

20 Years

Improving Lives Through Oral Health



2022

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Mission Statement

The Santa Fe Group is a 501 (c)(3) action-oriented think tank with a passion to improve lives through oral health. Since its inception 25 years ago, the Santa Fe Group has been instrumental as a neutral convener, communicator, connector, and catalyst to move the needle on critical issues such as oral cancer, dental education reform, children's oral health, improved primary care access, the importance of linking medical and dental health systems, and most recently, expanding oral healthcare for our nation's seniors.

A Few Words from the President

Welcome! I am pleased and honored to introduce the Santa Fe Group (SFG) 2022 Annual Report. I should begin by noting that 2022 was a celebratory year in general as the world continues to emerge from the COVID pandemic and embraces a “new normal.” And notably, the SFG commemorated its 25th Anniversary! Rest assured, however, that the time was not all champagne and caviar! We remained focused on our mission of “improving lives through oral health” and we marked several notable successes.

As you peruse this Report you will find highlights of the key initiatives and programming led by the SFG. All of them are meritorious, but special mention must be given to the SFG’s role—seven years in the making—in the groundswell of advocacy that led to the first inclusion of dental benefits for medically necessary care in Medicare this past November. This is truly a watershed moment and has opened the door for broader benefits and integration of oral and overall health.

We also focused a good deal of our energy on increasing awareness of the challenges in caring for patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities—efforts that we are continuing in 2023 in support of this burgeoning and underserved population. This and many other projects undertaken in 2022 arose from the personal commitment of the SFG members to truly make a difference in the lives of others.

For this reason, it has truly been a privilege to serve as the President of the SFG and an honor to call its Members, Scholars, and Fellows not only colleagues, but friends. Their integrity, charity, empathy, and optimism are unwavering and inspiring.

In closing, I would be remiss in my reflections not to express the gratitude of the Group to the members of our Strategic Advisory Council. Without the support and generosity of these industry leaders, the SFG would be significantly less impactful, and we remain ever appreciative of their collaboration, insights, and philanthropy.

Likewise, to the many coalitions, organizations, universities, and individuals noted in passing in these pages whose philosophies and priorities dovetailed with our own, thank you for your efforts. As 2022 demonstrated and the coming years will only reinforce, we are truly stronger together.

Teresa A. Dolan, D.D.S., M.P.H.
President, Santa Fe Group
Chief Dental Officer, Overjet

Executive Management Committee



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(PRESIDENT)

Chief Dental Officer, Overjet



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(PRESIDENT-ELECT)

Principal, Cambridge Concord Associates



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(IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT)

Vice President of Global Professional Relations,
Office of the Chairman & CEO, Henry Schein, Inc.



KATHRYN A. ATCHISON, D.D.S., M.P.H.
(TREASURER)

Professor of Public Health and
Community Dentistry, University of
California at Los Angeles



FOTINOS S. PANAGAKOS, D.M.D., PH.D.
(SECRETARY)

Founding Dean, School of Dental Medicine at Pacific
Northwest University of Health Sciences

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Vice President of Professional Services,
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Principal Associate Dean, Associate Dean for Research, and Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Maryland College Park



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Clinical Professor, Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine; Dean Emeritus, Columbia University College of Dental Medicine



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Professor Emerita, University of Washington (UW) School of Dentistry; Founding Director, UW Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) Program



NADER A. NADERSHAHI, D.D.S., M.B.A., ED.D.

Dean, University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry



LINDA NIESSEN, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P.

Professor and Founding Dean, College of Dental Medicine, and Vice Provost for Oral Health Affairs, Kansas City University



Senior Scholars



SOLOMON G. BROTMAN, D.D.S., M.A.G.D.

Vice President, National Clinical Operations, Life and Specialty Ventures; Clinical Instructor, Department of Neural and Pain Sciences, University of Maryland School of Dentistry; Private Practice in General Dentistry and Facial Pain, Jacksonville, Florida



CHERAЕ FARMER-DIXON, D.D.S., M.S.P.H., M.B.A., F.A.C.D., F.I.C.D.

Dean, School of Dentistry, Meharry Medical College



DENNIS A. MITCHELL, D.D.S., M.P.H.

Executive Vice President for University Life; Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement, Columbia University College of Dental Medicine; Professor of Dental Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center



TIMOTHY L. RICKS, D.M.D., M.P.H., F.I.C.D.

19th Chief Dental Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service and Assistant Surgeon General



MIRIAM R. ROBBINS, D.D.S., M.S., F.A.C.D., F.I.C.D.

Director, Care Center for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Oral Medicine, Division of Restorative Dentistry, Penn Dental Medicine



GINA THORNTON-EVANS, D.D.S., M.P.H.

Director, CDC Dental Public Health Residency Program; Dental Officer, Surveillance, Investigations, and Research Team, Division of Oral Health (DOH), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Founders Fellow



ALLEN WONG, D.D.S., ED.D.

Professor in Diagnostic Science and Director of Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD)/Hospital Dentistry Program, University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry



CLAUDE EARL FOX, M.D., M.P.H.

