



2026 ADEA Allied Dental Program Directors' Conference  
June 6–9, 2026  
Hilton  
Minneapolis, MN

Preliminary Meeting Agenda

Saturday, June 6

- 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.      **Registration**
- 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.      **ADEA Welcome Committee**  
New and returning directors are invited to stop by the welcome area to meet Planning Committee members, ADEA Council of Allied Dental Program Directors Administrative Board members and ADEA staff who will help orient them to the meeting and share useful ADEA resources.
- 10:00 – 10:30 a.m.      **Conference Connections Check-in  
(Pre-registration required)**  
Participants will check in at this table prior to orientation.
- 10:30 a.m. – noon      **Conference Connections Program**
- Noon – 2:45 p.m.      **Corporate Sponsor Meet and Greet With Small Plate Lunch  
(Registered attendees only)**  
*Please note: Small food items will be available throughout the entire meet and greet to allow you to simultaneously snack and visit with corporate sponsors.*  
  
Participants will have the opportunity to speak with members of the ADEA Corporate Council to discuss specific program needs and obtain educational materials.
- 1:00 – 2:15 p.m.      **Corporate Raffle Drawings  
(Must be present to win)**
- 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.      **Poster Presentations**
- 2:45 p.m.      **End of Corporate Sponsor Meet and Greet**
- 3:00 – 3:15 p.m.      **Welcome and Introductions**  
  
Speakers:  
Dianne Smallidge, RDH, Ed.D.

Chair, ADEA Council of Allied Dental Program Directors  
(ADEA CADPD)

Karen West, D.M.D., M.P.H.  
ADEA President and CEO

Cherae M. Farmer-Dixon, D.D.S., M.S.P.H.  
Chair of the ADEA Board of Directors

### Recognition of VIPs

3:15 – 3:20 p.m.

**Recognition of Corporate Sponsors and ADEA Staff**

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

**Keynote: Leading from the Middle**

Speaker:

Scott Mautz

CEO, *Profound Performance*

Trainer, Speaker, Course Instructor and Author

In this riveting, interactive 90-minute session, the audience discovers *why* being a middle manager, or leading from the middle of an organization, is so difficult, and why—when you excel at it—it's something to be so proud of. The audience learns of the importance of leading up, down and across an organization, and is introduced to the book that will serve as an ongoing resource to help them do just that. Then the session delves into the best overall practices of the most successful middle managers and ends with an inspiring call-to-action.

#### Learning Objectives

- Define a middle manager, why it applies to all of us and why it's something to be proud of.
- Discover a framework that explains why leading from the middle is so hard; to understand the difficulty is to navigate it more effectively.
- Describe and apply some of the very best practices of the most successful middle managers.
- Prepare a complete toolkit for excelling as a middle manager.

CE Credits: 1.5

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Scott Mautz Book Signing

5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

*PechaKucha Practice Run*

5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Reception and Dinner**  
(For attendees and one registered adult guest)

2026 Allied Dental Program Directors' Conference  
Preliminary Agenda

Sponsored by HuFriedyGroup

**Sunday, June 7**

7:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Registration**

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

**Networking Breakfast  
(For attendees only)**

8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

**Business Meeting**

Speaker:  
Dianne Smallidge, RDH, Ed.D.  
Chair, ADEA Council of Allied Dental Program Directors

9:30 – 9:35 a.m.

**Short Break (to allow set-up)**

9:35 – 10:20 a.m.

**PechaKucha**

Using a PechaKucha format, facilitators present a brief synopsis of empowerment activities at their campuses. Immediately following the presentations, attendees will participate in several small group facilitated discussions on the issues:

*Cultivating Thriving Students: Integrating Strengths, Emotions and Mental Fitness*

Speaker:  
Michelle Hurlbutt, M.S.D.H., D.H.Sc., RDH  
Dean and Professor, Dental Hygiene  
West Coast University

*Beyond the Classroom: Experiential Interprofessional Education in Public Health*

Speaker:  
Marion Manski, M.S., RDH  
Program Director, Dental Hygiene  
Virginia Commonwealth University

*Taking Clinic on the Road: Teledentistry and Mobile Dentistry*

Speakers:  
Krystal Quaynor, M.H.A., RDH  
Adjunct Professor  
Fones School of Dental Hygiene  
University of Bridgeport

Adriana Fields, M.S.H.A., RDH

2026 Allied Dental Program Directors' Conference  
Preliminary Agenda

Program Director, Dental Hygiene  
Fones School of Dental Hygiene  
University of Bridgeport

*Mr. Owens Goes to Dental Hygiene School*

Speaker:  
Leigh Ann Nurick, RDH, M.A., M.S.  
Interim Program Director, Dental Hygiene  
Caruth School of Dental Hygiene  
Texas A&M University College of Dentistry

