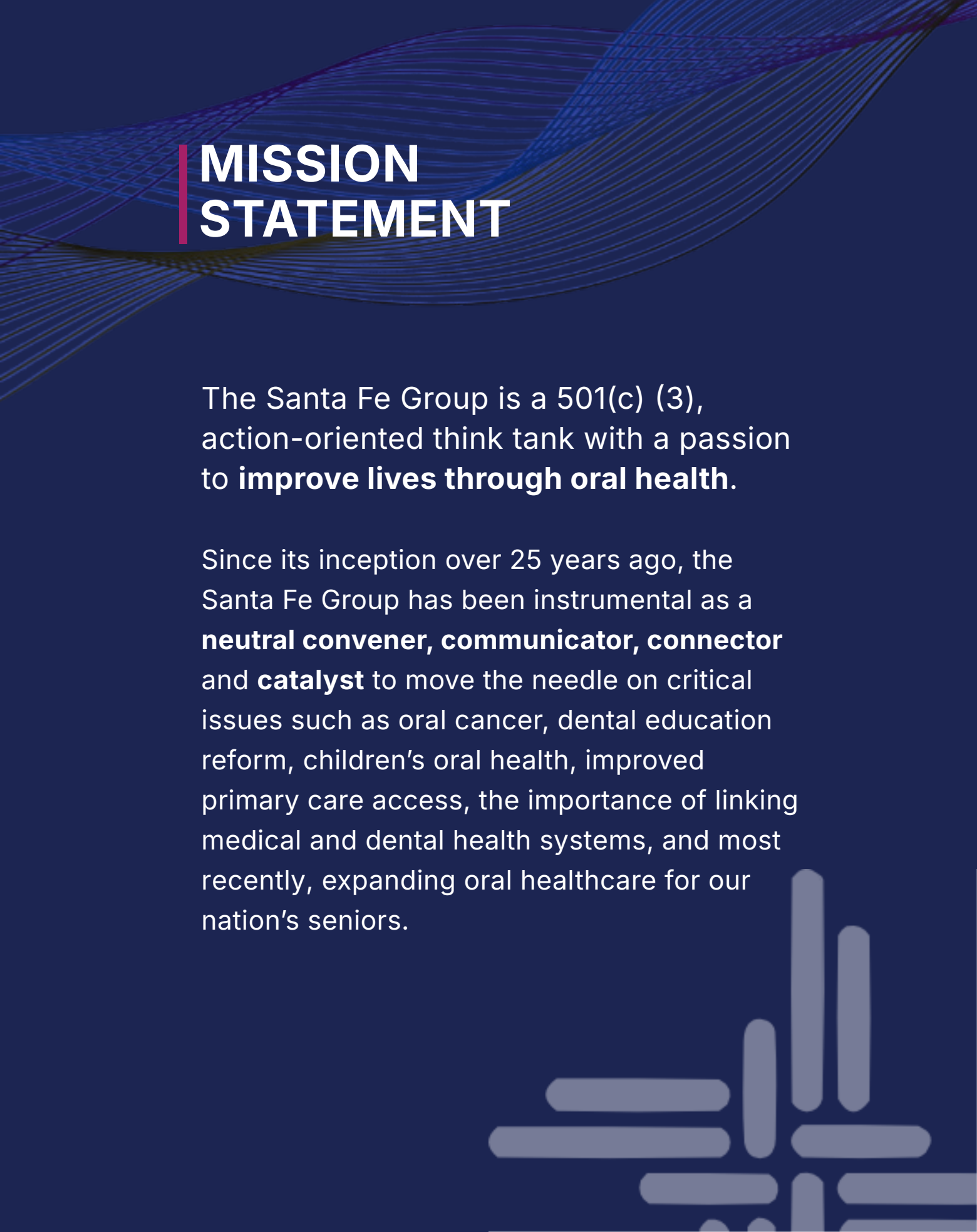




2025 ANNUAL REPORT





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 over 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

We entered 2025 with a sense of reaffirmation, preparation, and renewed urgency and a commitment to our mission and vision. We exited the year better positioned to meet emerging national challenges.

