

# TDA TODAY

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## Shaping the Future of Dental Care in Texas: TDA’s Legislative Victories for 2025

By Diane Rhodes, TDA Senior Policy Manager

The 89th Texas Legislative Session has officially concluded. The Texas Dental Association (TDA) is pleased to report that TDA achieved significant legislative victories on behalf of its dentists and the patients they serve across Texas. A comprehensive “Legislative Report Card” detailing the outcomes of the session will be mailed to you in the coming weeks, so please keep an eye out for it. In the meantime, here are some key highlights of TDA’s advocacy work during the 89th Session—successes made possible by the steadfast commitment of our leadership and legislative teams.

We’re proud to report that TDA secured several key victories during the 89th Legislative Session—advancing priorities that directly benefit our members and their patients. Here’s a look at what we accomplished together:

- **Medicaid Dental Fee Increases**  
We secured approximately \$140 million in new funding to increase reimbursement rates for frequently used Medicaid dental codes, providing meaningful support to both providers and patients.
- **DIY Orthodontic Appliances**  
We successfully advocated for sensible legislation that requires an in-person examination by a Texas-licensed dentist before selling orthodontic appliances, enhancing patient safety and care quality.
- **Pediatric Anesthesia Coverage**  
We helped pass a law requiring state-regulated insurance plans to cover general anesthesia when medically necessary for dental treatment in children under 13.
- **In-Network/Out-of-Network Payment Protections**  
We stopped legislation that would have eliminated equal payment protections for dentists treating patients outside their insurance network.
- **Dental Licensure Compact**  
We opposed legislation that would have allowed out-of-state dentists to practice in Texas without licensure from the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners—preserving the integrity of professional standards.
- **Anti-Fluoridation Measures**  
We successfully blocked proposals to ban community water fluoridation, maintaining a proven public health safeguard.

These victories were made possible through the dedicated efforts of TDA’s Council on Legislative, Regulatory, and Governmental Affairs and our advocacy team. Most of all, thank you to our members—your commitment was essential to these successes. Together, we made a real impact on dentistry in Texas. ✉

## Dr Carmen Smith Receives TDA Gold Medal Award

Carmen Smith, DDS, of Dallas is this year’s recipient of the TDA Gold Medal for Distinguished Service, the highest achievement within the Association. Dr Smith is the 29th TDA member to be so honored by her peers, who gave her a standing ovation at the awards ceremony held during the May 2025 meeting of the 152nd House of Delegates at San Antonio.

The Association’s Gold Medal is presented once a year to deserving individuals who meet certain criteria, including leadership service to the TDA and ADA, contributions to his or her local dental society, commitment to organized dentistry, teaching, and community service.

TDA President Dr Georganne McCandless presented Dr Smith with the award, introducing her as a steadfast leader in organized dentistry. “This honoree has a career that isn’t just impressive on paper but has genuinely made a lasting impression. Let’s just say if leadership and service were an Olympic sport, tonight’s honoree would be taking home gold every time.”

Since Dr Smith joined organized dentistry in 1996, she has served her community and patients at the local, state, and national level. She was president and chair of several committees and councils at the Dallas County Dental Society. At TDA, Dr Smith currently serves as the secretary-treasurer and has been a delegate for many years while also chairing and serving a number of committees, including the Awards Committee and Strategic Planning Committee. At ADA, she was a member of the Council on Membership, Institute on Diversity in Leadership, Committee for Continuing Education, and is currently a delegate representing the 15th District.

Dr Smith is a past president of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center Baylor College of Dentistry Alumni Association, and a fellow of the American College of Dentists, the International College of Dentists, and Pierre Fauchard Academy.

Civically, she has been involved in the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce, the Junior League of Dallas, the Dallas Running Club, and St Luke Community United Methodist Church. She was a CASA volunteer, is a member of the Village Giving Circle and a dental provider for Attitudes and Attire.

