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# WMDDS in the House (of Delegates)!

Photos by Dave Trumpie, Trumpie Photography

Do you ever wonder what occurs at the MDA House of Delegates? This article will summarize what happens at the House of Delegates during Annual Session and will let you know the roles your fellow WMDDS members played in it this year.



By Rachel Sinacola, DDS, MS  
Grand Rapids  
WMDDS Editorial Staff

It was an exciting and productive weekend for Michigan Dental Association member dentists on April 17–20 at the Lansing Center for the 2024 Annual Session. Not only were a multitude of members from our component present at Annual Session, the West Michigan District Dental Society membership was well-represented in the MDA House of Delegates. Another weekend to be a proud member of the West Michigan component!



WMDDS In Attendance: Elizabeth Christopherson, Graham Greenland, Thomas Korte, Daniel Miller, Michael Palaszek, James Papp, Stephanie Sakowicz, Tamar Shrikian, Rachel Sinacola, Katie Swanson, Lauryne Vanderhoof, Leigh Ann Wahl, Liz White, Anthony Guinn.



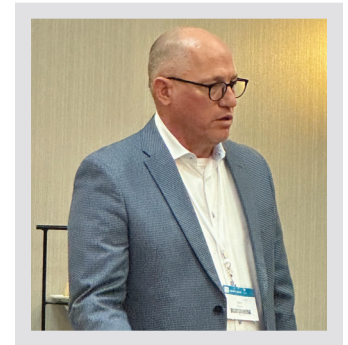
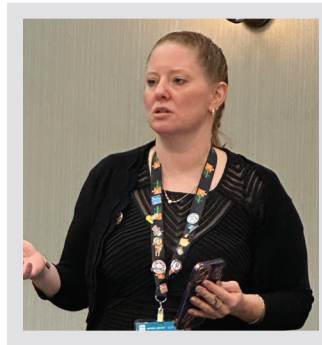
The event is essentially “emceed” by the Speaker of the House (WMDDS member, Dr. Deb Peters), who makes sure that the House events run smoothly and is a resource for parliamentary procedure. She “keeps the House in order” during the event but also plays an essential role throughout the year planning for the House of Delegates, recruiting for committees, and is a resource for introducing resolutions during the meeting.

The House of Delegates has a standard structure that one can anticipate each year.

- **Review the past year as an organization.** This includes presentations that summarize the past year, such as the MDA Executive Director’s report and a financial report for the organization.
- **Testimony on resolutions.** Resolutions can include amendments to the MDA bylaws and member concerns for the Board of Trustees to consider. Resolutions are introduced by components. Members provide testimony for a resolution, in which they speak in favor of or against a resolution. It’s a structured and efficient way to debate a topic.

- **Reference Committee Hearing.** A group of delegates are selected to be on the reference committee. The reference committee's function is to summarize the testimony and prepare a report to the House to help expedite voting. This year, Dr. Daniel Miller of WMDDS served on the reference committee.
- **Voting on the resolutions.** Prior to voting, the reference committee report is reviewed and additional testimony can be provided. It is at this time that resolutions can be amended.
- **Election of the Board and ADA Delegation.** Candidates are introduced on the House floor. The candidates have time on Saturday morning to meet with each caucus, including the West Michigan Steering Committee, as part of their campaigns. The election results are delivered to the Speaker of the House by the Chief Teller (Dr. Rachel Sinicola served in this role this year).

The MDA House of Delegates is represented by each component's elected delegates. The MDA Board of Trustees, MDA staff, and members of the delegation are present "on the House floor." Access to the House floor requires verification by the Sergeant at Arms. This year's Sergeant at Arms was our component's own Dr. Liz White.



## Three WMDDS Members Recognized by the Pierre Fauchard Academy

The Michigan section of the Pierre Fauchard Academy (PFA), an international dental honor organization, met during the Michigan Dental Association Annual Session. During the meeting, three WMDDS members were bestowed with special award recognitions, including:

### **Dr. Scott Hodges (L) receives the PFA Joseph B. Harris Mentorship Award**

Dr. Hodges was honored with the prestigious Joseph B. Harris Mentorship Award. Through an exceptional career that has included private practice endodontics, faculty appointment, public service dentistry, mission work, and community service, Dr. Hodges has been a mentor to a multitude of dentists. He continually makes outstanding contributions to our profession through leadership and service, including chairing the first four MDA Mission of Mercy events.