Our Annual Business Meeting catalyzed that progress and set the tone for moving forward collectively through a linked, network-based approach. Our review of ongoing and proposed initiatives across a wide array of stakeholders, along with substantive feedback from our Strategic Advisory Council and SFG Scholars informed the SFG Future Direction and Strategy Brief, reaffirming health equity as our north star and whole-person health—explicitly including oral health—in an inspiring and practical pathway forward. Five (5) interconnected strategic areas of oral and overall health integration; workforce development; technology; access to care; and population health emerged as foundational and central to the future direction of the Santa Fe Group.

Our four (4) core strategies—partnering and convening; promoting science-based policy; centering person, community, and stakeholder voices; and building leadership—remain the engines that will move these priorities forward. We also benefited from public policy guidance provided by Dr. John Pournoor of Government Analytica, who assisted us in applying a public policy framework to sharpen analysis across select topics.

Using those strategic areas as a scaffold, we mobilized internal workgroups to conduct environmental scans and to apply an ideation → incubation → implementation approach to identify priority investments. “Maintaining Momentum,” captures the arc of our 2025 work and the sequence by which ideas moved toward actionable pilots.



Our 2025 programmatic work continued across several initiatives: advancing coverage in Medicare for medically necessary dental care; progressing the Community Oral Health Partnership (COHP); strengthening primary care linkages with oral health; and evolving the Circle of Scholars and Fellows as a mechanism for effective engagement. Workgroup deliberations produced concrete outcomes and informed planning for a new, cross-cutting initiative: Oral Health: A Pathway to Wellness and Longevity—that we will shape and formally launch in 2026. This initiative will be developed with active inclusion of the Board, Circle members, Strategic Advisory Council members, and key external partners to ensure broad ownership and collective impact.

We responded deliberately to changes at the federal level by aligning our priorities to the shifting national landscape while keeping health equity central to aims. Our approach remains pragmatic and networked: identifying levers where the Santa Fe Group can convene, translate evidence into policy, elevate lived experience, and build leadership across sectors.

At another at a more personal level, we marked 2025 with sadness at the passing of Michael Alfano, a last remaining Founder of the Santa Fe Group and champion of oral health as critical to wellbeing. The year also included opportunities to acknowledge the contributions of Hal Slavkin, who also had the foresight to collaborate with Mike Alfano and others to create the Santa Fe Group more than 25 years ago. We will continue to honor their legacies as we advance our agenda. Their commitment and counsel have helped shape our thinking and strengthened our resolve.

As we look to 2026, we do so with confidence and purpose. The foundation laid this year, of strategy, structure, and partnership, positions us to engage others in the Oral Health: A Pathway to Wellness and Longevity initiative, to sustain momentum across existing projects, and to intensify our policy engagement. I am grateful to our new Santa Fe Group Officers, members, scholars, advisors, and partners for their dedication and collaboration, and to all who work toward improved health for all. Together we will continue to make measurable progress on whole-person health and health equity.

Sincerely,

Ralph Fuccillo
President, Santa Fe Group



2025

INITIATIVES



2025 SFG PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, the Santa Fe Group strengthened its commitment to advancing oral health through key sponsorships and partnerships with organizations that share our focus on health equity and policy advocacy. Our contributions supported impactful initiatives, while the collaboration and expertise from our partners helped drive progress in expanding access and improving care for all. Together, we continue to amplify our collective efforts toward systemic change in oral health.



THE CONSORTIUM



NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences Engineering Medicine

ADEA THE VOICE OF DENTAL EDUCATION



MEDICALLY NECESSARY MEDICARE INITIATIVE



 **MEDICARE HEALTH INSURANCE**

Name/Nombre
JOHN L SMITH

Medicare Number/Número de Medicare
1EG4-TE5-MK72

Entitled to/Con derecho a
**HOSPITAL (PART A)
MEDICAL (PART B)**

Coverage starts/Cobertura empieza
**03-01-2022
03-01-2022**



The Santa Fe Group continues to play a national leadership role in advancing access to dental services for the nation's older adults. Our SFG team collaborated with Eric Berger and the 250 -member National Consortium for Medically Necessary Oral Health Coverage to support a change in the 2027 Physician Fee Schedule payment policy for dental services that are inextricably linked, substantially related and integral to the clinical success of Medicare covered medical services (<https://oralhealthconsortium.org>).