Read more about Dr Smith’s story in the November 2025 *Texas Dental Journal*. ➡



## Dr Tanya Sue Maestas Named TDA Rising Star

TDA President Dr Georganne McCandless presented Dr Tanya Sue Maestas of El Paso District Dental Society with the Rising Star of the Lone Star award during the House of Delegates at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in May 2025.

The Rising Star of the Lone Star Award is given to an outstanding new dentist, recognizing his or her dedication and drive to honor the field of dentistry. This award is peer-reviewed and the criteria includes that the individual must be less than 10 years out of dental school; must be a TDA/ADA member in good standing; and must exhibit excellence in one or more of the following areas: science, research, and education, practice excellence, philanthropy, leadership, and/or advocacy.

Dr Maestas is a 2018 graduate of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry.

She devotes herself to public health as the dental director of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso, providing care to the Tigua Indian community. She is a parttime clinical faculty member at the Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine.

She has served in many leadership positions within organized dentistry, including the American Dental Association Council on Dental Education & Licensure and the ADA Council on Communications. She participated in the ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership and was an ADA Success speaker. She is a delegate to the TDA House of Delegates and was a consultant to the TDA Council on Membership, New Dentists, and Students and a new dentist liaison to the TDA Council on Dental Licensing, Standards, and Education. She served on the board for the El Paso District Dental Society and was president of the American Student Dental Association.

Dr Maestas was named Texas New Dentist of the Year in Georgetown in 2023 and ADA 10 Under 10 Dentist in 2022. She is an inductee of the Pierre Fauchard Academy and the International College of Dentists. In 2018, she received the TDA Outstanding Senior Dental Student Award.

Civically, she traveled to Honduras to provide dental care and has volunteered at the ASDA Houston Food Bank, ASDA Family Picnic, UTSD Give Kids a Smile, Hispanic Student Dental Association Service Event at El Centro, plus much more.

Congratulations on this deserving honor, Dr Maestas! ➡





# Medicaid Update

## UPDATE: TDA SECURES HISTORIC MEDICAID DENTAL FEE INCREASES

As outlined in the legislative update, TDA successfully advocated for a reallocation of Medicaid dental funding, increasing to approximately \$140 million in combined federal and state funds. This marks the first major boost in Medicaid dental reimbursement rates since the 2007 Frew settlement.

The additional funding will be directed toward a targeted group of dental procedure codes, including: D0120, D0150, D0210, D0220, D0230, D0272, D0274, D0330, D1110, D1120, D1206, D1208, D1351, D1510, D1516, D1517, D2140, D2150, D2160, D2330, D2331, D2332, D2335, D2391, D2392, D2393, D2751, D2930, D3120, D3220, D3310, D3320, D3330, D7140, D7240, D9248, D2931, D7111, D7210, D7220, D7230, D2750, D2752, D2790, D2933, D2934, D2940, and D9243.

These procedure codes span diagnostic, radiographic, preventive, restorative, surgical, and supplemental dental services within the Texas Medicaid Dental Program. Enhancing reimbursement for these codes is a critical step toward improving provider participation and expanding access to care for Medicaid patients.

While the unbundling of the First Dental Home program will remain in place, all other March 1 dental payment adjustments will be reversed, and those funds will be redirected to the designated procedure codes.

TDA is collaborating with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to ensure the reallocation is carried out per legislative intent. Updates will be shared in upcoming issues of *TDA Today* as HHSC proceeds with implementation. The agency is currently on an accelerated timeline to roll out the new rates by September 1, 2025.

### Provider Enrollment Revalidation Flexibilities Extended to November 30, 2025

The Texas Medicaid & Healthcare Partnership (TMHP) and HHSC recently extended certain provider enrollment flexibilities through **November 30, 2025**.

#### Important Highlights:

- Extended Revalidation Deadline:** Providers scheduled for revalidation between **December 13, 2024**, and **November 30, 2025**, will now have an additional **180 calendar days** to complete their revalidation in the Provider Enrollment and Management System (PEMS).
- Retroactive Enrollment Opportunity:** Providers who were disenrolled between **November 1, 2023**, and **December 12, 2024**, and complete revalidation by November 30, 2025, may be eligible to have their enrollment retroactively reinstated for up to **one year**.

