



**ADEA Allied Dental New Program Director Academy
Workshop
June 5, 2026**

Workshop Description

There are ever increasing numbers of new allied dental program directors leading all four allied dental disciplines: dental assisting, dental hygiene, dental laboratory technology and dental therapy. Many new program directors have not had the opportunity to develop skills to lead departments nor to handle the large workload of potentially new tasks they may never have done before. This workshop will begin to expose new program directors to challenging tasks faced daily, while also providing resources to utilize in these challenges. Helpful insights into meeting Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) requirements are included. New allied dental program directors (three or fewer years in the role) will meet other new directors and discuss challenges common in either established or developing programs.

Delivery Method: Live, In-person

Learning Objectives

- Create networks within the community of program directors.
- Review resources to enhance performance as a program director.
- Discover how to develop communication up and down the chain of command.
- Evaluate experiences as a new program director with other directors.
- Accurately prepare a CODA annual report or self-study assessment.

Friday, June 5

7:30 – 8:30 a.m.

Networking Breakfast and Registration

8:30 – 9:15 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

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

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

9:15 – 10:00 a.m.

Keynote

**Untapping the Leader Within:
Essential Qualities of Successful Leaders**

Rebecca Wilder, RDH, M.S., ICF-ACC,
FAADH Adjunct Professor, Office of the
Dean
Former Associate Dean for Professional Development
and Faculty Affairs
Executive Leadership Coach
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Adams School
of Dentistry

This keynote will kick off participants' journey into the exciting world of leadership development. Being a leader is a privilege, yet not without challenges. New leaders can be particularly perplexed as they face rapid changes from shifting workforce needs, new technologies and competing needs of students, staff and faculty.

This keynote explores the mindset and essential qualities needed to lead with clarity and confidence in allied dental education programs. Participants will hear examples of leadership strategies, including how to build an atmosphere of trust, enthusiasm and productivity. Professional development enhancement through mentoring, coaching, faculty development and building emotional intelligence will also be highlighted.

Learning Objectives

- Identify key qualities that characterize effective leaders in allied dental education.
- Describe how mentoring and faculty development contribute to sustained program growth and leadership success.
- Discuss how emotional intelligence impacts the ability to strengthen communication and interpersonal effectiveness.

CE Credits: 0.75

10:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Break

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.

Resources (ADEA and Others)

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

Leslie Payne
Manager, Allied Application Service
ADEA

ADEA, as well as other national associations, provide valuable resources for developing leaders. This session will provide a review and list of these resources, including the benefits of using ADEA Dental Hygiene Centralized Application Service (ADEA DHCAS®).

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast the leadership development programs offered by ADEA with those of other national associations to determine alignment with personal and institutional goals.
- Create a personalized action plan for engaging with one or more national leadership development opportunities in the next 6–12 months.
- Evaluate the benefits of using ADEA DHCAS® for admissions into your program.

CE Credits: 0.5

10:45 – 11:30 a.m.

Your Team

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

Hema Udupa, D.D.S., M.S., DIP. ABOMR
Dental Assisting Program Director
Metropolitan Community College – Penn Valley
Health Science Institute

This session will focus on dealing with challenging relationships in the workplace. Ways to promote cooperation and collaboration among program personnel will be discussed. New work in a hybrid environment will also be addressed. At the end of the session, program directors will be able to manage challenging interpersonal situations in the workplace.

Learning Objectives

- Implement tools and practices that encourage cooperation, shared goals and open communication among team members.
- Describe the unique challenges of managing difficult interactions in a hybrid work environment.
- Develop practical approaches for maintaining positive team relationships and morale across in-person and remote settings.

CE Credits: 0.75

11:30 – noon

Roundtable Discussion

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

This interactive small-group session provides a space for participants to reflect on both the keynote speaker's content as well as the information presented on leading and interacting with your team. Through peer sharing, participants will deepen their self-awareness, gain

insight into the diverse strengths of others and consider how to leverage individual and collective strengths for greater impact.

Learning Objectives

- Reflect on how their unique strengths influence their behavior with team members.
- Learn from peers by discussing similarities and differences in strengths within the group.
- Explore how individual strengths can complement others in team dynamics.

CE Credits: 0.5

noon – 1:00 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Communication and Crisis Leadership

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and Faculty Development
ADEA

Misty Mesimer, Ph.D., RDH, CDA
Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene Program Director
Germanna Community College

Excellent verbal and nonverbal communication leads to a healthy workplace culture and positive team experiences. Nonverbal communication is every bit as important when conveying a message and carrying on a conversation, especially in the workplace. Communication and its relationship with emotional intelligence will be addressed.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the impact of effective verbal and nonverbal communication on workplace culture and team dynamics.
- Demonstrate strategies for aligning verbal and nonverbal cues to enhance clarity and trust in professional interactions.
- Apply tools that encourage open dialogue and promote mutual respect.

CE Credits: 1.0

2:00 – 2:45 p.m.

Students

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

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

Allied dental programs have both traditional and non-traditional students, as well as students from multiple generations spanning multiple ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Serving student needs while also maintaining high standards and keeping students motivated to perform are challenges for both faculty and program directors. This session will aid in student management for the courses that program directors teach as well as dealing with difficult scenarios presented by students to leadership.

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the unique needs, expectations and learning styles of traditional and non-traditional students across multiple generations, cultures and backgrounds.
- Apply practical approaches to motivate students and encourage consistent performance across varied learning environments.
- Develop proactive communication and support strategies to manage student challenges both in the classroom and at the leadership level.

CE Credits: 0.75

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Panel of Experts

Misty Mesimer, Ph.D., RDH, CDA
Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene Program Director

Germanna Community College

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

Hema Udupa, D.D.S., M.S., DIP. ABOMR
Dental Assisting Program Director
Metropolitan Community College – Penn Valley Health
Science Institute

This session involves a Q&A with a panel of three expert program directors: one from dental assisting and two from dental hygiene. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with the panel during a live Q&A gaining insights into best practices in directing allied dental education. This serves as a valuable opportunity to connect, learn and ask the questions that matter most.

Learning Objectives

- Identify key responsibilities and challenges faced by program directors in dental assisting and dental hygiene education programs.
- Engage in informed dialogue with experienced program directors to clarify real-world approaches to leadership and problem-solving in academic settings.
- Apply insights gained from the panel to enhance leadership effectiveness within their own educational or professional environments.

CE Credits: 1.0

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Surviving CODA

Rebecca Stolberg, RDH, M.S.D.H.
Senior Vice President, Allied Dental Education and
Faculty Development
ADEA

Misty Mesimer, Ph.D., RDH, CDA
Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene Program Director
Germanna Community College

Accreditation of allied dental programs is required and often a large form of stress for program directors. This session will allow program directors to learn effective ways to prepare for accreditation site visits and to collect data needed for annual reporting to CODA. Program directors will learn that CODA can be an asset to their program rather than being a source of fear.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the role and purpose of CODA in the accreditation of allied dental programs.
- Identify the key components of preparing for a CODA site visit, including timelines, documentation and team readiness.
- Explain the process for collecting and organizing data required for annual CODA reporting.
- Reframe perceptions of CODA by recognizing its role as a supportive framework for program quality rather than a source of stress.

CE Credits: 1.50

5:15 p.m.

Review of Phases II and III

5:30 p.m.

Reception

NOTE: Immediately following the program, participants will receive an online program evaluation. This feedback will help planning staff continue to improve the program. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Disclaimer

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

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ADEA designates this activity for up to 17.50 continuing education credits.

CE credit is awarded for overall participation in the ADEA Allied Dental New Program Director Academy.

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