In 2025, we built an evidence-based clinical case about the importance of preventive dental and oral care to the health outcomes of older adults requiring planned hospitalization who are at risk for developing Hospital-Acquired Pneumonia, the most common hospital acquired infection, and older adults with diabetes-related retinopathy and/or nephropathy, the most common complications of diabetes affecting adults 65 and older. **The Santa Fe Group submitted a nomination to CMS on February 10, 2026.**



SFG is committed to advancing the Consortium's strategic advocacy plan that prioritizes Medicare dental benefit expansion. We advocate for a feasible CMS implementation plan, facilitates Medicare enrollment and reimbursement of dentists, and expands awareness of health professionals and the public about improved access to affordable dental and oral health care for older adults.



Ultimately, our goal is to catalyze national groups across the health professions to include dental care in Medicare Part B. In the meantime, we will focus on maintaining the progress we made with prior authorizations for medically necessary dental services for older adults undergoing organ transplant surgery, cardiac valve replacement and valvuloplasty procedures, and head and neck cancer (2023), In 2024, dental services for older adults with cancer-related immunosuppression were authorized, followed by 2025 authorization for dental services for older adults with end stage renal disease (ESRD) on dialysis.

COALITION FOR ORAL HEALTH POLICY (COHP):

From Strategy to Action

In 2025, the Coalition for Oral Health Policy (COHP) — an initiative of the Santa Fe Group (SFG) — completed its transition from strategic planning to execution. Building on the framework developed at the 2024 Charlotte retreat, COHP's first full operational year was defined by the formal launch of three integrated priority areas and expanded partnerships.



Expanding Capacity and Partnerships

COHP broadened its community-based partnerships in 2025 and deepened its expertise by bringing new perspectives into the Coalition. This expanded capacity positioned COHP to engage more effectively across the policy landscape and to pursue multiple workstreams.



Three Integrated Priority Areas

COHP formally launched three priority areas in 2025 — each distinct in focus yet strategically linked in the shared goal of strengthening the role of oral health within national policy.



1. Implementation Strategy for Medically Necessary Dental Care

Since 2023, CMS has progressively authorized Medicare payment for medically necessary dental services linked to a growing number of medical conditions. As the scope of covered conditions has expanded, so has the need for a coherent strategy to ensure these benefits reach the patients they are intended to serve. COHP began initial development of an implementation strategy to address the practical barriers that can limit uptake, including provider enrollment, billing infrastructure, beneficiary awareness, and care coordination between medical and dental settings, and will continue this to execution in 2026 — 2027.

2. Medicare Advantage Oral Health Project

COHP launched a two-phased project to raise awareness of oral health coverage in MA, and to increase engagement of consumer-based choice. Phase I focused on a landscape review of existing MA dental benefit structures, the development of an advisory committee to guide the initiative's strategic direction, and initial discussions with CMS regarding the inclusion of oral health measures within the Star Rating framework. Phase II centers on the development of a consumer-facing resource guide designed to equip Medicare beneficiaries with the information they need to make informed decisions about dental coverage when selecting among plans. The guide is being developed with an emphasis on clarity and accessibility, will undergo community-based message testing, and is slated for distribution in 2026 -2027 in coordination with community-based organizations and other aligned partners. By working on both the policy and consumer sides of this issue, COHP aims to ensure that MA dental benefits are both subject to meaningful accountability and genuinely useful to the people they are intended to serve.

3. Cost-Avoidance and Savings Workplan

COHP developed and launched a cost-avoidance and savings workplan to synthesize and clearly communicate the economic case for oral health coverage within Medicare. A growing body of evidence links preventive oral health care to reductions in costly downstream medical utilization, yet this evidence has not been assembled in a way that is readily accessible to policymakers and advocates. The workplan aims to produce a structured evidence framework that can be used to reframe the policy conversation — reorienting from the cost of covering oral health care to the cost of not covering it.





Federal Policy Thought Leadership

COHP continued to strengthen its role in federal thought leadership in 2025, assisting in the drafting of two formal public comments on pressing policy issues: the CMS Proposed Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2027; and the CY 2026 Physician Fee Schedule. Both carry significant implications for oral health coverage and access.



Organizational Milestones

COHP closed its initial planning grant, generously provided by the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health, marking the completion of the Coalition's foundational phase. With the planning period concluded, COHP began identifying additional opportunities to provide community value through oral health policy advocacy.