For more details and access to provider support materials, including guidance on claims reprocessing, visit: <https://www.tmhp.com/news/2025-05-29-revalidation-due-dates-and-retroactive-enrollment-period-gap-closures-extended-for-provider-resources>, including information on claims reprocessing. ■

# Hundreds of Students Graduate from Texas Dental Schools in May

## Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine Marks Inaugural Commencement

The 4 Texas dental schools celebrated their graduates at commencements throughout May, with almost 500 students receiving their dental and dental hygiene degrees.

Notably, 40 students received their Doctor of Dental Medicine Degrees from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine (WLHSDM), the state’s first new dental school in 50 years, at its inaugural graduation on May 19.

WLHSDM opened its doors in July 2021, which required many prospective students, including its current graduates, to interview in 2020 while the world was adjusting to COVID-19, according to a news release issued by the school.

The school was established to address a severe dentist shortage in Far West Texas, where El Paso County had only 1 dentist for every 4,840 residents, compared to the national average of 1 dentist per 1,638 residents, according to the release.

“We’re seeing the beginning of a significant shift in dental care access for our region,” said Dr Richard Black, founding dean of WLHSDM. “Research shows that approximately 75% of dental

school graduates establish practices near their alma mater, which positions us to dramatically improve access to dental care in west Texas.”

The school reports that 18% of the inaugural class are from El Paso, and 30% of all class graduates will stay in the El Paso Borderplex to start their careers. In total, 43% will practice dentistry in west Texas.

In addition to their DMD, WLHSDM graduates received a Community Health Certificate with 15 hours toward a Master of Public Health degree. Four students received both a DMD and MPH through a partnership with the UTHealth Houston School of Public Health. WLHSDM is the only dental school in the nation that offers this certificate fully integrated within the school.



WLHSDM Dean Richard Black and Texas Tech Health El Paso President Dr Richard Lange present Woody L. Hunt, the WLHSDM namesake, with a commemorative plaque for the inaugural graduating class.



The inaugural graduating class of the WLHSDM, the state’s first new dental school in 50 years.

## Texas A&M University College of Dentistry

Several years of study and work led to success for 170 dental students, dental hygiene students, and graduate students who earned their degrees on May 25 from Texas A&M University College of Dentistry in Dallas.

The procession was led by Teachers of the Year Dr Amp W. Miller III, professor in the comprehensive dentistry department, and Professor Brandy S. Cowen, clinical assistant professor and clinic coordinator in the dental hygiene program.

The dental college celebrates its 120th anniversary this year.



Dr Larry Tadlock, department head of orthodontics (center), surrounded by new graduates Eric Wong, Emilee Dudley, Kelly Doan, Elizabeth Celani, Sara Soofian, and Jared Fletcher.



Texas A&M College of Dentistry Teachers of the Year Dr Amp W. Miller III and Professor Brandy S. Cowen led the graduation procession.

## The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio School of Dentistry

At UTHealth San Antonio School of Dentistry, 177 students graduated, which included 108 Doctor of Dental Surgery and 23 Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene degrees, during a school-wide commencement ceremony on May 17.

“You are choosing a path of discipline, empathy, and service—a path that calls you to heal, to discover, and to lead. Because of your choice, the world is already better tonight,” said Francisco G. Cigarroa, MD, the university’s senior executive vice president for Health Affairs and Health System, one of the 3 keynote speakers at the event.

## University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston

At UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry, 173 graduates received their degrees on May 15 at NRG Arena in Houston.

It was the school’s 120th commencement ceremony, and the address was delivered by Rita M. Cammarata, DDS ’96, former president of the TDA. With a background as a dental hygienist and recently retired pediatric dentist, she understands the dedication and effort required to reach the pivotal moment of graduation.

