



**Upcoming CE**  
Council on Dental  
Practice offerings

09



**Dental Assistants  
Recognition Week**  
Set for March 3-9

10



**Obituary**  
Dr. Loren J. Feldner dies

15

# ADA News

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION WWW.ADA.ORG

FEBRUARY 4, 2019

VOLUME 50 NO.3



Join us on Facebook: American Dental Association

YouTube

Follow us on Twitter @ADANews

## BRIEFS

### February JADA examines caries risk assessment tools

Inconsistency in weighing risk factors in caries risk assessment tools affects dentists' ability to best identify and develop a treatment plan for patients at risk of developing caries, according to a study that is the cover story of the February issue of The Journal of the American Dental Association.

Authors of the article, "How Useful Are Current Caries Risk Assessment Tools in Informing the Oral



Health Decision-Making Process?," used National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data to construct 10 caries risk assessment models and use them to estimate the level of caries risk for publicly insured young people aged 1-20. They found "significant variation among models in assigning risk levels," according to the article.

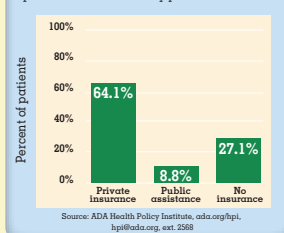
"This affects dentists' ability

See JADA, Page 19

## JUST THE FACTS

### Patient insurance types

Among general practitioner dentists working in private practice in 2017, the majority of their patients were covered by private insurance.



## Dentists, dental schools provide care to federal employees during shutdown

BY DAVID BURGER

With the government shutdown affecting an estimated 800,000 federal employees — who either were out of work or worked without pay — dental practices and schools across the country helped federal workers weather the shutdown

when it came to dental care.

About 45,000 federal workers who live in the Philadelphia area were supported by two dental schools in the area during the shutdown. Temple University School of Dentistry provided free dental care to furloughed federal employees

during the government shutdown, the school said in a news release. The providers treated emergency pain — pain, infection and trauma — as well as urgent matters requiring immediate care, such as broken fillings.

Penn Dental Medicine, also in

Philadelphia, similarly provided emergency dental care to furloughed federal employees. "With budgets tight for many furloughed workers, they may be reluctant to seek dental care even when in

See SHUTDOWN, Page 19

## ADA advocates streamlining electronic payment transactions

BY DAVID BURGER

The Association is acutely aware of the problems dental offices face in adapting to the continued push from third-party payers to gain administrative efficiency on their end by moving away from paper checks to electronic reimbursement.

"The ADA recognizes that electronic funds transfers are on the road to becoming the preferred payment method of the future," said Dr. Mark Mihalo, chair of the ADA Council on Dental Benefit Programs' Coding and Transactions Subcommittee. "However, the industry must recognize its role in assisting dental offices to be able to adapt to this change without inadvertently increasing inefficiencies for dental offices. The 2018 CAQH Index Report estimates that by moving into electronic payments and remittance advice, third-party payers can save \$131 million and dental offices can save \$539 million. There is a win-win situation for all sides if the system works well."

CAQH is the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare, a nonprofit organization. The CAQH Index, according to the group's website, "tracks adoption of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) mandated and other electronic administrative transactions for conducting routine

See PAYMENT, Page 10

## Studying, excelling, more studying

*Editor's note: In November 2017, the ADA News launched Becoming a Dentist, a series of stories that follow three dental students at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry — Dan Yang, LaShonda Shepherd and Ben Horn — during their journey of becoming dentists.*

BY JENNIFER GARVIN

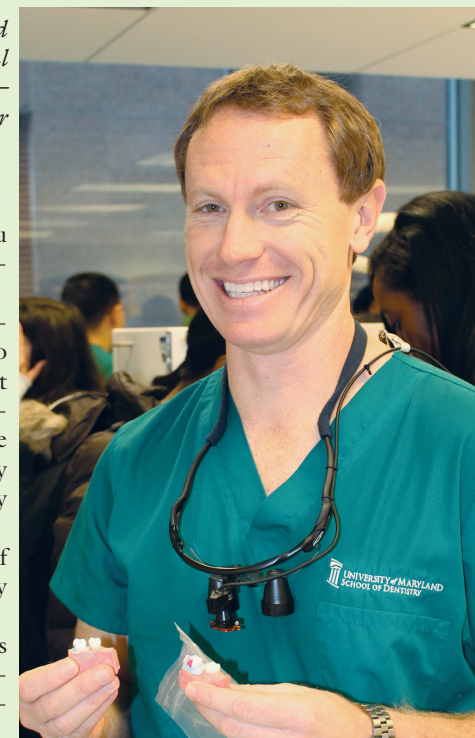
Baltimore — The thrill of finding out what grade you made on an exam — a good grade, especially — is something you never forget.

On this rainy November morning, the second-year dental students in the endodontics lab led by Dr. Frederico Martinho are huddled around an exam table waiting to get their hands on their typodonts. The metal oral cavity models were used in a practical exam in which the students were tasked with performing a simulated full root canal therapy on tooth No. 14 and creating access for root canal therapy on No. 19.

Like all the preclinical laboratories at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, this endodontics laboratory is a crucial part of the students' education.

