Annual Pitt Dental Medicine Dean's Scholarship Celebration on Friday, April 19, 2024

On Saturday, March 25, 2023, Interim Dean Marnie Oakley, DMD, welcomed guests to the 21st Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball at the Heinz History Center. Guests enjoyed the evening's dinner, dessert, and dancing, and the chance to reunite with old friends and classmates. The evening included the presentation of Distinguished Alumni of the Year awards to Dr. Lee Pollan and Linda Straub-Bruce. Guests also were introduced to Dean's Scholarship recipients Youssef Gabraiel (DMD Class of 2026), Mariam Amr (DMD Class of 2027), and Nathaniel Semanek (DMD Class of 2027).

Thank you to our gracious sponsors UPMC, United Concordia Dental, PNC Bank, Benco Dental, and Mission of Mercy Pittsburgh.

See photos from the 21st Annual Dean's Scholarship Ball 2023 at <https://tinyurl.com/yn35r495>.



2023

Distinguished Alumni Recipients



Dr. Lee D. Pollan

Lee D. Pollan, DMD, MS, is a 1971 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. He completed his residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Georgetown University Medical Center and earned a Master of Science degree from Georgetown University in 1974.

He had practiced the contemporary scope of oral and maxillofacial surgery in Rochester, N.Y., and was a clinical professor of dentistry and oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Strong Memorial Hospital, and the Eastman Institute for Oral Health. He has served as the interim residency program director and chair of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the University of Rochester, and is a diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

Dr. Pollan has lectured on local, state, national, and international programs. His areas of interest include office-based anesthesia and management of medical emergencies, TMD management, orthognathic surgery, chronic obstructive sleep apnea, and dento alveolar surgery.

Dr. Pollan has served on the New York State Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (NYS-SOMS) and as president of NYSSOMS. He was elected to the Board of Trustees of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons in 2001, and served as president of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons in 2007-08. He has served as the treasurer of the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Foundation. He recently has represented the American Dental Association (ADA) as the liaison to the American Medical Association (AMA). Dr. Pollan also has been a member of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery examination committee for the last 12 years.

He has published several articles in refereed journals and wrote a book chapter on ethics and professionalism in Fonseca's recent textbook of *Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery*.



Linda Straub-Bruce

Linda Straub-Bruce is a 1989 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine Dental Hygiene program. She received her bachelor of science in education from Edinboro University and her master's in health services administration from the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, where she currently is a doctoral candidate in healthcare administration.

Currently, Straub-Bruce is the operations and finance manager of a busy, multi-doctor practice in Erie, PA. She is a part-time clinical faculty member at the LECOM Dental Outreach Clinic, where she works with fourth-year dental students to facilitate their achievement of clinical competency in procedures within her scope of practice.

She is very involved in professional development and was the president of the Pennsylvania Dental Hygienists' Association from 2019 to 2021 and has served—and continues to serve—in many roles within the organization. She is a published author, provides continuing education lectures, volunteers regularly, and is actively engaged in research. Straub-Bruce is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, International Federation of Dental Hygienists, American Dental Education Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, Pennsylvania Academy of Dental Hygiene Studies, and The National Practice-Based Research Network. She is a certified Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner and is very passionate about interprofessional collaboration, the business of healthcare, and legislative reform to improve oral and overall health within our communities.

Straub-Bruce lives in Erie, Pa., and enjoys spending her free time traveling, exploring off-the-beaten-path outdoor historical sites, hiking, and kayaking.

2023

Dean's Scholarship Recipients



Class of 2026 Youssef Gabraiel

Murrieta, CA
University of California Santa Barbara
BS in Biology, March 2021

Born in Giza, Egypt. Immigrated to the United States with family at age 11.