President, Med Plus Disability Evaluations Inc.; Professor Emeritus, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami



TERRY FULMER, PH.D., R.N., F.A.A.N.

President, John A. Hartford Foundation



GARY W. PRICE

Principal, Hooks Ridge Consulting



HAROLD SLAVKIN, D.D.S.

Dean Emeritus and Professor, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry, University of Southern California

Emeritus Members

In Memoriam

AUGUST 11, 2022, MARKED A SAD DAY FOR THE SANTA FE GROUP WITH THE PASSING OF ONE OF THEIR SENIOR SCHOLARS, **E. DIANNE REKOW, D.D.S., PH.D.**

"It was a great pleasure to get to know Dianne more personally as a SFG Senior Scholar," said Teresa Dolan, D.D.S., M.P.H., President of the Santa Fe Group. "Dianne was fully committed to using her talents and hard work to advance dentistry, oral health, and the lives of others. The Santa Fe Group lost a shining star in our constellation of oral health leaders, scholars, and advocates. I know we will keep Dianne in our thoughts and hearts as we celebrate her life and mourn her loss."

Dr. Rekow was an Emeritus Professor and Executive Dean of King's College London Dental Institute and Fellow of King's College London; former Senior Vice Provost for Engineering and Technology, Chair of the Department of Basic Science and Craniofacial Biology, and Professor of Orthodontics at New York University.

From 2002 to 2012, Dr. Rekow served in a number of roles at New York University, including chairing the Department of Basic Science and Craniofacial Biology, Director of Translational Research, Senior Vice Provost for Engineering and Technology, and engaging the dental school in emergency response initiatives and activities following the 9/11 attack.

From 2012 to 2017, during her service as Executive Dean of King's College London Dental Institute, she simultaneously led the Dental Clinical Academic Group, coordinating dental education and research activities of the college with two associated NIH hospitals.

Dr. Rekow also held various appointments at the Universities of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Maryland at Baltimore, and Minnesota. Her research career, primarily NIH funded, focused on applying engineering principles and technologies to improve dentistry.

After her formal retirement, Dr. Rekow volunteered her time to local and professional communities, focusing on demystifying technology and digital systems that can enhance oral and systemic health.

Her tenure as a Santa Fe Group Senior Scholar was marked by an incisive curiosity, rigorous work ethic, and meticulous attention to detail, which she applied to all her projects. Her wide range of expertise, encompassing physics, mathematics, business, and dentistry, as well as mechanical and biomedical engineering, allowed her to bring a variety of perspectives into focus and approach issues from multiple angles to put forth the most comprehensive of outputs. She played a leading role in establishing the Santa Fe Group as a key resource for the dissemination of clear and accurate science and information in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and her forward-thinking and formidable intellect consistently challenged her peers within the Group to ever rise toward the lofty goal of improving lives by improving oral health.

She will be missed by all who knew her, forgotten by none.



2022 Recap

ADVANCE HEALTH EQUITY SUMMIT

In June 2022, the Santa Fe group convened a national summit to advance health equity, bringing together an interdisciplinary group of 120 professionals from various organizations in oral and general health. The goal of the Summit was to tackle the persistent challenges surrounding the achievement of health equity, by catalyzing aligned, multi-stakeholder action. The Summit was held in Arlington, Virginia.

Over the course of two days, participants engaged with other thought leaders from multiple fields and worked together to identify and commit to collective action solutions on three primary strategic areas: expanded coverage, workforce development, and integration of oral and overall health.

The Summit took place in a moment of rapid change and increased attention to health disparities. The COVID pandemic put a powerful spotlight on the entrenched health inequities across the country. The release of the Oral Health in America report by the National Institutes of Health sparked impactful work. The Pandemic Response Workgroup convened agencies and organizations to focus attention on questions of oral health. The Santa Fe Group's 2021 Continuum and Salon emphasized the urgent need to act amid these dynamics, while the 2022 Summit provided the opportunity to co-create actionable solutions toward positive change.



The idea for the Summit was initiated by Immediate Past President Steve Kess, who gave the group a specific charge: to move beyond dialogue to action. A National Planning Committee, chaired by President-Elect Ralph Fuccillo and comprising champions for whole person and inclusive community engagement, shaped the Summit design. Members of the Santa Fe Group Strategic Advisory Council dedicated time and resources through their participation in the Summit, further emphasizing the urgency of identifying solutions to long-standing obstacles to health equity. SFG Senior Scholars facilitated the action-oriented Summit sessions, assuring follow-up for each priority area.

Our Summit speakers added their voices to the call to action. Dr. Gail Christopher, Executive Director of the National Collaborative for Health Equity, Dr. Myechia Minter-Jordan, President and CEO of CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, Dr. Rena D'Souza, Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), and Nicole Johnson of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention each inspired the participants to work together toward policies, practices, and new models to achieve health equity.

For a more detailed Summit Report, please [click here](#).

COVID-19 SERIES SUMMARY

Led by the late Dr. Dianne Rekow, a small group of Santa Fe Group members and scholars published a series of articles related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on oral health care providers and patients, as well as the geopolitical and economic ramifications of the pandemic. Eight different white papers were published on the SFG website under “Oral Health Resources.”