Speaking to the adage of see one, do one, teach one, Dr Cammarata charged the graduates to participate in many different experiences so that dentistry, dental hygiene, or their dental specialty becomes so second nature that they can explain it clearly to others.

She also reminded the graduates not to forget that their experiences extend beyond themselves.



UTHealth San Antonio School of Dentistry graduates at their ceremony on May 17.

“You are all about to create an experience each and every day for strangers. People who will respect you because they call you doctor, but whose trust you will need to gain and nurture through each experience you two are sharing together. Trust me when I say these shared experiences you create with your patients and staff can significantly influence your professional success, so approach each day with the mindset to succeed.”



Dr Rita M. Cammarata, former TDA president, delivers the commencement address at UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry.



(L-R) UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry graduates Drs Peyton Garnett, Cody Attack, Colby Allen, Kaden Ockey, Keaton Moore, Paxton Larson, and Colton Sheperd.



# COMPONENT CORNER

Each month, we aim to spotlight a state component society and the events happening in the area. For more information or to let us know what is happening in your TDA component society, please email Managing Editor Nicole Scott, [nscott@tda.org](mailto:nscott@tda.org).

## SPOTLIGHT: Dallas County Dental Society and Greater Houston Dental Society

### DCDS Celebrates Leadership, Legacy, and Laughter at 2025 Installation Dinner

On May 15, the Dallas County Dental Society (DCDS) welcomed members, families, and honored guests to its annual Installation Dinner and Ceremony at the Hilton Dallas Park Cities. The evening celebrated the service of outgoing leaders and formally installed the 2025–26 Board of Directors, committee members, and officers.

Dr Celeste Latham opened the program with a warm welcome and introduced distinguished guests, including ADA Past President Dr Gary Rainwater and Texas A&M College of Dentistry Dean Lily Garcia. Past Presidents of DCDS were also recognized for their continued service.

As dessert was served, Dr Drew Vanderbrook led the awards presentation, honoring:

- New Dentist of the Year: Dr Jon Vogel
- Texas A&M Faculty Member Award: Dr Simmi Patel
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr Bill Gerlach
- Dentist of the Year: Dr Michael Rainwater
- President’s Award: Dr Chi Trieu



Dr Brad Crump presented the President’s gavel to Dr Andrew Read-Fuller as the new President took office.



Dr Read-Fuller’s young son quietly slipped onto the stage and began showing off his dance steps during his father’s presidential address.



Dr Michael Rainwater was named the 2025 DCDS Dentist of the Year, following in the footsteps of his father, Dr Gary Rainwater, who earned the same honor in 1987.

### Greater Houston Dental Society

On May 15, the Greater Houston Dental Society installed its 2025-26 Officers and Directors at Joystix Games with a “Back to the Future” theme.

Attendees dressed in ‘80s attire and enjoyed retro arcade games and snacks. 🎮



Dr Tommy Harrison installs 2025-26 President Dr Joel Vela.



The 2025-26 GHDS Board of Directors: (L-R): Drs Tommy Harrison, Katie Stuchlik, Adam Shisler, Eva Boldridge, Michael Chan, Anna Munne, Joseph Bernier, Spencer Wood, David Montz, Maria Loza, Alicia Valentini, and Becky Wang.

## PERKS PROGRAM

value for your profession

### \$6,671 Average Annual Savings on Card Processing through TDA Perks Partner

TDA-member practices save an average of 28% annually on credit card processing, compared with what they paid with their prior processors, through TDA Perks partner Best Card.

Best Card offers a wide range of processing solutions—from standalone terminals to online and mobile solutions—and options for posting payments into your dental software.

It offers EMV and contactless-capable terminals with a 1-to-2-year warranty; and its most popular terminal starts at \$299 for TDA members. Notably, the program’s well-loved customer support team is a phone call away.