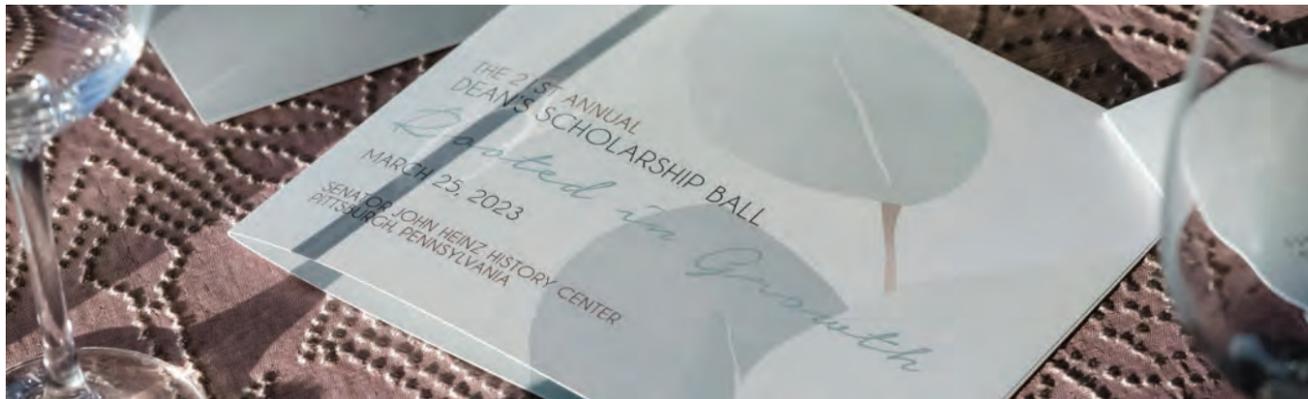
UCSB Pre-Dental Organization: vice president
MU Delta Pre-Medical Fraternity: vice president, treasurer, and academic officer

Connie Frank Scholar at UCSB: This scholarship is supported through the generosity of the Connie Frank Foundation in support of six UCSB undergraduate students who are pursuing pre-health programs, show academic promise, and demonstrate financial need

John C. Mithun Foundation Scholarship 2018-19 academic year: This scholarship is given to 54 notable undergraduates for showing academic promise by achieving a 3.96 GPA

Undergraduate Highest Honors: Recipients complete their studies within the top 2.5% of students in each college

Youssef was a research assistant in the UCSB biochemistry department where he studied contact dependent inhibition (CDI) in gram-negative bacteria. This lab studied the individual proteins involved, as well as how each protein contributed to the toxin translocation process. Working in this field, Youssef realized that to be a good clinician one must analyze each case as an investigator and use problem solving and critical thinking to be a good clinician in the future.



Class of 2027 Mariam Amr

Wexford, PA
University of Pittsburgh; BS in Psychology, Minor Chemistry; 3.93 GPA

Pitt Student Advisory Board Member: Office of Interfaith Dialogue and Engagement

Pitt undergraduate teacher's assistant and lab teacher's assistant

Pitt Muslim Student Association: event secretary

Pitt Dental Science Club

Islamic Center of Western Pa.: student teacher

Volunteers Around the World mission trip: Guatemala, May 2022

ICP Food Pantry: volunteer

HHMI SEA-PHAGES lab program

Dean's List all six semesters

As an undergraduate student at Pitt, Mariam worked as a student researcher at Pitt Dental Medicine in Dr. Alexandre Vieira's lab as part of the longitudinal study observing the long-term effects of repeated work on a single tooth and the eradication of oral diseases.



Class of 2027 Nathaniel Semanek

Bedford, PA
Johns Hopkins University, BA in Biology, honors

Omicron Delta Kappa national academic and leadership honor society; advisory board to JHU Leadership Engagement & Experiential Development; advisory board to the Dean of Student Life and Dean of Academic and Student Services

Crisis Text Line: crisis counselor providing free, text-based mental health services

Splash at JHU Program: course instructor. Splash is an educational outreach program offering courses to high school students from the Baltimore/D.C. area as an opportunity to explore topics that may not normally be presented at their school.

Maryland Science Olympiad at JHU: volunteer and state exam writer

JHU Pre-Dental Society: vice president

Dean's List all semesters

At the end of the 2021-22 academic year, Nathaniel received the JHU Community Value Award through the JHU Residential Life; one of the five main pillars of the department. This annual award is given to a single resident advisor who demonstrates exemplary work and promotes collective growth among their residents.

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Nyla Balakrishnan, Pitt Dental Medicine assistant professor and director of the SCOPE Program, was named chair for the ADEA Section on Educational Research Development and Curriculum.