Published Original Content

In collaboration with the SFG communications team, COHP published original content throughout 2025 on topics at the center of its policy agenda:

- Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Oral Health: Debt, Diversity, and Dentistry
- A Defining Step Toward Whole-Person Health: CMS Advances Oral Health Integration in the 2026 Physician Fee Schedule
- What Medicare Advantage Is Missing — and Why Oral Health Must Be Part of the Star Rating System and Future

Learn more about COHP's work at santafegroup.org/oral-health-policy/



Members

Ira Lamster, DDS, MMSc
Michael Monopoli, DMD, MPH, MS, FACD, FICD
Zachary Brian, DMD, MHA, FICD, FACD
Jane Weintraub, DDS, MPH
JoAnn Gurenlian, RDH, PhD
Judi Haber, PhD, APRN, FAAN
Richard Manski, DDS, MBA, PhD
Eric Berger, BA
Rich Vogel, DMD, MS

Frank Scannapieco, DMD, PhD
Bailey Reavis, BA
Melissa Burroughs, BA
Terri Dolan, DDS, MPH
Nathan Fletcher, DDS
Foti Panagakos, DMD, PhD
Peter DuBois, JD
Stephen Thorne, BA, MPH

PROMOTING PRIMARY CARE ACTIVITIES IN DENTISTRY

The multi-year initiative to integrate primary care into dentistry advanced throughout 2025 by educating clinical, academic, and corporate healthcare professionals. While American Dental Association leadership strongly backs these efforts, implementation faces roadblocks due to a lack of dedicated dental procedure codes for medical screenings.

2025 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES



Academic Outreach: Delivered targeted presentations across dental and medical academic programs.



CMS Collaboration: Supported the 2026 CMS incentive prompting physicians to study oral health via Smiles for Life.



Workflow Optimization: Partnered with non-dental medical teams to build workflows improving patient oral health literacy.



Stakeholder Education: Briefed industry and professional leaders on key stakeholder findings and strategic next steps.



Interprofessional Lectures: Expanded joint physician-dentist lecture programs aimed at healthcare providers and insurance payers.



Symposium Planning: Organized the upcoming June 2026 Symposium to drive actionable healthcare integration.

COLGATE ORAL HEALTH NETWORK & SFG LIVE WEBINAR

Older Adults and Oral Diseases: Benefits from Early Intervention, Emerging Technology and Minimally Invasive Dentistry

In 2025, the Santa Fe Group continued its collaboration with the Colgate Oral Health Network (COHN) through a live continuing education webinar focused on minimally invasive dentistry for older adults. The program explored clinical approaches for preventing and managing oral diseases in aging populations, including the role of artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, preventive care strategies, and evolving Medicare and Medicaid policies affecting access to oral health care.

Featuring Dr. Elisa Chávez, Dr. Terri Dolan, Dr. Linda Niessen, and Dr. Lisa Simon, the webinar reflected the Santa Fe Group's continued commitment to advancing oral health education and promoting integrated approaches to care for older adults.





MEMBERSHIP



STRATEGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Strategic Advisory Council (SAC) brings together senior leaders from industry and partner organizations who share the Santa Fe Group's commitment to advancing oral health and overall health. Through their expertise, strategic guidance, and support, SAC members contribute to informing the Santa Fe Group's priorities, strengthen collaboration across sectors, and advance innovative solutions to improve oral health outcomes.

In 2025, **SAC members** provided remembrances of Dr. Michael C. Alfano for his contributions to dentistry, the Santa Fe Group and initiatives to integrate oral health into overall health. The SAC welcomed guest representatives from Vvardis who will join the SAC as members in 2026. The SAC recognized Stanley M. Bergman for his extraordinary leadership and longstanding contributions to the Santa Fe Group and the oral health community upon his retirement from Henry Schein and service on the Strategic Advisory Council.



EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) continued to provide strategic leadership and operational guidance in support of the Santa Fe Group's mission and organizational priorities. Building on the expanded structure introduced in 2024, the EMC continued to include the Chair of the Governance Committee and the Chair of the Strategic Advisory Council, reinforcing cross-committee collaboration and broader perspectives in organizational decision-making. This collaborative approach helped strengthen alignment across initiatives and advance the organization's strategic direction.