*Beyond Teeth: Building Professional Identity Through Collaborative Allied Dental Care*

Speakers:  
Cyndee Stull, D.H.Sc., M.D.H., RDH  
Program Director, Division of Dental Hygiene  
University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Yvette Reibel, Ed.D., M.S.D.H., LDH  
M.S.D.H. Program Director  
University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

*Virtual Reality (VR)-based Simulation as Pedagogical Interventions*

Speakers:  
Victoria Patrounova, M.H.A., RDH  
Associate Professor  
UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

Khairunisa Hashmani, MA, Ed.D., RDH  
Associate Professor  
UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

Learning Objectives

- Identify issues affecting successful administration of allied dental programs.
- Discuss possible emerging educational strategies for the future.

CE Credits: 0.75

10:20 – 10:35 a.m.

**Break**

10:35 – 12:00 p.m.

**Pecha Pucha (continued)**

CE Credits: 1.42

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

**Networking Lunch**

(For attendees only)

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

**Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Dental Education: Innovation Through Practice**

Speaker:

Helen Compton

Executive Director

Research Institute for Digital Innovation in Learning

Old Dominion University

This workshop provides a current overview of how artificial intelligence can enhance dental education. Participants will examine leading AI tools and effective integration strategies for teaching, clinical instruction and administrative processes. Guided activities will allow attendees to experience AI in action and apply it to authentic contexts within dental programs.

Learning Objectives

- Identify current AI tools and approaches that support innovation in teaching, clinical education and program management within dental education.
- Apply strategies to integrate AI effectively into instructional design and assessment.
- Evaluate opportunities and challenges of AI implementation through guided discussion and hands-on activities that connect emerging technologies to authentic educational practice.

CE Credits: 1.0

2:00 – 2:15 p.m.

**Break**

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

**Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Dental Education: Innovation Through Practice (continued)**

CE Credits: 1.0

3:15 – 3:30 p.m.

**Break and Introduction to Discipline-specific Sessions and Room Assignments  
(Choose which session you'd like to attend)**

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

**Dental Assisting**

Facilitator:

Sherri Meyers, RDH, M.S., FADHA

Program Director, Dental Hygiene

Northampton Community College

Speakers:

Representative from Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the Dale Foundation

This session will present timely and critical issues relevant to dental assisting programs. These issues will be discussed at roundtables with reporting out of the discussions to the larger audience.

Learning Objectives

- Describe various issues affecting dental assisting programs.
- Discuss methods for implementing program changes based on current issues.

CE Credits: 1.50

**Dental Therapy**

Facilitator:

Amy Coplen, RDH, DT, EPDH, M.S.  
DH/DT Program Director  
Pacific University

This session will present timely and critical issues relevant to dental therapy programs. These issues will be discussed at roundtables with reporting out of the discussions to the larger audience.

Learning Objectives

- Describe various issues affecting dental therapy education.
- Discuss methods for implementing program changes based on current issues.

CE Credits: 1.50

**Bachelor of Science Degree Completion Programs and Graduate Dental Hygiene Programs**

Facilitator:

Jennifer Cullen, RDH, M.P.H.  
Program Director, Dental Hygiene  
University of Michigan School of Dentistry

Speakers:

JoAnne Gurenlian, RDH, M.S., Ph.D., AAFAAOM, FADHA  
Director, Education, Research & Advocacy  
American Dental Hygienists' Association

Leciel Bono, RDH-ER, M.S. Ed.D., FADHA  
Associate Professor and Department Chair  
Idaho State University

This session will present timely and critical issues relevant to Bachelor of Science degree completion programs and graduate dental hygiene programs. These issues will be discussed at roundtables with reporting out of the discussions to the larger audience.

Learning Objectives

- Describe various issues affecting Bachelor of Science degree completion education.
- Describe various current issues affecting graduate dental hygiene programs.
- Discuss methods for implementing program changes based on current issues.

CE Credits: 1.50

**Dental Hygiene**

Facilitator:

Dianne Smallidge, RDH, Ed.D.  
DH Program Director  
University of New England

Speakers:

Sarah Ostrander, RDH, M.S., D.H.Sc.  
Director

Council on Dental Education and Licensure and Coalition for  
Modernizing Dental Licensure

David Waldschmidt, Ph.D.

Senior Director, Testing Services  
Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations

This session will present timely and critical issues relevant to dental hygiene programs. These issues will be discussed at roundtables with reporting out of the discussions to the larger audience.

Learning Objectives

- Describe various issues affecting dental hygiene education.
- Discuss methods for implementing program changes based on current issues.

CE Credits: 1.50

**Dental Laboratory Technology**

Facilitator:

Twyla Rader, LDH, B.S., M.Ed.  
Program Director, Dental Hygiene  
Indiana University School of Dentistry

This session will present timely and critical issues relevant to dental laboratory technology programs. These issues will be discussed at roundtables with reporting out of the discussions to the larger audience.