Request a detailed savings analysis from Best Card by sending a recent credit card processing statement via email to [Compare@BestCardTeam.com](mailto:Compare@BestCardTeam.com). For more information, visit [tdaperks.com](https://tdaperks.com) (Financial & Real Estate) or call Best Card at (877) 739-3952. 📞

## Texas A&M University College of Dentistry Inducts Three into Hall of Fame



Drs Amp W. Miller III, Ernestine S. Lacy, and John S. Findley are inducted into the Texas A&M University College of Dentistry Hall of Fame.

Texas A&M University College of Dentistry in Dallas honored 3 new Hall of Fame inductees on April 30. Drs Amp W. Miller III, Ernestine S. Lacy, and John S. Findley each continuing to serve and build the dental profession.

“We are the crown jewel for A&M in Dallas,” said Dr. Lily T. García, dean. “I extend my deep appreciation to those who advance our college as a highly regarded academic dental institution, known for clinical excellence, high-impact research and outstanding service through which our students learn through direct patient care.”

A fixture at the dental college, Miller began teaching part-time in 1973 in the fixed prosthodontics department at what was then Baylor College of Dentistry, his alma mater. He’s taught a range of courses, from preclinical to graduate prosthodontics. Currently, Miller teaches fixed prosthodontics, operative dentistry and removable prosthodontics in the predoctoral program and is part of the advanced education general dentistry program and graduate prosthodontics program. He serves as interim assistant department head of comprehensive dentistry.

Miller earned his dental degree in 1973 and a certificate in prosthodontics in 1980. He also served as interim chair of restorative services, director of curriculum and briefly as interim associate dean for clinical affairs.

Students recognized his outstanding teaching with Teacher of the Year awards in 1992, 2005, 2011, 2018 and this year.

A born educator, Lacy began her professional career with a bachelor’s in mathematics and minors in French and physics from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She taught high school math and science for 17 years before entering what was then Baylor College of Dentistry, where she earned a dental degree and an AEGD certificate.

Lacy became an assistant professor in the restorative sciences department. She’s also served as director of academic programs, director of student services and executive director of student development. Lacy is associate dean for student affairs and a tenured professor in the comprehensive dentistry department.

She’s served as principal investigator and project director since 1999, overseeing nearly \$16 million in grant funding that supports the dental college’s Bridge to Dentistry pipeline programs. Under her leadership, the dental college was recently awarded its third consecutive 5-year Center of Excellence grant from the Health and Human Services Administration.

On a national level, Lacy facilitated the American Dental Education Association’s Admissions Workshops and served as a reviewer for the *Journal of Dental Education* and HRSA grant applications.

Findley, a practicing dentist in Plano and a 1970 graduate of what was then Baylor University College of Dentistry, also studied at what was then North Texas State University, Southern Methodist University, and the United States Air Force Academy. He served 8 years in the Air Force and the Air Force Reserve.

Among his many leadership roles, Findley was the 2008 president and subsequent interim executive director of the American Dental Association. Prior to that, he was a trustee from the 15th district (Texas) and chaired numerous committees, including the Commission on Dental Education and Licensure, Dental Practice, Scientific Affairs, and Government Affairs. He also served as president of Texas Dental Association and the Dallas County Dental Society. Findley served as legislative chairman of TDA.

The mayor of Cross Roads from 1992 to 1994, Findley also served on the town council. Additionally, he served as president of the Plano Rotary Club and was a board member of the Plano Chamber of Commerce and the Plano YMCA.

He continues to serve as the community dental health officer for Dallas County Dental Society and recently completed his term as chair of Baylor Oral Health Foundation Nominating Committee (2020-23).

Findley was honored with Distinguished Alumnus recognition from Baylor College of Dentistry in 1996 and the Texas Dental Association’s Gold Medal for Distinguished Service in 2015. 🏆





# TSBDE Rule Update

This recurring section is designed to help TDA members keep up with important Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) rules, other regulations, and state law affecting their practices.

## Texas State Board of Dental Examiners Rule Adoptions

The following Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) rule adoptions were published on May 16, 2025, in the *Texas Register* with an effective date of May 22, 2025.