Ralph Fuccillo, M.A.
President



Dushanka V. Kleinman, D.D.S., M.Sc.D.
Vice President



Teresa A. Dolan, D.D.S., M.P.H.
Immediate-Past President



Judith Haber, Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.A.A.N.
Secretary, Chair of Communications Committee



Fotinos S. Panagakos, D.M.D., Ph.D.
Treasurer



Judith Jones, D.D.S., M.P.H., D.Sc.D.
Chair of the Governance Committee



Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P.
Chair of the Strategic Advisory Council

SANTA FE GROUP BOARD MEMBERS



Stephen N. Abel,
D.D.S., M.S.D.



Kathryn A. Atchison,
D.D.S., M.P.H.



Elisa Chávez,
D.D.S.



Teresa A. Dolan,
D.D.S., M.P.H.



Peter A. DuBois,
J.D.



Ralph Fuccillo,
M.A.



Raul Garcia,
D.M.D., M.Med.Sc.



Anita Duhl Glicken,
M.S.W.



Judith Haber,
Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.A.A.N.



Ronald Inge,
D.D.S.



Judith Jones,
D.D.S., M.P.H., D.Sc.D.



Dushanka V. Kleinman,
D.D.S., M.Sc.D.



David Kochman,
J.D.



Ira B. Lamster,
D.D.S., M.M.Sc.



Nicholas G. Mosca,
D.D.S., Dr.P.H.



Nader A. Nadershahi,
D.D.S., M.B.A., Ed.D.



Linda Niessen,
D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P.



Fotinos S. Panagakos,
D.M.D., Ph.D.



Lisa Simon,
M.D., D.M.D.

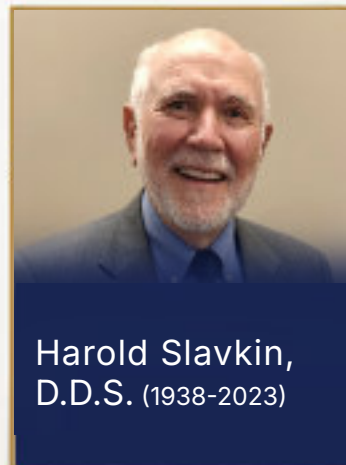
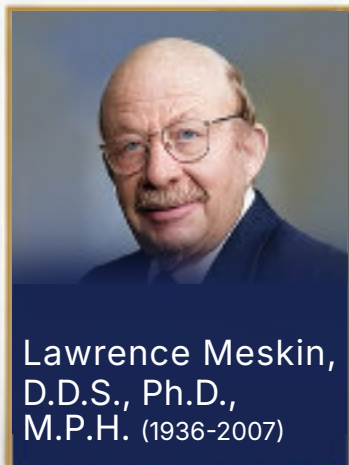
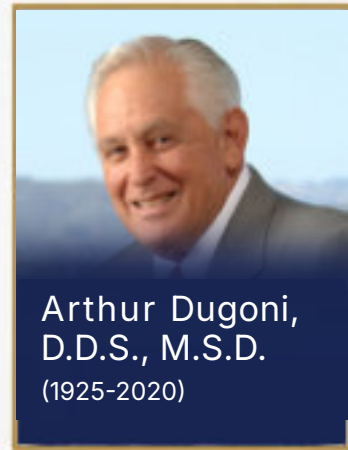
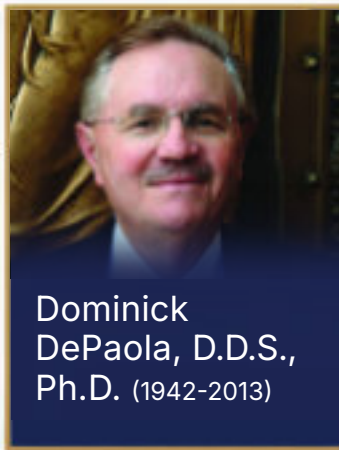
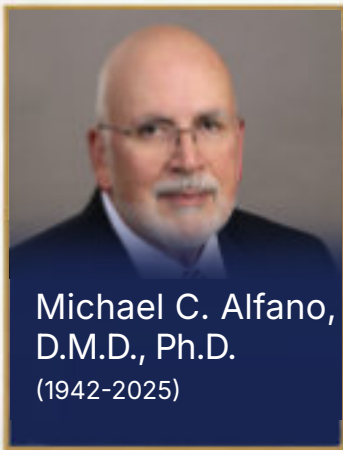
FOUNDERS

Thank you for your inspiration

The Santa Fe Group was founded on the belief that oral health is essential to overall health and well-being. Through their vision, leadership, and dedication, our founders helped shape an organization committed to advancing health equity, collaboration, and innovation across generations.

