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Time, Talent, and Treasure

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Time, Talent, and Treasure

by Christopher Gorecki, DDS



It has always been a passion of mine to give back to our community. Dentistry has provided me and my family with so many opportunities. Many of you know that I was personally asked to join the Tri-County Dental Health Council, which was initially funded by United Way to provide free dental care to patients in our office. This led me to be on the Access to Care committee at the MDA. One avenue to increase awareness of access issues is the Mission of Mercy, MOM, dental event. These are free dental care clinics that are held throughout the U. S. The MDA decided to hold a Mission of Mercy at Grand Valley State University in 2013. Ferris State University in 2014, Macomb, Detroit, and Oakland held the next MOM in 2016. I had the distinct honor to be the co-chair of the 2016 event. Grand Rapids was the location in 2018 and Flint was scheduled in 2020. Due to the need to postpone the 2020 event due to COVID, the fifth Mission of Mercy will be held at the Dort Financial Center in Flint this June. The dates of patient care will be Friday and Saturday June 14th and 15th. Set-up of the 100 chair dental clinic takes place on Thursday, followed by the tear-down on Sunday.

The need for dental care will not go away and through the generosity of dental professionals, dental technicians, lay volunteers, community leaders, businesses across the country, and the charitable work of dental agencies and organizations throughout America, those needs are being addressed. Because of the widespread interest in M.O.M.'s, America's Dentists Care Foundation (ADCF)



2016 MOM Michele Tulak-Gorecki, myself, and our daughter Sophie



2018 MOM Michele Tulak-Gorecki, myself, and our daughter Lydia.

was formed on Feb. 29, 2008. Using a collaborative model, the Michigan Dental Association Foundation produces MOMs but relies on the national structure for implementation. That is the role of ADCF: to support those organizations and states that have captured the passion.

One of the most exciting things about giving is that there are countless ways to make a difference in our community. Most likely, all of us have heard the three pillars of any charitable giving are time, talent, and/or treasure. Time may be the most valuable resource we all have, until it is gone! That's why it's well known how precious the gift of time truly is. We as dentists have quite a unique talent and the third gift of our treasure may be the only way some of us can contribute to a cause like the Mission of Mercy.

The Michigan Dental Association Foundation is integral in coordinating the Mission of Mercy. From fundraising, promotion, to sign up of over 1400 volunteers, the MDAF is running the show. Since 2013, more than 4,600 MOM volunteers have provided FREE dental care in communities across the state. Nearly 5,000 patients have received \$4 million dollars of treatment. Events

like the MOM also provide a unique avenue to showcase the access to care issue to our elected officials. Even though many safety net programs have been developed in the state of Michigan, I am surprised at the number of patients that participate in the MOM. A dental home

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Macomb Legislative Event

Macomb had the distinct pleasure to speak with Representative Denise Mentzer, and staff representatives from Senator Hertel's and Senator Klinefelt's offices on March 22, 2024. Several Macomb members met at Macomb Community College's Dental Clinic to discuss MDA legislative priorities and to open dialogue with the legislators to increase awareness of dental issues that will assist dentists and their patients. You may be unaware that the MCC Dental program includes a hygiene and dental assisting program. The hygiene program is CODA approved and does schedule prophylaxis appointments at a lower cost. Dentist's should consider referring patients that need a lower cost option to receive cleanings, radiographs, and periodontal scaling and root planing. The legislators were given a tour of the facility to appreciate how tax dollars are at work, and to increase awareness for future careers in the dental field. This event was coordinated with Lynn Aranoff, the MDA's legislative liaison who also plans other grass-root events

across the state. Please consider participating in future events to increase our advocacy efforts with the legislators.

The Board reviewed and discussed the MDA's legislative Priorities for 2024 and adopted the following:

7-1223 Resolved, that the Michigan Dental Association's Legislative Priorities for 2024 are:

1. Dental Loss Ratio
2. Assignment of Benefits
3. Medicaid Anesthesia Fee Increase
4. Virtual Credit Card Payments
5. Workforce Shortage
6. Student Debt Crisis

Board Vote: Unanimous



Time, Talent, Treasure ... continued

is the ultimate goal of our profession. Even though the MOM delivers the most urgent dental care in a limited timeframe, we still attempt to establish a dental home by providing patients with the ability to contact a dentist after the event.

Not only are we helping the underserved to find a sustainable place for dental care, but we alleviate the pressure and money spent on one-appointment fixes that don't address the root cause of the problem. If MOM events could even help 10% of its patients find a dental home each year, in the near future we could have found a dental home for thousands of Michigan residents.

We can all make a difference by participating in a MOM event.

Imagine the difference we can make finding patients a dental home and establishing preventative and periodic oral health care. We change the outlook from fixing teeth, to changing lives and making people healthy.

Please consider "contributing" to the upcoming Mission of Mercy or future ones. Follow the QR code to contribute to the MDAF.



Ways to Give - MDAF