Dr. Suvendra Vijayan, Pitt Dental Medicine assistant professor and director of 3D Printing and Advanced Technologies in Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology within the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, was awarded a Fellowship of the Academy of Dentistry International (ADI) during their annual meeting in November 2022. To learn more about the ADI, please visit adint.org.

In March, at this year's ADEA Annual Session in Portland, Ore., Dr. Vijayan was transitioned to chair of the ADEA Section on Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology.

Dr. Vijayan is a member of the American Dental Association (ADA) Standards Committee on Dental Informatics (SCDI) Augmented Intelligence (AI) Working Group and recently published a report on AI in dentistry entitled, "ADA SCDI White Paper No. 1106 for Dentistry—Overview of Artificial and Augmented Intelligence Uses in Dentistry."

See more or download this white paper at <https://tinyurl.com/5sdj7kpa>.



Dr. Wellington Rody, chair and residency director of the Department of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, presented a lecture on 3D printing, entitled "3D printing is an area of research that I want to grow in the department" at the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) Winter Annual Session in January 2022. Being invited to present at the AAO meetings is a very prestigious achievement and his presentation was very well received by the audience.



Dr. Michael J. Parenti, (DMD '80) and **Dr. Dejan Golalić** (DMD '09) received Mastership Awards from the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) during their annual convocation ceremony on July 30, 2022. The ceremony recognized the achievements of selected award recipients. The Mastership Award was presented to dentists from the United States and Canada. Only about 2% of dentists have met the requirements to earn this honor. Three of the 71 Master of the Academy of General Dentistry (MAGD) awardees in 2022 were from Pennsylvania and two were Pitt Dental Medicine alumni.

Details about the Mastership Award can be found at www.agd.org/education/awards-recognition/agd-mastership

See a complete list of recent AGD awardees > <https://www.agd.org/education/awards-recognition/other-awards/2022-fellows-masters-and-llsrs>

Pictured are Dr. Golalić, dentist and owner of Carlisle Dental Studio in Carlisle, PA., and Dr. Parenti, clinical assistant professor in the Pitt Dental Medicine Department of Prosthodontics.



Dr. Bernard J. Costello, associate vice chancellor for Health Sciences Integration at Pitt, and professor and chief of Pediatric Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at UPMC Children's Hospital, was elected president of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (ABOMS). His term is from September 2022 thru September 2023.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Rebecca Green, Pitt Dental Medicine assistant professor, received the H.W. Mossman Award in Developmental Biology at the American Association for Anatomy 2023 Annual Meeting. This award recognizes her as the 2023 American Association of Anatomists New Investigator in the area of Developmental Biology.



Dr. Martinna Bertolini, assistant professor in the Department of Periodontics and Preventive Dentistry, is a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Dental Research*. She also has published an invited editorial paper entitled “Oral Microorganisms and Biofilms: New Insights to Defeat the Main Etiologic Factor of Oral Diseases.”

She has been participating in several published news articles and radio interviews, including a recent NBC story about probiotic bacteria and bad breath, and a Consumer Reports article about the most hygienic way to store your toothbrush while traveling.

In February, WOSU, NPR-affiliate in Columbus, Ohio, invited Dr. Bertolini to participate in their live, Wellness Wednesday show to talk about oral health and good brushing habits.

Pitt Dental Medicine assistant professors **Joelle Carlo, PhD**, and **Samantha Manna, PhD**, recently completed the University of Pittsburgh 2022 Leadership Academy for Early Career Faculty in the Office of Academic Career Development. Accepted applicants from across the Schools of Health Sciences engage in professional development activities and develop leadership action plans in this high-priority, year-long program. Dr. Carlo and Dr. Manna were the 2022 representatives from Pitt Dental Medicine in this fantastic program.

For more information about the Leadership Academy, please visit www.oacd.health.pitt.edu/2022-leadership-academy-early-career-faculty



Joelle Carlo



Samantha Manna

Joanne Prasad Recognized with Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award



Joanne Prasad, DDS, MPH, Pitt Dental Medicine associate professor in the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, and assistant dean for Academic Affairs, has been selected by the University to receive a 2023 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award.

