

# NYSDA Scores Significant Victory Against CIGNA's Star Rating System

On October 13, 2014, the ADA News reported that the dental insurance branch of the CIGNA Insurance Company would be launching a rating system of their in-network dentists in 2015. The article called the rating system "scientifically flawed". The article also stated that CIGNA originally planned to launch the rating system as of November 1, 2014 but delayed the launch in order to continue its communication with the dental community. The rating system was based solely on price comparison.

The New York State Dental Association immediately took action to tackle the issue locally in New York. NYSDA introduced legislation to make quality comparisons based solely on lowest prices illegal and brought this price comparison

to the attention of the NYS Attorney General as a form of consumer deception about quality of dental services. NYSDA expressed concern that this kind of intrusion by a third party insurer into the dentist-patient relationship worked to deceive patients about the cost-effective delivery of quality dental services - solely to enable the insurer to pay less with no real benefit to patients. NYSDA General Counsel met with the Attorney General who then contacted Cigna.

Consequently, in a matter of days, NYSDA President John Liang was pleased to announce to NYSDA members that "Cigna is completely withdrawing its dentist star rating program. Cigna is going back to the drawing board to possibly come up with something

else, but they are not implementing their proposed program." NYSDA was informed by the Attorney General's office that if CIGNA does come up with any alternate system, they must run it by the NY At-

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The ADA has also been working with several other state dental associations to provide information to members and has developed communication materials

for state dental societies to use when answering questions about this new ranking program. It is unclear at this time whether other states will have the same level of success as NYSDA did.

This success truly represents the power of organized dentistry and two of its most important benefits - regulatory monitoring and advocacy. Without the ever watchful eye of the ADA, NYSDA, and SDDS, obtrusive and unfair practices such as the CIGNA rating system would slip by and have a significantly detrimental effect on our practices. To be sure, no one dentist could have had the power or wield the

political weight to affect the outcome of this challenge. It is through the power that organized dentistry wields as a cohesive, strong political group that these successes are achieved. Our legislative and regulatory victories on the state level are the envy of many other professions.

Many individuals utilize their expertise on our behalf to safeguard against unwelcome intrusions into our daily practice. From NYS-DA staff in Albany to SDDS staff here in Brooklyn and Staten Island, the battle over regulatory intrusion goes on. But dentistry can only keep winning if remains strong as an undivided, member-driven organization. This is why membership and participation in organized dentistry is key. NYSDA is well respected in Albany because it represents ap-

proximately 70% of the dentists in New York. No other professional organization comes close. We need to keep our membership levels strong so we can retain this respect in Albany.

Lastly, these victories can be directly linked to the strength of our PAC and its lobbying efforts. EDPAC, New York State dentistry's lobbying organization, is widely respected in Albany. But it needs our help. Lobbying requires funding. The rolls of EDPAC's Capitol Club are meagerly populated. If you value this victory, and if you value the advocacy and monitoring that has been done, then go to the EDPAC website and donate. Keep our voice strong. Who knows where the next challenge will come from?

## Mentorship AdoptD

Stuart Segelnick DDS, MS

At the SDDS we have a new mentorship program that can change a person's life in the most profound way. Am I being dramatic? Have I at least caught your attention? Do I want you to be a part of it?

Yes, just say "YES!" What I am asking of you is easier than you may think and it only takes as much as you want to give. But I ask you again to please give generously. Not with a check but with your heart.

Here is what I propose:  
Step 1: Simply send us an email that you want to participate. (Drop this bulletin

right now, head over to your computer or smart phone and please send an email to [vmolina@sddsny.org](mailto:vmolina@sddsny.org).)

Step 2: You will be assigned a newly practicing dentist or dental resident (AdoptD).

Step 3: Call your AdoptD and let him/her know you are willing to help him/her.

Don't trip over Step 3. It isn't meant to be complicated or confusing. So let me define "help them". It means you are willing to make time to talk to your AdoptD about anything on their minds especially related to the practice of dentistry and will give them your best advice.

Try to remember what it was

like just starting out. Did you have a family member or friend that was a dentist? How about your attending or professor, did they help you? In the last couple of years I lost three of my mentors who were father figures to me. They were so helpful in my career development that I would have liked to introduce you to them. Unfortunately now I cannot. But I can tell you I will always remember Dr. Herman Beckelman for his help in practice-related problems; Dr. Mike Salkin for his insight related to patient treatment, and the science behind my treatments; and Dr. Bob Schoor for his kind hearted expertise on professional and personal

life issues. When my office was destroyed in the Sandy storm he was one of the first people to offer me assistance.

All three of these mentors gave so much of themselves, while surprisingly asking for very little in return. Actually, I can't remember anything they asked me to do for them that wasn't for my own benefit. The one thing that I think they all appreciated though was my thankfulness for their help. So, for our AdoptDs a simple thank you to your mentors will be valued.

For our potential mentors, I would like you to again ponder when you were starting out, did you have someone that you could call and dis-

cuss anything dental? Many of our AdoptD's don't have anyone with your knowledge and life experience to assist them. In this newly changing world of dentistry, "It ain't easy." You can make a difference in their lives and help steer them past all the problems you faced. I know you can be their hero as surely as Drs Beckelman, Salkin and Schoor were mine.

Dr. Lauro F. Medrano-Saldaña, our president gave some great suggestions of how you can go beyond that by:

1) Going to a Second District general membership meeting together with your AdoptD (CE and dinner for free!)

2) Going to a SDDS Continuing Education course together (for free!)

3) Going to the GNYDM together and volunteering together for the same assignment (also free)

There are many mentorship programs around the country that have been shown to have a positive impact on the lives of the mentee. A good number of us already have experience helping at hospital residency programs and dental schools and know the good that can be done. Please don't let this rewarding opportunity pass you by. Send us an email so we can start a truly wonderful program together.



Second District Dental Society

## SDDS

www.sddsny.org

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

{ Mentor Sign-up Form }

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Dear Second District:

**YES**, as a member of Second District in good standing, I am interested in serving as a mentor to a new dentist member of the Society. Please find my information below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ADA#: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

Dental school: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of years in practice: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

**Complete and return to:**  
 Second District Dental Society, 111 Fort Greene Pl, Brooklyn, NY 11217  
 Phone: (718) 522-3939, Fax: (718) 797-4335  
 Email: [info@sddsny.org](mailto:info@sddsny.org)