The first, COVID-19: A Catalyst for Engendering Public Trust in Health Care and Building Back a Better Health Profession, focuses on the rapid, complex unfolding landscape from December 2019 through January 2021.

The second, A Few Steps Forward – Many Steps Remain, covers the February – March 2021 evolution of the virus, including increasing vaccinations, reduced infection rates and death tolls, and what we thought would be a return to pre-COVID-19 normal life.

The third, Is the End Really in Sight, reports the April – May 2021 dramatic reduction in numbers of cases and deaths and the expansion of vaccinations to a broader age group, with the good news being tempered by an increase in breakthrough cases.

The fourth, Vicious, Dispiriting Delta, focuses on the June – August 2021 Delta-variant-driven turnabout that created a surge in cases and deaths and overwhelmed hospitals, as well as new treatments and emerging science.

The fifth, Significant Improvements, but Infowars, Mandate Resistance, and Burnout are Still Threats, summarizes the October – November 2021 trajectory of the pandemic, the impact of misinformation relating to vaccines and treatments, the prolific frustration of both health care workers and the public, and postulates what might come next.

The sixth, Omicron Takes Center Stage: Complicating Policies, Guidance, and Practices, discusses the sudden emergence of the Omicron variant, the evolving science, and the breadth of the virus’ impact on health care and everyday life.

The seventh paper, Two Years and Still Not Over, discusses the decline in case numbers from January through March 2022 but also the anxiety of many to return to “normal.”

The final paper, published in June 2022 and covering the period of April – June 2022, describes the new sub-variants and their impact on the growing number of cases.

These white papers, all available for download on the SFG website, informed oral health providers and many others by providing a detailed account of the political, economic, and health care turmoil caused by the pandemic.

MEDICARE UPDATE

The Santa Fe group continues its efforts to integrate oral and general health. A critical aspect of this work is to catalyze efforts to expand dental benefits in Medicare. While our long-term objective is to include a dental benefit in Medicare Part B, during 2022/2023 SFG worked with the 244 members of the Oral Health Consortium to build support for the Public Statement on Medicare Coverage for Medically Necessary Oral and Dental Health Therapies, which addresses the need to provide necessary dental treatment to Medicare beneficiaries with specific medical conditions. These efforts included two submissions in support of medically necessary dental care in Medicare to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS.

For our [CMS submission](#) on August 29, 2022, eight SFG members collaborated with colleagues to describe evidence that supports medically necessary care in two categories. First, we summarized data describing conditions for which dental care is integral to the clinical success of long-term medical management. Here we focused on the importance of preventive

dental care to health outcomes in persons with diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, pneumonia, and chronic lung diseases. Secondly, we expressed support of dental treatment to prevent infection prior to and during recovery from surgical procedures and before/during immune suppression (e.g., cancer chemotherapy, severe rheumatoid arthritis, and prior to valvular or transplant surgery and subsequent immunosuppression).

On February 9, 2023, SFG submitted [a second letter](#) to CMS focusing on the need for medically necessary dental care to improve the outcomes with immunosuppression and diabetes and cancer treatment. SFG continues to participate in the Consortium's strategic advocacy plan, which prioritizes Medicare coverage expansion, coordinates advocacy, seeks congressional appropriations support for additions to the 2023 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, compiles patient success stories made possible by the new coverage, and will continue to expand the awareness of the impact of improved access to care on health and quality of life through an informational website.



MAJOR MEETINGS PROGRAM

In order to expand the reach of the Santa Fe Group to the practicing oral health community, the organization launched a major meetings program in the fall of 2021. Over the past year and a half, we have engaged with organizers of major regional dental meetings to secure time on the program agenda to allow the SFG to present updates on key oral health issues, the role of oral health in overall wellness, and the continued problem of oral health inequities. The purpose of these programs is to communicate with the practitioners who are at the front lines of managing these issues, share the efforts of the SFG in addressing these issues, and outline the benefits these efforts will have in their individual practices. These sessions are engaging, promoting dialogue between the SFG and the attendees so that the attendees depart with a better appreciation for the issues, understanding how they can support the changes needed and recognizing the benefit the changes will deliver.

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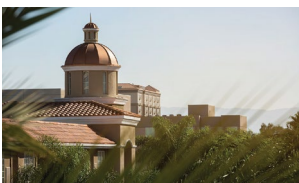
FOR THE 2022 PROGRAM, THE SFG HELD THREE SESSIONS:

1

CALIFORNIA DENTAL ASSOCIATION - ANAHEIM MAY 12, 2022

Providing Oral Health Care to Older Adults: Challenges and Opportunities

This session featured Richard Nagy, D.D.S.; Elisa Chavez, D.D.S.; and Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P.



2

CALIFORNIA DENTAL ASSOCIATION - SAN FRANCISCO SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

The Art and Science of Oral Health for Those with Special Health Care Needs: Equitable Health for All

This session featured Rick Rader, M.D., Steve Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D., D.H.L. (Hon); Rick Guidotti; and Allen Wong, D.D.S.