This University-wide teaching award is the highest honor given for teaching at the University of Pittsburgh and publicly recognizes distinguished teaching. Dr. Prasad’s efforts stand as an inspiring example of excellence in teaching. Noteworthy are her passion and commitment to teaching, her efforts to create an engaging learning environment, her engagement in promoting sex and gender health in dental education, and excellent student performance on the oral pathology and radiology section of national board exams. She participates in many aspects of teaching here at the school.

The Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award consists of a \$2,000 cash prize and a grant of \$3,000 to support teaching activities. Each year, up to five faculty members are selected from across the University to receive this award. The selection process is conducted by a committee that includes faculty and students appointed by the University provost.



I am deeply honored and grateful to have been selected to receive a Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award, fully cognizant that there are so many wonderful educators here at Pitt Dental and throughout the University. Over the past 17 years, I have had the great privilege of teaching and interacting with a diverse group of learners at the undergraduate, predoctoral, residency, and continuing education levels. I have learned a lot about the principles and scholarship of teaching and learning from them, but also from numerous faculty development and enrichment opportunities and from many of my amazing colleagues. I also am grateful for the support of my chairs and administrators who have enabled me to grow. Being a teacher has been both incredibly humbling and richly rewarding. It certainly has been a very satisfying aspect of my career at Pitt. Receiving this teaching award truly is a great honor.”

—Joanne Prasad, DDS, MPH



Pitt Dental Medicine Welcomes New Chairs

Please welcome Drs. Abimbola Adewumi and Helen Giannakopoulos



Abimbola O. Adewumi

Dr. Abimbola O. Adewumi joined the School of Dental Medicine in June 2023 as professor and chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry.

Born in London, Dr. Adewumi received her BDS from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria followed by postgraduate training in oral surgery in England. In 1996, she was awarded a Fellow in Dental Surgery (FDS) by the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

In 1999, Dr. Adewumi completed her masters degree in pediatric dentistry at the University of London and specialist training in pediatric dentistry at King's College Dental Institute and St. George's Hospital in London. She was awarded a Diploma of Member in Pediatric Dentistry from the Royal College of Surgeons of England in 2003.

In 2004, Dr. Adewumi joined the University of Florida College of Dentistry as a fellow in pediatric dentistry, and shortly after, in 2005, she was appointed assistant professor and appointed to associate professor in 2012.

Dr. Adewumi is a board-certified pediatric dentist in both the United Kingdom and United States. She is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and is a past chair and counselor of the Pediatric Dentistry Section of ADEA. Her work focuses in several areas: the management of medically complex patients and those with special health-care needs; presurgical nasoalveolar molding (PNAM) in infants born with cleft lip and palate.

She has authored many peer-reviewed articles and has been a chapter contributor to textbooks of Pediatric Dentistry and Emergency Medicine, and has led many UFCD humanitarian dental mission trips to Jamaica and Bahamas.



Helen Giannakopoulos

Dr. Helen Giannakopoulos joined the School of Dental Medicine in July and will serve as the chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS) and associate dean for Hospital Affairs.

A Chicago-native, Dr. Giannakopoulos, earned her dental degree from University of Illinois at Chicago and medical degree from Drexel University, combined with her specialty residency training in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Allegheny General Hospital. In 2002, she completed her specialty certificate in OMS from the University of Pennsylvania.

Most recently, she was at Penn Dental Medicine where she directed four pre-doctoral courses, and served as residency program director, academic chair of OMS, and chair of the faculty senate. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and has received the Daniel M. Laskin Award for the most outstanding paper published in the Journal of OMS, and the Linback Teaching Award.

Dr. Giannakopoulos's research and clinical practice have a strong emphasis on the surgical management of temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders and comprise full-scope TMJ surgery including arthroscopy, arthroplasty, TMJ stock and custom replacement, combined orthognathic and TMJ reconstruction, and the use of botulinum neurotoxins (Botox and Dysport) for the treatment of facial pain and dystonias. She developed a protocol for this use in 2007 and she is currently serving on an advisory board at AbbVie Pharmaceuticals.

Dr. Giannakopoulos is recognized and has lectured both nationally and internationally in the surgical management of temporomandibular joint disorders. She belongs to the University of Pennsylvania's Center of Excellence for TMJ Disorders and serves as the guidelines chair on the executive council for the American Society of TMJ Surgeons—driven to contribute evidence-based guidelines to the surgical treatment of TMJ disorders.