"General dentists are routinely dealing with patients experiencing pain from endodontic origin, therefore establishing a correct diagnosis is a critical skill to be acquired regardless of providing the endodontic treatment themselves or referring the patient to an endodontist," explained Dr. Martinho, who also holds a Ph.D. in endodontics. "Since a large number of root canal treatments are performed by general dentists, dental students should be offered strong foundational principles of endodontics. It is expected upon graduation that students will become competent in diagnosing and treating pulpal diseases. Also, they should be able to identify cases that will require a referral following the [American Association of Endodontists] Endodontic Case Difficulty Assessment Form and Guidelines."

The scene is one of orderly chaos as the students rush off to sort through the pile of completed typodonts that sit on a table in the back of the room. They already know their grades — they were able



**Big smile:** Top, Ben holds up his final exam on teeth Nos. 14 and 19. Below, LaShonda shows off her lab workspace.

See STUDY, Page 18

# Study

*Continued from Page 1*

to access them online — but this is their first chance to take their completed typodonts to the professor and discuss his assessment of their work.

The stakes are high. A good grade in this case means receiving an S, which stands for superior, or an A, which means the student's work was clinically acceptable. Students who receive N (needs improvement) or U (unsatisfactory) are tasked with remediating the exam, and the highest overall grade they can receive for the overall course is a C. If a student fails a class, they will meet with a committee in the summer that ultimately decides if they can continue or if they need to repeat a class and be held back a year.

School protocol dictates that class members who are satisfied with their grades sign off on the assignment. Those who have questions — or who are required to complete follow-up work — hold off on signing. The 10 or so students who fit these descriptions quickly form a queue.

After all, this is dental school, where just passing is never enough.

All the students here want to excel. They also want to know, “What did I do right?” and “What do I need to do better?”

As Dr. Martinho begins to discuss his assessments, he urges all class members to feel good about where they are now and how far they have come.

“Improving is the main reason why you are here. We aren't expecting you to walk in here and know everything. We expect you to walk in here and work hard with skills and knowledge so that you can perform high quality treatment (later). I'm proud of you guys.”

His words seem to buoy even those students who may not be happy with their grades. When he instructs members of the small group who are charged with remediating their typodonts, he is patient, clear and encouraging.

One plus of doing the assignment over, he said, is that the students are able to work not just with loupes but with university-provided microscopes, which allow magnification of the work up to eight times compared to the 2.5 magnification with the loupes.

Martinho's style of instruction also is a plus, said Dan. “He really knows his stuff, and I learn a lot from his lecturing style. The sim lab is also pretty fun and challenging.”

Fortunately, Dan, LaShonda and Ben can rest easy. The three classmates are happy with their practical results.

“We survived,” Dan said.  
 “I loved it,” Ben said of the assignment. “This was by far the most fun I've had. I liked it the most out of anything we've done in dental school.”

When asked why he enjoyed this assignment more than anything else he's done in the last 14 months, Ben chalked it up to having earned an undergraduate degree in control systems engineering and military experience.

“I think it's the engineer in me,” he said. “Do this to exactly this measurement, and you should have good results. It's very methodical and objective so maybe that's why I like it. It was the best practical I've had.”

LaShonda and Dan were equally thrilled. “It turned out really well, particularly because there was a problem with my mannequin head halfway through the practical,” said LaShonda, who then points to a classmate.



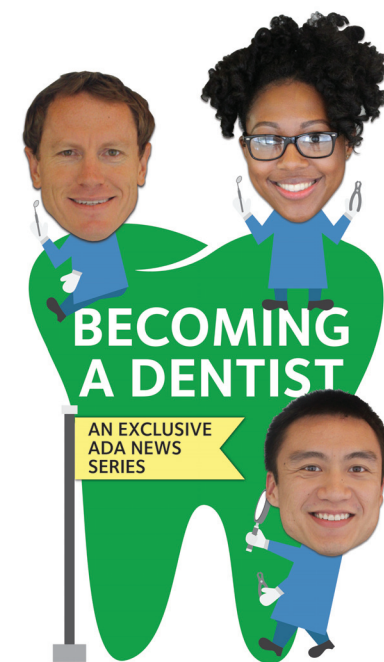
**Success:** Ben, LaShonda and Dan are all smiles following their exam success. The thrill of finding out what grade you got never gets old.



**Discussion:** Dr. Frederico Martinho talks to second-year student Jean Donovan about root canal therapy.



**Study partners:** Dan and Jennifer Kim breathe a sigh of relief after their endodontics practicals.



“Luckily he let me use his since he finished early.”

After learning their grades and picking up their typodonts, Ben, Dan and LaShonda and the other students who did well on the exam, find themselves with two free hours. But that raises a new quandary: Do they use the extra time to work on their dentures for denture lab or study for the next day's anesthesiology final?

Ben opts to work on his dentures. Dan and his study partner (and girlfriend), Jennifer Kim, choose to study for the final.

“We did dentures yesterday so we'd be able to study for anesthesiology,” Jennifer said.

LaShonda was torn yet felt motivated to again excel on an exam.

“Working on dentures is a good idea, but I think I'm going to study,” she said.

To read all the stories from the Becoming A Dentist series, visit [ADA.org/BeADentist](http://ADA.org/BeADentist). ■

—garvinj@ada.org