3

GREATER NY DENTAL MEETING NOVEMBER 27, 2022

The Art and Science of Oral Health for Those with Special Health Care Needs: Equitable Health for All

This session brought the San Francisco program to the East Coast and again featured Rick Rader, M.D.; Steve Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D., D.H.L. (Hon); Rick Guidotti; and Allen Wong, D.D.S.



INTELLECTUAL / DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (IDD) HEALTH EQUITY

The Santa Fe Group committed significant attention and energies in 2022 to care for patients with intellectual/developmental disability (IDD) through a slate of live programming designed to bring together thought leaders and stakeholders to move the needle on this critical initiative. Santa Fe Group Fellow Allen Wong, D.D.S., spearheaded the year-long programming, highlighted by the following events:

On September 6 and 7, a Summit on IDD, “Achieving Equitable Oral Health for Those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Promise, A Pledge, A Plan,” was hosted at the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry in conjunction with a celebration of the Santa Fe Group’s 25th Anniversary and in honor of one of the Group’s founders, Emeritus Dean Arthur A. Dugoni, D.D.S., M.S.D. One hundred attendees participated in the meeting, which was facilitated by leaders in IDD education and involved participants from communities of interest, self-advocates, and parent advocates. The format was small group discussions as well as large group talks and featured addresses by Rick Rader, M.D., Matthew Holder, M.D., M.B.A., Jay Kumar, D.D.S., M.P.H., and Steven Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D., D.H.L. (Hon), among other opinion leaders.

On September 8, at California Dental Association (CDA) Presents, San Francisco, the Santa Fe Group hosted a panel discussion, “The Art and Science of Oral Health for those with Special Health Care Needs: Equitable Health for All,” with approximately 40 attendees. The room was surrounded with photos by photographer Rick Guidotti, noted for his focus on individuals with IDD. Presentations were made to bring focus to the inequities of IDD/disability populations, with an update on the future of education and basics of caring for those with IDD/disabilities. Panelists included Rick Rader, M.D., Steven Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D., D.H.L. (Hon), Rick Guidotti, and Allen Wong, D.D.S.

Mr. Guidotti also led an SFG-sponsored exposition and lecture following the CDA panel “Change How You See, See How You Change.” This open presentation in the Exhibitor Hall attracted about 40 attendees who listened and learned more about the “beauty and art of people” as Mr. Guidotti shared his insights on medical and dental education through art.

Lastly, on November 27, the Santa Fe Group sponsored “The Art and Science of Oral Health for Those with Special Health Care Needs: Equitable Health for All,” a panel discussion at the Greater New York Dental Meeting of approximately 75 attendees. This forum illuminated the disparity of care and the professional ethics that can help make access to care more equitable and featured presentations from Allen Wong, D.D.S., Vincent Siasoco, M.D., M.B.A., Liz Matejka-Grossman, and Steven Perlman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D., D.H.L. (Hon).

*“I am honored to have served as the Santa Fe Group Fellow to focus on IDD Health Equity,” Dr. Wong noted. “I thank the Santa Fe Group for trusting and allowing me to lead this area of interest. **My personal thanks to Nader Nadershahi and Steve Kess for their encouragement and support and the new friends/colleagues I have met.** I look forward to the future of health equity and justice for all.”*



Notes from the Strategic Advisory Council 2022

STRATEGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Henry Schein, Inc.

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Co-President
The George E. Richmond Foundation

STEPHEN MASON, PH.D., M.R.S.C. (CCHEM)

Category Medical Director -
Oral Health Haleon

MATTHEW M. COGGIN

Chief Strategy & Business
Development Officer
Dentsply Sirona

ROBERT A. GANLEY

Emeritus Member
Ivoclar Vivadent

WARDAH INAM, PH.D.

CEO
Overjet

MICHAEL MONOPOLI, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.S.

Executive Director
DentaQuest Partnership
for Oral Health

EDWARD ALLAN MURPHY

Executive Vice President, Life and
Specialty Ventures
President, LSV Dental Management

MARK NANCE

Senior Vice President and
General Counsel
Envista

AMIR NESHAT, D.D.S.

President & Chief Executive Officer
Liberty Dental Plan

TIM ROGAN

President
Patterson Dental

MARIA RYAN, D.D.S., PH.D.

Vice President & Chief Dental Officer
Colgate Palmolive, Co.

STEPHEN E. THORNE, IV, B.A., M.H.A.

Founder & CEO
Pacific Dental Services

GEORGE W. TYSOWSKY, D.D.S., M.P.H.

Senior Vice President, Technology
Ivoclar Vivadent, Inc.