Update from OMS



MaryJane Anderson

MaryJane Anderson, DMD, MD, is serving as the residency program director. Dr. Anderson earned her DMD at the University of Pennsylvania before completing her training in OMS at the University of Pittsburgh in 2022. Dr. Anderson is a diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery with interests in facial trauma, orthognathic and obstructive sleep apnea surgery, temporomandibular joint surgery, pathology and reconstruction, and dentoalveolar and implant surgery.



Matthew Dailey

Residents Matthew Dailey, DDS, MD ('23) and **Alexander Romash, DDS, MD ('25)**, were accepted to the Osteo Science Foundation's Clinical Observership Program. This innovative program offers OMS residents the opportunity to refine their clinical interests in a private practice setting during a two- to four-week assignment with a senior clinician. Through an intensive, one-on-one training environment, trainees gain experience in the areas of dentoalveolar reconstruction and regenerative medicine, in addition to advanced dental implant surgery. The generous support of the Osteo Science Foundation aids in professional development and elevated patient care.

Recent Pitt OMS graduates **Bryce Hartman, DDS ('21)**; **Aaron Altman, DDS ('22)**; **MaryJane Anderson, DMD, MD ('22)**; and **Valentina Zahran, DDS, MD ('22)**, passed the ABOMS Oral Certifying Exam in 2023.



Alexander Romash

Faculty Appointments

As Pitt Dental Medicine works toward our mission of improving oral health through teaching, research, and service, we are pleased to announce four new directors whose innovative work is aimed at harnessing the advantages of technology and efficiency.



Dr. Joelle Carlo has been appointed the **Director of Online Education**. In this new role, she will work within the Office of Academic Affairs to collaboratively develop and implement online education opportunities across all units and departments. She will serve as a liaison between Pitt Dental Medicine, the Health Sciences, and the University as we partner with industry and expand our educational reach. Dr. Carlo's extensive interdisciplinary teaching portfolio as well as experience in implementing and evaluating interactive learning technologies that support online asynchronous education, will support her work as she drives this initiative forward.



Dr. Robert Nerone has been appointed the **Director of Chairside Digital Dentistry**. This new role, working under the Offices of Academic and Clinical Affairs, will have a particular focus on creating efficiencies across all clinical areas of Pitt Dental Medicine through the integration of innovative digital tools and products. Dr. Nerone's extensive experience in private practice where he deployed advanced digital technologies, alongside his research on acoustic technology partnered with residents and graduate students at Carnegie Mellon University, will allow him to share real-world experiences and application of these advanced technologies into traditional workflows.



Dr. Suvendra Vijayan has been appointed the **Director of 3D Printing and Advanced Technologies**. In this new role, working under the Offices of Academic and Clinical Affairs, he will focus on expanding the use of open platform and specialized 3D printing technologies across our institution. This initiative will be applied across pre- and post-doctoral programs as well as in our research platforms. Dr. Vijayan's insight as a member of the American Dental Association's Standards Committee on Dental Informatics, and his research focus on artificial intelligence, machine learning, 3D printing, and image segmentation with Pitt, CMU, and other universities, will allow him to bring the most innovative technologies to Pitt Dental Medicine.



Dr. Pamela Tisot has been appointed the **Director of Predoctoral Clinical Operations**. This role within the Office of Clinical Affairs will focus on streamlining clinical workflows, optimizing chair utilization, and maximizing educational experiences for the predoctoral students. The objective is to standardize the predoctoral clinical experience throughout the various departments while minimizing barriers to student progression and facilitating continuity of patient care. Dr. Tisot's experience in the comprehensive care forum will support her work with department chairs as they collectively identify pain points and implement pragmatic and efficient solutions around the topics of clinical faculty coverage, patient scheduling, student assistant support, and supply management.

Give Kids a Smile Days

This year, the 21st annual **Give Kids a Smile Days** took place at Pitt Dental Medicine Department of Pediatric Dentistry on February 24 and 27, and March 16, 24, and 28. Both DMD students and Pediatric Dentistry residents provided care to the patients who attended. The event this year provided \$12,387 worth of free dental care to 88 kids from our community.