Their ideas challenged convention, inspired action, and created a lasting impact that continues to guide our mission today.

We honor their legacy with gratitude and deep appreciation for the foundation they built and the future they made possible.





EMERITUS

The Emeritus Members of the Santa Fe Group are distinguished leaders whose vision, scholarship, and service helped shape the organization's mission to advance oral health, health equity, and the integration of oral and overall health. Though retired from active roles, these esteemed individuals continue to be honored for their lasting contributions to dentistry, medicine, public health, and policy. Their legacy of thought leadership and collaboration continues to guide and inspire the work of the Santa Fe Group today.



Terry Fulmer,
Ph.D., R.N.,
F.A.A.N.



Claude
Earl Fox,
M.D., M.P.H.



Steven
William
Kess, M.B.A.



Wendy
Mouradian,
M.D., M.S.



Gary W. Price



SENIOR SCHOLARS & FELLOWS

Our Senior Scholars & Fellows bring expertise, innovation, and collaboration to support the Santa Fe Group's mission and future.



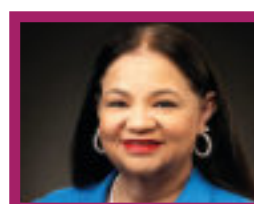
Solomon G.
Brotman,
D.D.S.,
M.A.G.D.



Cherae
Farmer-Dixon,
D.D.S., M.S.P.H.,
M.B.A., F.A.C.D.,
F.I.C.D.



Miriam R.
Robbins,
D.D.S., M.S.,
F.A.C.D., F.I.C.D.



Gina
Thornton
-Evans,
D.D.S., M.P.H.



Zachary A.
Brian,
D.M.D., M.H.A.,
F.I.C.D., F.N.A.P.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Throughout the year, Santa Fe Group members and leaders continued to be recognized nationally for their leadership, service, and contributions to advancing oral health and overall health. The following highlights reflect the impact and influence of members across the profession, public health, academia, and policy leadership. The Santa Fe Group congratulates these distinguished leaders and celebrates their continued contributions to improving oral health and overall well-being.

LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENT



Nader Nadershahi Appointed to ADA Leadership Role

Dr. Nader Nadershahi was appointed Senior Vice President of Education/Professional Affairs at the American Dental Association (ADA), a national leadership role overseeing the Association's educational affairs, accreditation-related activities, continuing education, and professional development initiatives. A nationally respected leader in dental education and organized dentistry, Dr. Nadershahi brings decades of experience advancing innovation, equity, leadership, and academic excellence in oral health education. His appointment reflects a distinguished career dedicated to shaping the future of the dental profession and advancing oral health nationally.

HONORARY RECOGNITION

Ralph Fuccillo Receives Honorary Fellowship

Ralph Fuccillo received an Honorary Fellowship from the American College of Dentists (ACD) during the College's 2025 Annual Meeting and Convocation in Washington, D.C. The Honorary Fellowship is the highest distinction the ACD bestows upon non-dentists, recognizing individuals whose leadership, integrity, and service have made a lasting impact on oral health and public well-being. This recognition reflects Ralph's longstanding contributions to public health, philanthropy, policy leadership, and advancing collaboration to improve access to oral health care.



NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Judith E. Haber Named Living Legend



Dr. Judi Haber was honored as a Living Legend by the American Academy of Nursing (AAN), the Academy's highest designation recognizing extraordinary contributions to nursing and health care. Presented to a select group of nationally recognized leaders, the distinction honors individuals whose careers have had a lasting impact on health systems, policy, research, education, and patient care. Dr. Haber was recognized for her decades of leadership and innovation in nursing, mental health, interdisciplinary collaboration, and advancing the integration of oral and overall health.

PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP

Dushanka V. Kleinman Receives Distinguished Terrapin Award

Dr. Dushanka Kleinman was honored with the Distinguished Terrapin Award by the University of Maryland School of Public Health during its 2025 Dean's Recognition Ceremony. The award recognizes individuals whose leadership and service have made a lasting impact on public health and education. Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Kleinman has advanced oral health and public health through leadership roles in the U.S. Public Health Service, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. This recognition reflects decades of service, mentorship, and commitment to improving health and well-being.