SFG CONTINUES ITS SUCCESS IN EXPANDING DENTAL BENEFITS IN MEDICARE

In November 2022, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a final rule that it would expand access to dental care for Medicare recipients by providing Medicare coverage for dental services that are “inextricably linked to, and substantially related and integral to the clinical success of, covered medical services, also known as ‘medically necessary dental care.’” This represented the first substantial increase in dental benefits since the Medicare program was founded in 1965. Such an increase in benefits was deemed by many informed observers to be impossible. However, the powerful scientific and clinical arguments submitted to CMS by organizations such as the Santa Fe Group, coupled with the huge coalition of 244 supporting partner organizations from the medical, dental, public policy, and consumer advocacy fields made a compelling case for changing the Medicare regulations. Medicare Parts A and B will begin coverage of dental treatment to eliminate oral infection prior to solid organ transplant and select cardiac procedures in 2023, and prior to head and neck cancer treatment in 2024. Accordingly, the CMS specifically approved the following indications in its November 1, 2022, announcement:

1. Stabilization of teeth when related to a jaw fracture
2. Extraction of teeth prior to radiation of the jaw for cancer treatment
3. Ridge reconstruction when associated with removal of a tumor
4. Intraoral splints when used in conjunction with medically necessary treatment
5. Intraoral exams and dental treatment prior to cardiac valve replacement, valvuloplasty, or transplant procedures

Most importantly, the CMS opened the door for submissions of new medical indications that require dental treatments on an annual basis. This allows for significant expansion of dental coverage in future years as new data and evolving treatment paradigms continue to show the benefits of dental care in reducing both morbidity and costs associated with certain medical conditions.

In late 2022, SFG members Ira Lamster, Judi Haber, Mike Alfano, and Judy Jones partnered with several other organizations to draft a request that CMS expand dental coverage for Medicare recipients who have diabetes, immunosuppression, and autoimmune diseases. This request was submitted on February 10, 2023, for possible implementation by CMS beginning January 1, 2024. Stay tuned!

SFG ADVANCES THE FOUNDING OF A NATIONAL ENTITY FOCUSED ON OPTIMAL ORAL HEALTH POLICY

In late 2021, the Build Back Better plan, which was planned to include dental, vision, and hearing care for all Medicare beneficiaries, was scaled back dramatically. Unfortunately, many national dental organizations opposed this plan. While these member-based dental organizations often support public policy that can improve oral health, such support can be withheld when the members of a given clinical organization perceive a threat—usually an economic threat—to their clinical practices. Nevertheless, members of the Santa Fe Group worked directly with the Senate Finance Committee on how best to structure a dental benefit in Medicare, including the development of a specific plan proposal (see <https://santafegroup.org/news/medicare/2021-santa-fe-group-updated-plan-and-cost-estimates-for-medicare-part-b-dental-coverage/>). As a result of this interaction with Senate Finance, the SFG members became aware of considerable lobbying efforts by segments of the dental profession to squash any such expansion of dental benefits in Medicare. Ultimately, as Build Back Better was scaled back substantially, the proposed benefits for dental, vision, and hearing care were eliminated.

The SFG discussed this issue at length with the members of its Strategic Advisory Council and determined that the best approach to address the inherent conflicts among members of clinical dental organizations struggling with the question of “What is best for my practice?” versus “What is best for society?” would be to build a strong alternative public policy voice in oral health. Such an entity, called “The Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe,” already exists in the EU, and establishment of a similar entity in the United States would be very helpful in creating fair balance the next time a major oral health public policy issue, such as the proposed dental care reforms of the Build Back Better plan, is debated in the United States. Accordingly, the SFG discussed this opportunity with various organizations including state dental societies, dental service organizations, foundations, minority dental associations, dental hygiene organizations, and related health professions including nursing, and determined that there was interest in forming such a group.

SFG member Dr. Ira Lamster is working with these various organizations to coordinate the development of this new public policy entity, called the Coalition for Oral Health Policy (COHP). As this group develops its governance, it has jump-started its activity by chartering two position papers in oral health policy. One white paper focuses on the “Addition of Dental Benefits to the Medicare Program.” The other position paper is titled “Integration of Dental and Primary Medical Care: Introduction of Primary Care in the Dental Office.” The authors are highly respected professionals in their fields, and the position papers will be carefully vetted not only by representatives of the COHP, but also by SFG members and independent reviewers before they are approved for release.

It is important to note that the COHP will not be a “think tank” like the SFG but will be structured and budgeted to have a significant national impact on issues that affect the oral health of society. In addition to preparing scientific and policy-oriented position papers, the COHP is expected to commit significant funds for educating Congress and the public about the importance of oral health to overall health. These efforts may include use of appropriate consumer media. Assuming that the COHP is chartered successfully in the coming year, it can evolve to become a powerful force in shaping public opinion on the best approach to ensure optimal oral and general health.

STRATEGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP

On November 30, 2022, SFG’s Strategic Advisory Council (SAC) convened its annual meeting in a hybrid format in New York City. The SAC currently has 13 members and welcomed Tim Rogan, President of Patterson Dental, as the newest member.

The SAC reviewed SFG activities including: the Oral Health Summit in June, which was attended by some SAC members; the efforts to expand dental benefits in Medicare; and the development of a new oral health advocacy group (COHP). The SAC identified activities and ideas moving forward to advance oral health access.

Health Equity Summit: In June 2022, the SFG convened a health equity summit, Advance Health Equity – An Alignment and Action Summit. The Summit brought together more than 100 leaders in oral health from various organizations. Several SAC members participated in this Summit. Working in small groups, the Summit identified issues that affect expanding access to oral health care and developed innovative solutions. SFG will continue to build on the momentum created by the meeting.

