

Confessions of a SADHA Advisor

Often times I tend to focus on what needs to be done on a daily or weekly basis and not the bigger picture. While I am aware of the benefits of membership in the Massachusetts Dental Hygiene Association, I don't always convey to my students the enthusiasm and passion I have for our association.

Annual Session allowed me to focus on the bigger picture. The association is the voice of our profession. The greater the number of hygienists in our association, the more credible our profession becomes. As we know, the curriculum for dental hygiene programs is extensive and through the association, we can raise the educational standards. This was clearly demonstrated through legislation which allowed the administration of local anesthesia.

Through the Membership and SADHA Advisor networking sessions, I was able to refocus my goals and objectives and bring back some valuable tools for my students. It is our responsibility to build relationships with dental hygiene students. Students need to know that we hear their concerns and are an amazing resource. What are some of the students' concerns? Time management, employment opportunities and the ever present ethical challenges are only a few. Many students are also interested in licensure in other states. While national licensure is a goal of the ADHA, we need to demonstrate to our students how to navigate these uncertainties through MDHA and ADHA.

Through the networking sessions, I became aware of the many grants and scholarships available to students and hygienists. I was also able to gather many ideas for fundraising and mentorships. While legislation is an important element of our association, it isn't our only focus. Through networking opportunities on a more local level, each of us can share ideas and learn from other hygienists and students. The MDHA Membership Council is currently developing sessions for such opportunities which should prove useful to all hygienists no matter the focus or stage of their hygiene career.

Students provide a unique perspective and we would all do well to learn from our future hygienists and leaders. They are our future and I am going to do my best to listen to their ideas and concerns. Together we can build an amazing force which will create an alliance for all hygienists. Now is the time to focus on the bigger picture.