Congratulations!

CLASS OF 2023

Pitt Dental Medicine Diploma Ceremony



The University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine held our Diploma Ceremony for the Class of 2023 on Saturday, May 20, at Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall.

The Class of 2023 ceremony celebrated the achievements of 12 residents who received dental specialty certificates, 5 Oral and Craniofacial Sciences PhD and master's degree recipients, 84 DMDs, and 25 dental hygiene students. A special recognition ceremony for DMD graduates unable to attend the ceremony was held on May 19.

***Congratulations to the Class of 2023
and Hail to Pitt!***

To see all of the photos from the events, please visit our Flickr site at <https://tinyurl.com/5799d62t>



#H2P



In Memoriam

- Dr. Wm. Ronald Corsello (DDS '55) February 8, 2023
- Dr. James Hughes Currier (DDS '63) February 4, 2023
- Dr. James R. Dee, Jr. (DMD '74) April 8, 2023
- Dr. Paul Edmond Dornin (DMD '61) March 1, 2023
- Dr. Bernard Grubler, Jr. (DDS '60) February 3, 2023
- Dr. Michael E. Katora, III (DMD '78) January 23, 2023
- Dr. Lon Kessler (DMD '86) May 30, 2023
- Dr. Leon A. Kohane (DMD '82) January 27, 2023
- Dr. Gustav T. Pieprzny (DDS '56) March 30, 2023
- Dr. John Scotto (DDS '48) June 2023
- Dr. William Stitt (DMD '72) March 13, 2023
- Dr. Anthony J. Traficante (DDS '56) May 16, 2023
- Dr. William B. Trice (DMD '51) January 13, 2023
- Dr. Stephen J. Weissberger (DDS '65) December 25, 2022

Dental Volunteers Needed

Make a difference and earn 3 CE credits!

Friday and Saturday, October 27 & 28, 2023
David L. Lawrence Convention Center
Pittsburgh, PA

Visit MOMPGH.ORG for more information and volunteer registration.



Introducing the New Healthy Smiles Fund at Pitt Dental Medicine

The School of Dental Medicine has a long history of supporting the community and the brand-new *Healthy Smiles* fund is another example of this civic commitment.

This fund is dedicated to aiding individuals by helping to offset costs associated with dental treatments. This was created in an effort for us to give back to our Pittsburgh community, a community that we, Elizabeth Dennis (DMD 2023) and Ryan Jenkins (D4), love.

Many of our patients are hard-working people who struggle to earn a living wage; many earn just enough money to survive paycheck to paycheck. A plethora of patients do not have any form of dental insurance. Some patients make an income that is slightly more than is needed to qualify for federally- or state-run programs. On many occasions, we have witnessed patients cancel a scheduled dental appointment because a job opportunity presented itself at the last minute. A patient with a part-time job or sporadic employment may be faced with a tough choice: seeking greatly needed dental care or seizing an opportunity to earn some much-needed money.

Volunteering at Mission of Mercy in Pittsburgh opened our eyes to the realization that there is an immense need for dental care in our community, especially for people who live at or below the poverty line. After discussions with colleagues at other dental programs and wanting to help those in need, we realized that there was an opportunity to create this fund to help offset costs at Pitt Dental Medicine.

We see the importance and the huge impact that a healthy smile has on an individual's self-confidence, including the ability to attain work and increase participation in the community. By increasing patient encounters, *Healthy Smiles* also improves student exposure to more hands-on and varied experiences. We ask that you please consider donating to this important fund, enabling the school to support both our community and our students.

*Thank you,
Elizabeth Dennis, DMD, and Ryan Jenkins*

Giveto.pitt.edu/healthysmiles

Ryan Jenkins and Elizabeth Dennis, DMD





University of
Pittsburgh
School of Dental Medicine

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This semester has been long, and we see and appreciate all that our preclinical instructors and didactic teachers do for us.

Last semester we brought in some treats from Oakmont Bakery and everyone loved them, so we wanted to do the same this semester to thank our amazing faculty.

We love our Pitt dental family and look forward to continuing this new tradition into the future.”



Pictured left to right are DMD Class of 2026 students Taylor Dermond, Hannah Ceravolo, and Nicole Didenko.