Achieving Equitable Oral Health Care for Those with an Intellectual and Developmental Disability: In September 2022, The University of Pacific and California Dental Association partnered with SFG to convene a meeting on oral health for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Dr. Allan Wong worked with SFG members Dr. Nader Nadershahi and Dr. Peter Dubois to address access to oral health care for individuals with IDD. Follow-up efforts on this important topic will continue. A copy of the report summarizing this meeting is attached.

SFG 25th Anniversary: In 2022, SFG began celebrating its 25th anniversary. Throughout the past year, our new branding has included the 25th anniversary logo.

2023 Initiatives

POLICY AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVE (ALOHA/COHP)

Routine dental care services have been excluded from the Medicare program since its inception in 1965. Since that time, a large body of evidence has accumulated indicating that oral infection and inflammation are risk factors for a number of chronic diseases. Further, epidemiological trends in the United States, including the aging of the national population, with older Americans as a group retaining all or most of their dentition for their lifetime, strongly suggest the negative impact of oral disease on the general health and well-being of older adults. Further, as older adults retire from the workforce, they often lose their dental insurance coverage, resulting in the need to pay out-of-pocket for dental care or pay for private dental insurance. For these patients, costs can be expected to increase with increasing age, as dental disease is cumulative, and oral health problems predictably occur later in life. Those with limited financial resources are at greater risk for oral disease. Further, this burden disproportionately affects older adults of color.

In 2021, the Biden Administration proposed the Build Back Better bill, which included the addition of basic dental services for Medicare recipients. A debate followed on the merits of such a program, with both misleading and incorrect information being circulated by organized dentistry. In response, a need arose for a neutral voice that could provide accurate and unbiased information. Such an organization was never intended to be an opposition group to organized dentistry. Rather, its goal was to be a “sustainable, respected voice for effective, patient-centric oral health policy and oral health advocacy in the United States.” Originally identified as the Association of Leading Oral Health Advocates (ALOHA), member organizations included the American Dental Hygienists Association (ADHA), the California Dental Association (CDA), CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, Oral Health Nursing Education and Practice (OHNEP), the Nation-

al Dental Association (NDA), and the Santa Fe Group (SFG). Recently, Pacific Dental Services (PDS) became a member organization. This initiative was originally proposed as a stand-alone entity, but a second round of strategic planning led to a request to the SFG to host the organization during its formative stage. This proposal was accepted by the SFG, and modest funding was allocated.

The efforts of this new organization began by defining the initial steps for both the policy and advocacy components. Two policy documents were commissioned, written by leading experts in the field. These were tentatively titled “The addition of dental services in the Medicare program” (Frank Scannapieco, primary author) and “The integration of primary care and dental care” (Lisa Simon, primary author). The initial drafts of both documents have been submitted, and reviewable versions are expected in the spring of 2023. These documents will be vetted by internal and external experts in each area. The policy documents are intended to both define the case and provide relevant supporting evidence.

Ongoing discussion within the group led to the decision to change the name of this initiative to the “Coalition for Oral Health Policy” (COHP). This name change better reflects the purpose and intent of the initiative.

As the first two policy documents are being prepared and comprehensively reviewed, the advocacy component is now being planned. An outside consultant is required, and options are currently under consideration. One goal of the COHP is to establish an even broader coalition of supportive organizations. Additional plans call for building an appropriate governance and financial plan, publication and distribution of the policy documents, and broad dissemination of COHP initiatives.



PROMOTING PRIMARY CARE ACTIVITIES IN DENTISTRY

As a follow-up to the 2021 Santa Fe Group Salon and Continuum series, an initiative to promote primary care activities in dentistry was created to help promote the “other side” of integrated care: integration of overall health/primary care into oral health. Each year an estimated 29.5 million Americans visit an oral health professional but not a medical provider (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Statistical Brief #544, 2022). Screening for acute and chronic medical conditions in a dental setting not only improves oral health but can also improve overall health. According to the Health Policy Institute, screening for chronic diseases in a dental setting may save \$102.6 million each year in health care costs (American Dental Association, 2016). Health screenings and other primary care activities in dental settings also establish a multi-directional referral pattern and help promote collaboration between oral health professionals and other health care professionals (e.g., medical providers, pharmacists, and behavioral health providers).

This multi-year initiative by the Santa Fe Group hopes to promote primary care activities in dentistry through educating medical and dental providers about the rationale for health screenings in the dental setting, working with dental schools to develop a curriculum that includes primary care screenings, and working with key stakeholders to identify barriers to full integration and solutions to those barriers. During 2022–2023, the SFG initiative team promoted primary care screenings through various national presentations and learned more from key stakeholder groups about potential barriers (e.g., coding, reimbursement) and solutions. Moving forward, our plans are to develop several pilot projects involving primary care screenings in dental schools as well as to promote coding and reimbursement for different types of primary care screenings.

**According to the Health Policy Institute,
screening for chronic diseases in a
dental setting may save**

\$102.6

MILLION

each year in health care costs.

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION, 2016

25 years...