SANTA FE GROUP FELLOW



Zachary A. Brian Named Santa Fe Group Fellow

Dr. Zach Brian was officially welcomed as a Fellow of the Santa Fe Group in recognition of his leadership and contributions to oral health policy, public health, academic leadership, and community-based care. A nationally respected advocate for equity and systemic change in oral health, Dr. Brian has helped advance innovative approaches to health policy and interdisciplinary collaboration through his work in education, service-learning, and the Coalition for Oral Health Policy (COHP). His appointment reflects the Santa Fe Group's continued commitment to forward-thinking leadership and advancing oral health for all.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



Wendy Mouradian Receives Lifetime Award

Dr. Wendy Mouradian received the 2025 Dean's Club Honorary Lifetime Award from the University of Washington School of Dentistry in recognition of her lasting contributions to dental education, leadership, advocacy, and community health. Presented during the School's Dean's Club Dinner in Seattle, the award honors individuals whose dedication and service have made a meaningful impact on the dental profession and academic community. Dr. Mouradian's distinguished career and commitment to advancing oral health continue to inspire colleagues, students, and leaders across the profession.



CLOSING REMARKS

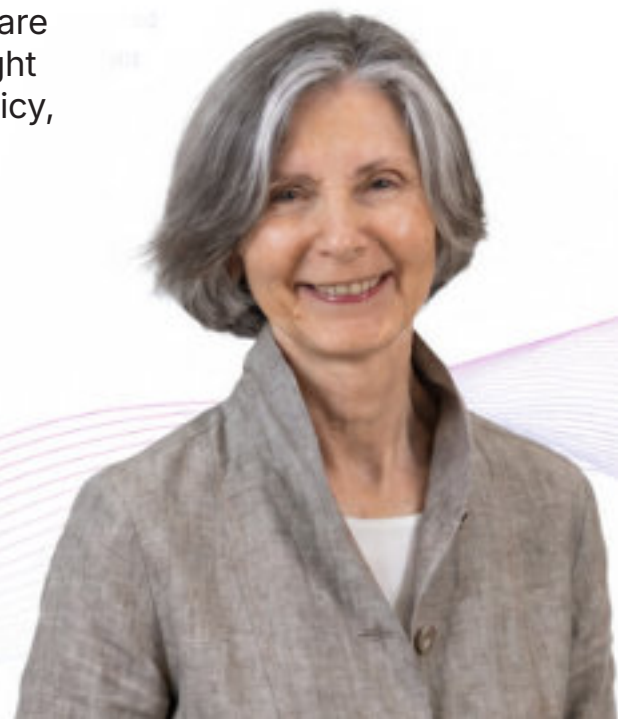
Looking forward to 2026:

Thank you to President Ralph Fuccillo for leading the Santa Fe Group through a careful review of our past and positioning us for the future.

Through our “maintaining momentum” environmental scan process we reviewed the impact of major challenges to health equity and whole person health through the lens of access to care, population health, workforce development, technology and integration. Together with close collaborations with partners and input from our Strategic Advisory Council and Santa Fe Group Circle members we began formal planning of our “Oral Health as a Pathway to Wellness and Longevity” initiative in the latter part of 2025.

Our initiative is based on the knowledge that a range of oral and general health integration efforts exist, and on the premise that a national network could serve to learn from these efforts and accelerate integration innovation and scale effective models. Given the upcoming national policy and election discourse in 2026 and 2028, an aligned network approach will unite diverse organizations and disciplines to elevate public awareness.

We believe oral and general health integration is both an economic value proposition and a moral imperative to promote health, prevent disease burden and advance health, wellbeing, and equity for individuals and communities. We look forward to the national convening, designed to mark the formal launch of this initiative, on June 22-24, 2026 in Washington, DC. At that convening a multi-sectoral group of senior leaders will experience a structured phased process to share evidence and opportunities and translate this insight into promising prototypes with implications for policy, practice, education, and collective action. Identified priority activities that show promise for collaborative action will be supported by virtual sessions and regional collaboratives to monitor progress and advance implementation through 2028.





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