Learning Objectives

- Describe various issues affecting dental hygiene education.
- Discuss methods for implementing program changes based on current issues.

CE Credits: 1.50

5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

**Networking Reception**  
(For attendees and one registered adult guest)  
Sponsored by A-dec

**Monday, June 8**

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

**Networking Breakfast**  
(For attendees only)

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**Reflections on the Accreditation Practice**  
*(Closed Session—participants may only be allied dental program directors)*

Speaker:

Sherin Tooks, Ed.D., M.S.

Senior Chief, Knowledge, Engagement and Development  
ADEA

Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accreditation is a necessary process for allied dental programs wanting to be accredited. It is often one of the most dreaded processes for most allied dental program directors. This workshop will walk participants through some of the more challenging aspects of CODA Self-Study preparation, reports and site visits. Ways of communicating and corresponding with CODA staff will also be discussed.

10:30 – 10:45 p.m.

**Break**

10:45 – noon

**Reimagining Dental Care: Leadership, Innovation and Collaboration for a New Era**

Speaker:

Amber Lombardi, IPDH, B.S.D.H.

Founder/CEO  
Mainly Teeth

In this session, we will explore how entrepreneurial thinking, visionary and servant leadership and cross-professional collaboration can transform the landscape of dental care. We will discuss how to responsibly practice to the fullest scope, build interdisciplinary partnerships, implement innovative care models and leverage data and technology to drive systems change. We'll also examine the role educators play in preparing future dental professionals to engage in advocacy, legislative participation and non-traditional pathways to care. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to cultivate a culture of innovation, support emerging leaders and expand access to care in their communities.

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify practical ways to integrate innovation, risk-tolerance and growth-focused thinking in academic and clinical settings with an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Collaboratively develop a way to expand access to care through interprofessional practice, cross-training and working to the fullest scope of practice using a leadership framework, including visionary and servant leadership.
- Develop strategies to inspire and equip students and professionals to participate in legislative advocacy and system-change.

CE Credits: 1.25

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

#### Lunch

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

#### Leveraging Leadership and Advocacy

##### Speakers:

Denise McKinney, RDH, M.S., Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, Graduate Program Director  
Old Dominion University

Bridgette DeHart, J.D.  
Director, Federal Government Relations and Advocacy  
ADEA

Phillip Mauller, M.P.S.  
Senior Director of State Relations and Advocacy  
ADEA

Understanding the importance and interconnectedness of advocacy at the federal, state, local, institutional and professional levels is essential for leading the future leader of allied dental education.

Dental hygiene has been dealing with various issues at the federal and state levels, while dental assisting is trying to promote a new three-phase professional model. Participants will be apprised of current and proposed policies impacting allied dental education. Additionally, participants will receive resources to enhance advocacy efforts within their allied dental curriculum.

#### Learning Objectives

- Identify resources to integrate advocacy efforts in the allied dental education curriculum.
- Discuss current policies impacting allied dental education and patients' access to care.
- Apply leadership skills to advocate for or against policies impacting allied dental education at local and state levels, and professional associations.

CE Credits 1.5

2:30 – 2:45 p.m.

**Break**

3:30 p.m.

**Explore Minneapolis/Dinner on your own**

### **Tuesday, June 9**

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

**Networking Breakfast**

8:30 a.m.

**Closing Remarks**

8:30 a.m. – noon

**CODA Program Director Updates**

Katie Navickas, B.S.D.H., M.A.  
CODA

Jamie Hernandez, M.S.  
CODA

This session will be conducted by CODA Allied Dental Education staff and will include:

- Program Director 101,
- How to prepare CODA reports and
- Question and answer session.

Noon

**Adjourn**

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#### **Disclaimer**

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Preliminary Agenda*

The purpose of this program is to educate and inform. Information provided in this program is not a substitute for professional care and is not intended for use in the diagnosis or treatment of individual conditions. Guests at this presentation express their own experience, opinions and conclusions, which do not necessarily reflect those of their employer or any organization or group with whom they may be affiliated. Expressed viewpoints and opinions by speaker(s), presenter(s), guest(s) and/or facilitator(s) are also not those of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), ADEA staff or the ADEA Board of Directors. The mention of any product, service, organization, activity or therapy should not be construed as an endorsement by ADEA.

**CE Information**

ADEA is an ADA CERP recognized provider.

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ADEA designates this activity for 9.92 continuing education credits.

CE credit is awarded for overall participation in the ADEA Allied Dental Program Directors' Conference.

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Recognition Program

All speakers agree that neither they nor members of their immediate family have any financial relationships with commercial entities that may be relevant to their presentation.

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