As I reflect on my 25-plus years as a member of the Santa Fe Group, I find myself in the unique position of being the only active member who has been part of the Group from the beginning, as one of the five founders. The others—Dom DePaola, Larry Meskin, Art Dugoni, Hal Slavkin—were already quite accomplished luminaries in their fields. We would gather to talk about the issues of the day and help each other solve problems, but it was not until the publication of Alice Horowitz’s paper exposing the profound disparity between dentists claiming to perform oral cancer screenings (roughly 93%) and patient testimony as to actually having received an examination (roughly 7%) that we were moved to action.

Our first order of business was to shore up our ranks and expand our reach by adding Dushanka Kleinman, Raul Garcia, Steve Kess, and Linda Niessen to provide public health, research, and marketing/communications expertise. We met to plan our attack on oral cancer in the home of Larry Meskin in Santa Fe, New Mexico—and so the Santa Fe Group was born.

Without getting into detail, the oral cancer initiative, in which we partnered with the Oral Cancer Foundation, the American Dental Association, and the NIDCR, was a soaring success. Eight years later, the percentage of people who reported receiving an oral cancer exam quadrupled to about 30% of the population.

That shift, that movement within the oral health care profession, speaks to the impact of the Santa Fe Group. If I had to choose one word to crystalize the impetus behind all the initiatives—past, present, and future—that the Santa Fe Group puts forward, it would be that. Our goal is to have an impact.

To achieve this, it has always been the Group’s mindset that advancement can only come through communication and collaboration, not only among dental professionals, but our colleagues in medicine, public policy, law, advocacy ... the list goes on. The role of the Santa Fe Group became that of

a convener, gathering these parties to analyze the situation, but then moving beyond discussion to catalyze impactful action through such tools as newspaper ads, lay editorials, educating Congress, pressing federal agencies, and the like.

Over the next quarter century, the Group targeted existing or emerging issues ranging from dental education reform to health equity and access to care, particularly children’s oral health and geriatric oral health. We sought—and continue to seek—to establish oral health as indivisible from and integral to overall health and to make the mouth part of primary care. Most recently, we championed the inclusion of a dental benefit in Medicare, and I am proud to report that—57 years after the founding of Medicare and 7 years after we first turned our lances toward this windmill—the breakthrough that most believed impossible (or at the least improbable) came in November of 2022 when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services opened the door by providing coverage for some medically necessary dental treatments.

Despite our successes—some of which have been substantial—none of these battles are won yet. Others, such as improving the availability and quality of care for individuals with disabilities, are barely begun. The Santa Fe Group and its like-minded partners will continue to press forward, leveraging technology and relationships to enhance the communication of science to stakeholders who can create impact and, from that impact, effect seismic change.

The future is bright. Santa Fe Group is strong. I speak for all the five Founders when I express my great pride in what the Group has accomplished in our first 25 years, and I will be looking forward to what the next 25 years will hold.

*Michael C. Alfano, D.M.D., Ph.D.
Professor, Dean, and Executive VP Emeritus,
New York University
Founding Member, Santa Fe Group*

Timeline

1995

A GROUP OF FIVE DENTAL EDUCATORS AND SCIENTISTS meet to discuss the future of health care with special reference to oral health, public education, and research in the United States.

DR. LARRY MESKIN



DR. HAROLD SLAVKIN



DR. DOMINICK P. DEPAOLA



DR. ARTHUR DUGONI



1997 - 2005

FORMATIVE YEARS. The original group of five moves to expand their efforts, and four more thought-leaders join them, officially becoming the Santa Fe Group.

THE GROUP, CONCERNED ABOUT IMPROVING ORAL CANCER DIAGNOSIS, as data showed that only 7% of dentists' patients were receiving the examination, creates a powerful awareness campaign. It includes high-profile editorials, the formation of the Oral Cancer Consortium, the launch of an important oral cancer research program by NIDCR, a dedicated issue of the *Journal of the American Dental Association*, and advertising in major newspapers. This campaign advances change, and by 2005 the percent of patients reporting an oral cancer exam has quadrupled.

DR. MICHAEL C. ALFANO



DR. DUSHANKA KLEINMAN



DR. LINDA NIESSEN



2002

THE SANTA FE GROUP JOINS WITH THE AMERICAN DENTAL TRADE ASSOCIATION to create the Oral Health Access Scholars program, a commitment to fund new projects that achieve improvements to oral health care and dental productivity. The program's Scholars leveraged the nearly \$100,000 in funds into projects with more than \$32,000,000 in estimated value of impact. This included supported research and hundreds of individuals who benefitted from the projects' activities in oral health education, preventive services, and innovative delivery programs.

DR. RAUL I. GARCIA



MR. STEVEN W. KESS



Timeline

2004

THE SANTA FE GROUP CONVENES A SALON, based on the 18th century tradition to gather people for the exchange of ideas, at the University of the Pacific. The Group brings together 50 industry, academic, and association leaders to formulate short- and long-term strategies to transform dental education in the face of changing health care realities. Following this pivotal meeting, the American Dental Education Association forms the Commission on Change and Innovation in Dental Education, which continues to this day.

2006

AT THEIR CONFERENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY, the Santa Fe Group helps shine a light on the oral health of children and its impact on their well-being.

