

2023

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Recommended Citation

(2023) "The Road Forward: An Update on the MDDS Strategic Plan," *Articulator Magazine*: Vol. 29: Iss. 2, Article 6.

Available at: <https://commons.ada.org/mddsarticulator/vol29/iss2/6>

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The Road Forward: An Update on the MDDS Strategic Plan

SHELLY FAVA, MS, CMP, CAE



On a chilly February day, the MDDS Board of Directors, the professional team and a member-at-large gathered at the Mountain West Dental Institute (MWDI) to plan the future of organized dentistry in the metro area. This group engaged in the important work of Strategic Planning, sometimes called Strategic Forecasting. Strategic Planning is a process by which an organization or business establishes priorities and charts a path forward. At MDDS we firmly believe no association can grow or serve its members well without having goals and tactics for meeting those goals. You have to put your destination in the GPS before it can tell you how to get there.

MDDS engaged a professional facilitator, Mary Byers, with a specialty in helping associations develop achievable yet aspirational goals. In a 2019 strategic planning session, the committee updated the vision, mission and core values of MDDS. Then in 2022, MDDS also adopted a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement. In reviewing those foundational pieces, the Board had decided in advance they still speak to the purpose of MDDS. In case you aren't familiar, here are each:

MISSION

MDDS is dedicated to supporting our members, promoting the highest ethical practice of dentistry; providing continuing professional education, including a premier annual dental convention; oral health education and outreach to the community.

Vision: MDDS is the oral health authority committed to its members and the community of the Rocky Mountain Region.

Core Values:

Integrity	Visionary Leadership
Relentless Achievement	Growth and Learning
Collaborative Community	

DEI Statement: The Metro Denver Dental Society strives to model diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do. We believe this fosters an innovative and dynamic culture and leads to sustainable results. This environment allows us to further advance the dental profession in the metro Denver area, improve the oral health of the public and promote equity and access to oral health.

We resolve to promote and maintain an environment that honors and respects the dignity, uniqueness and worth of each person in order to empower each member of our organization to participate in our vision of improving oral health for our community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shelly Fava, MS, CMP, CAE is the Executive Director of the Metro Denver Dental Society (MDDS). Prior to assuming the position in 2018, she served in multiple roles at the Society including Director of Convention & Events. When she isn't serving the needs of the MDDS team or its members, she practices Tae Kwon Do and enjoys spending time with her husband, teenage son and their dog, Critter.