### 22 Texas Administrative Code §107.400, Collection and Reporting of Enforcement and Licensing Data

The amended rule requires a yearly report to the Board instead of a quarterly report because a yearly report will provide a better snapshot of the data. The adopted amendment updates the rule to reflect that the Dental Board no longer issues administrative citations, but rather administrative penalties. The adopted amendment also corrects a punctuation error.

### 22 Texas Administrative Code §108.8, Records of the Dentist

The amended rule removes the language that the use of radiographs should be in accordance with American Dental Association guidelines, and instead requires dentists to use radiographs in accordance with the minimum standard of care.

### 22 Texas Administrative Code §108.52, Names and Responsibilities

The adopted amendment specifies that dental specialties are approved by the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards. The proposed amendment also includes grammar changes.

## Fingerprint Requirement for License Renewal

Starting January 1, 2026, all license holders who do not have a State Identification (SID) number on file with the TSBDE will be required to complete a fingerprint-based background check before they can renew their licenses. The SID functions as a unique identifier used during criminal background checks, particularly for professional licensing and employment.

**Many individuals licensed before 2016** may not have an SID number recorded in the agency’s licensing system. Without an SID, the agency is unable to receive alerts about any criminal history tied to that licensee.

**If your license record does not include fingerprint data, you will receive a notification 90 days before your license expires**, delivered through the Dental Board’s online licensing portal. This requirement is supported by the Texas Government Code (411.12504) and Dental Board rules (101.1(c)(6), 103.1(c)(10), and 114.2(b)(3)), which authorize fingerprint collection for criminal background checks.

To assist with this new requirement, the TSBDE is updating its website to include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section. **Licensees are kindly asked not to contact the Dental Board to check whether their fingerprint or SID information is on file, as the system will automatically notify individuals who need to take action.**

## Need Feedback: March 2025 Report from the Advisory Committee on Dental Anesthesia (ACDA)


The Advisory Committee on Dental Anesthesia (ACDA) released its latest report, summarizing findings from 16 cases evaluated during Fiscal Year 2024 (September 1, 2023—August 31, 2024). All cases involved sedation- or anesthesia-related deaths or incidents, as defined by 22 Texas Administrative Code §100.12(c)(1). The patients involved ranged in age from 4 to 79 years.

The trends identified in this year’s report remain consistent with those of previous years and highlight 3 primary areas of concern:

- 1. Patient Selection**  
Adverse events were attributed to poor patient selection in 5 of the 16 cases reviewed. Contributing factors included:
  - o Proceeding with treatment despite the presence of poorly controlled comorbidities.
  - o Over-reliance on medical consultations as definitive clearance, rather than incorporating them into a comprehensive risk assessment.
  - o Incomplete medical consultation documentation, omitting critical details such as procedure duration, type and dosage of local anesthetic, and postoperative medications.
  - o Insufficient training or improper delegation of consult-related communications to administrative personnel.
- 2. Local Anesthetic Dosage**  
Two cases involved administration of local anesthetic in excess of the maximum recommended dose, resulting in adverse outcomes.
- 3. Recordkeeping**  
The ACDA identified deficiencies in clinical documentation across several cases, underscoring the need for improved recordkeeping practices.

The full report is available online at: <https://tsbde.texas.gov/78i8ljhb/ACDA-Report-2025.pdf>.

**TDA invites your feedback on the trends and recommendations presented in the report. Please submit your comments to Diane Rhodes at [drhodes@tda.org](mailto:drhodes@tda.org).**

*For more information on the TSBDE, please contact TDA Senior Policy Manager Diane Rhodes at 512-443-3675 ext. 122, [drhodes@tda.org](mailto:drhodes@tda.org).* 



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Tired of shaking your Magic 8 Ball to find answers to complex regulatory and compliance issues?

Maybe it's time to "Ask Diane"



*TDA Members can submit questions via [tda.org/askdiane](http://tda.org/askdiane)  
Look for answers to those questions in future issues  
of TDA Today, Texas Dental Journal, and online.*