This industry re-shaping conference demonstrated SFG's effective fund-raising model, the affordability of oral health care for both children (to reduce school absenteeism) and adults, and how to address the needs of the homeless and elderly. Notable results:

- A collaboration on research and millions in funding raised for a Los Angeles County-wide assessment as well as ways to address required treatment
- Funding secured and 13 school-based clinics built that provided mental, vision, hearing, and oral health as well as general primary care for students and their families. Tens of thousands of students and their families received comprehensive health care.

2007

REALIZING THAT IN FOUR YEARS THE FIRST BABY BOOMERS WOULD TURN 65, the Santa Fe Group meets to prioritize the oral health of the older population through the recommendations of four panel discussions.



2008

THE #1 RECOMMENDATION DELIVERED BY ATTENDEES TO THE FIRST ANNUAL MESKIN SYMPOSIUM, named after Santa Fe Group founder Dr. Larry Meskin, is to increase dental student exposure to working in integrated health care delivery teams across disciplines and scopes of practice.

2009

AT THE SECOND ANNUAL MESKIN SYMPOSIUM, the Santa Fe Group helps identify the best methods to educate health care providers to recognize and care for the unique challenges regarding the health of older patients.

2011

THE SANTA FE GROUP PARTNERS WITH THE NEWLY CREATED MARYLAND DENTAL ACTION COALITION to convene the Maryland Oral Health Summit in the aftermath of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from an untreated dental infection. This Summit builds on the state's experiences and provides lessons learned for other states.

2012

THE SANTA FE GROUP, in an effort to ensure it has the most comprehensive outlook on issues impacting its mission, forms the Strategic Advisory Council [SAC]. Comprising CEOs, senior corporate leaders, and association and foundation C-Suite executives, the SAC's members play an instrumental role in helping to shape and launch new initiatives; provide funding and intellectual support; and share unique guidance on emerging issues.

2013

AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION [ADHA], the Santa Fe Group brings together more than 100 oral health stakeholders for a conference titled "Transforming Dental Hygiene Education" to envision the role of dental hygiene in the future health care system. The ADHA continues to work on common interests with the Santa Fe Group today.

2016

THE SANTA FE GROUP IS A PARTNER in the "Engaging the Oral Health Community in Childhood Obesity Prevention" National Conference, where participation of key leaders and organizations is critical to informing future directions. Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, partners include the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center, and the American Dental Association.

SANTA FE GROUP CONVENES A SALON titled "Expanding Oral Health-care for America's Seniors." Attendees review evidence about the need for dental coverage for seniors and discuss what a Medicare benefits package could entail. The rationale, costs, and benefits of improved oral health care access for seniors make a compelling case for expanding Medicare to include dental benefits.

2019

IN A SIGNIFICANT EFFORT TO ADD A DENTAL BENEFIT TO MEDICARE, the Santa Fe Group convenes a Salon titled, "Comprehensive Health Without Oral Health: The Medicare Paradox." The meeting is unprecedented in size and in the diversity of the backgrounds of the participants, including dental, medical, nursing, consumer advocacy groups, and lawmakers. The conference also creates new national partnerships with organizations that share in the Santa Fe Group's mission, including Families USA and the AARP, among others. The John A. Hartford Foundation is the major sponsor for this meeting.

Timeline

2020

THE SANTA FE GROUP INVITES MORE THAN 175 HEALTH CARE CHANGE-MAKERS to elevate the critical need to have an oral health benefit in Medicare and the best way to make it happen. Results include growing the #TeethinMedicare movement from 80 national partners to more than 120; increased movement on the part of health professionals; expanded support of HR3, the Bill to add a dental benefit to Medicare; and increased attention from the public.

After a successful Santa Fe Group annual meeting, the global COVID-19 pandemic hits. The membership immediately leverages its collective and extensive expertise to advance the dissemination of unbiased information and oral health initiatives to support dentists and the public.

2021

The Santa Fe Group rolls out a Continuum on the benefits of integrating oral health into overall health. The 4-webinar series point toward a Summit hosted in June 2022 (see page 8).

The SFG and its partners achieve a number of successes in the priority area of inclusion of a dental benefit in Medicare, notably:

- An update to a 2017 paper by SFG member Judy Jones and SAC member Mike Monopoli on how to best structure oral health benefits in Medicare.
- Letter to the Editor of the *Wall Street Journal* in support of the dental benefit.
- SFG member Ira Lamster publishes the second New York State Medicaid paper.
- SFG continues its participation in the Medicare Dental Coalition, the 234-member organization focused on Medically Necessary Dental Care in Medicare.

SFG-hosted panels at Greater New York Dental Meeting, Chicago Midwinter Dental Meeting, and California Dental Association meetings expand the reach of the Group's priority interests.

SFG publishes the "COVID-19 Challenges and Consequences" series of white papers focused on rebuilding public trust and fostering a better health system response in the pandemic.





SANTA FE GROUP

Improving Lives Through Oral Health

2022
Was a Year Dedicated To

ACHIEVING ORAL HEALTH EQUITY

TRANSFORMING ORAL HEALTH
EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

FOSTERING HEALTH LEADERSHIP
AND INNOVATIONS



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