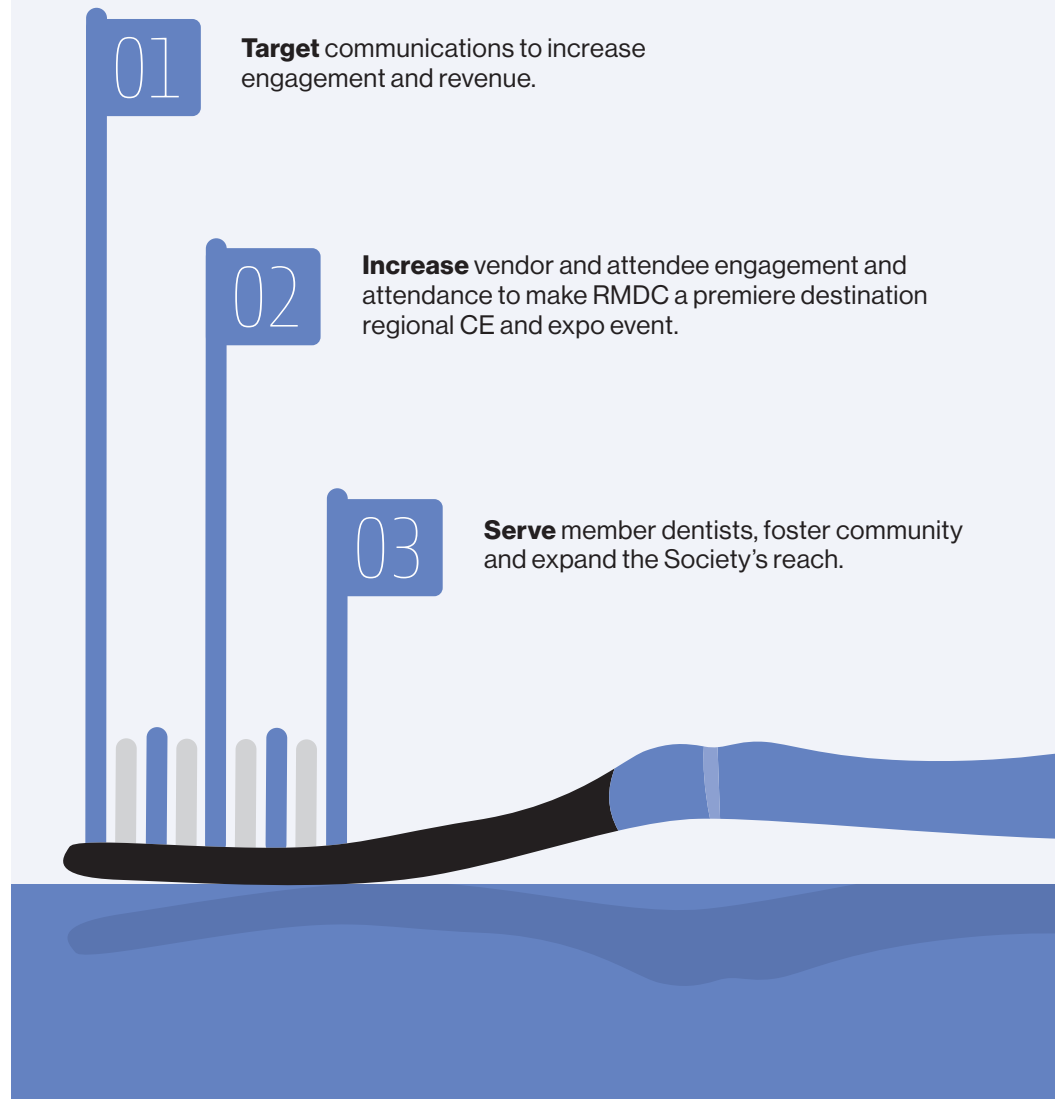
With a clear picture in mind of the purpose of MDDS, the group focused fully on creating goals and tactics to move the association forward over the next three years. The committee was privileged to have Dr. Marko Vujicic of the ADA Health Policy Institute (HPI) give a presentation on the current state of dentistry as a profession and an industry. His data and analysis helped the group understand the challenges and opportunities faced by our members across all demographics and practice modalities. I was able to share a picture of how MDDS has done serving members over the last ten years. We discussed membership, the Rocky Mountain Dental Convention (RMDC) and continuing education.

Our facilitator then guided the group through a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. This led to a robust conversation on ways to lean into strengths; compensate for or overcome weaknesses; take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats. To be a strong organization, it is important to be honest about exactly where you are now. This gave the group their starting point.

Having established clarity on the purpose of MDDS; the overall state of dentistry; the makeup and needs of members; and what the association can do to serve members best, it was time to create aspirational goals for the next three years. You can see the resulting goals in the graphic to the right. MDDS's goals are purposely few and focused. The committee would rather do a few things very well, than many things poorly. An association can advance its profession in many ways, but MDDS stayed zeroed in on what a local component society is best positioned to do for members, leaving other services, such as legislative initiatives, to our state and national partners. This allows members to access a full suite of benefits from each level of the tripartite without duplication of efforts. ▶

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Strategic Plan



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Once the goals were in place, the committee went on to create a large list of tactics for accomplishing each goal. This was open brainstorming where no idea was off the table. Subsequently, the professional team went through the tactics to prioritize them based on achievability, team capacity and budget considerations. Starting with a wide funnel of possibilities and narrowing the focus to what MDDS is best positioned and best capable of doing a strategic plan was born.

Beyond operational functions, the three new goals will guide all decisions by committees, the Board of Directors and the professional team for the next three years. Whenever a new program or event is proposed, the first question that will be asked is, "Which goal does this move forward?" By always keeping the goals in mind, the association will ensure time and money are being invested into areas that provide the most benefit to members. It is a plan created by members for their colleagues to further the MDDS vision and mission while manifesting the core values. ■

If you have questions about the strategic plan, feel free to reach out to me at director@mddsdentist.com.

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- Amy,
DDS PATIENT



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