### **Dr. Daniel Miller (L) receives the PFA M. David Campbell New Dentist Award**

This award was established by the Michigan Section of the PFA to recognize recent graduates who show exceptional leadership in our

profession in honor of former Michigan section chair, Dr. M. David Campbell. Dr. Miller has served in leadership roles such as editor of the *WMDDS Bulletin*, membership on multiple MDA committees, and ADA delegate.

### **Dr. Christopher Smiley (L) receives the PFA Distinguished Dentist Award**

The Pierre Fauchard Academy's Distinguished Dentist Award is given at the President's discretion to Fellows of the Academy "whose actions and deeds reflect the highest examples of honorary dental service." In addition to this well-deserved honor, Dr. Smiley's remarkable career and contributions have also been recognized with membership in the American and International College of Dentists, the Distinguished Service Award from the West Michigan Dental Society (also known as "The Silent Bell"), and the American Dental Association and American Association for Dental Research (ADA/AADR) Evidence-Based Dentistry Practice Award.



## Highlights from the 2024 Annual Session



The meeting started formally, with a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem, sung by WMDDS member, Dr. John Frey.

The delegation reviewed highlights of the year, including a speech from the incoming American Dental Association President, Dr. Brett Kessler, a 2025 ADA presidential campaign announcement from Macomb District member and ADA Board of Trustee, Dr. Michelle Tulak-Goreki, and a summary of an incredibly successful year for the MDA Foundation from our own colleague, Dr. Dan Peters. The organization also heard from the new MDA Executive Director, Mr. John Tramontana.



Multiple resolutions were discussed at the House this year and it was a very productive meeting. Two of the topics that generated the most discussion were dental compacts and local component responsibilities and representation.

Compacts are a hot topic among many professions and are rapidly presenting themselves at the government level. What is a dental compact? In simple terms, a dental compact is an agreement between states that creates reciprocity between those states. The goal is to increase the portability of licenses. The state of Michigan does



not currently participate in a dental compact. However, due to the importance of licensure, workforce, and governmental regulation, the House urged the Board to review MDA policy on compacts.

The Michigan Dental Association is divided into local components. Representation for components with a small number of members, the Upper Peninsula in particular was discussed. Topics discussed included the challenges of smaller components to elect leaders and representatives, the responsibilities of components to be successful and useful to members, and managing peer review and ethics committees. Speaking of the Upper Peninsula, outgoing MDA President, Eric Knudsen, is from the Upper Peninsula! His President Event even included a U.P.-themed party that featured flannel, Stormy Kromer hats, and all things “Yoooper!”





## Candidate Forum and Elections

This year, the WMDDS had plenty of members interested in running for positions, including on the Board of Trustees and for the ADA Delegation. WMDDS Members on the ballot included Dr. Tamar Shrikian (Board of Trustee) and Drs. Margaret Gingrich, Graham Greenland, Daniel Miller, Erick Rupprecht, Gary Scott, and Lauryne Vanderhoof (for the ADA Delegation). Dr. Shrikian was elected to the three-year position on the Board. Drs. Daniel Miller and Erick Rupprecht were elected to the ADA Delegation with Drs. Margaret Gingrich, Graham Greenland, Gary Scott, and Lauryne Vanderhoof elected as alternates.

Another proud moment for WMDDS was the recognition of Dr. Daniel Miller with the Matt Uday New Dentist Award. Dr. Miller was recognized for his outstanding contribution to the profession and organized dentistry at all three levels of the tripartite. This award recognizes those who show great promise, leadership skills, and are bound to do great things in our field. Congratulations, Dr. Miller!

Think you might be interested in a WMDDS position as a delegate? Reach out to WMDDS Executive Secretary, Elaine Fleming (efwmdds@aol.com), for information about next year's election.

