



ALABAMA
ACADEMY of
GENERAL DENTISTRY

SUMMER 2025

Composite

Dedicated To The Concerns
Of General Dentists In Alabama
Official Publication of the Alabama Academy of General Dentistry



Blount County awesome by nature





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Editor's Notes

Shivani Pandit, D.D.S., FAGD

As I sit down to begin editing this edition of the Alabama AGD Composite magazine as the new editor, I reflect on the history of this magazine and the Alabama AGD. After several years of dedicated service, Dr. Bill Chesser has passed the editorial baton to me. I am honored and excited about this new chapter. I deeply appreciate Dr. Chesser's hard work in establishing the foundation of a great resource for all members, and I am committed to continuing his legacy by making this a trusted resource for sharing information, celebrating success, and fostering connections among all our constituents.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am a graduate of the UNC School of Dentistry and have been practicing in Alabama for over 30 years. My passion for dentistry remains as strong as ever. I joined AGD during dental school and have relied on its resources to stay updated on innovations within the dental field and to learn best practices for continually improving my practice.

I am currently pursuing the AL AGD MASTERTRACK program, with an anticipated completion date of 2026. This pursuit is made possible thanks to Dr. Wendy Holder, the program director for the Alabama Master Track program, who revitalized it into a successful initiative that has graduated numerous participants. Members of the Alabama AGD, like you, have been instrumental in making this program a success, and I know we can count on your continued support.

As I consider how to make this publication an even more valuable resource, I need your input. Throughout my career, I have relied on great mentors who have shared their insights. I hope you will consider yourself part of the Alabama AGD Composite's advisory staff. I would love to hear from all of you with any feedback to improve and better serve our organization in the coming years.

As professionals, we have so much to teach each other. I am eager to involve both our tenured dentists and those new to our profession, including our student chapter. I know from personal experience how important a strong network of mentors and colleagues is to succeed in private practice. Our world continues to evolve, and with that evolution comes new challenges to navigate. Through our local and national chapters, we have a strong reservoir of knowledge and relationships.

I challenge you to join me in making this organization even more successful. Whether it is an announcement of an event that provides opportunities to network, a request for instructors or mentors, or a specific opportunity, I ask that you be open to taking an active role in our future. We have so much talent and knowledge, and I am excited and humbled by the opportunity to bring every member and potential member together through this publication.

Cover photo: Horton Mill covered bridge was built in 1934, situated 7 miles west of Oneonta in Blount County. This is one of the highest covered bridges in the nation, standing at 70 feet above the Black Warrior River. It is also one of three which still exist in Blount County, Alabama's home of the covered Bridge Festival each fall.

President's Message

Harrell Bullard, DMD, MAGD



This has been a busy spring for Alabama Academy of General Dentistry. Your President Elect, Melodie Jones, represented ALAGD well at AGD's Annual Hill Day in Washington, DC. She lobbied for AGD priorities meeting with both Senator Britt and Representative Aderholt and Senator Tuberville and Representative Figures' office staff. Your President had the privilege to attend UAB School of Dentistry's Honors Convocation where I presented awards to two outstanding AGD Student Chapter seniors. I was able to return to represent ALAGD at the UAB School of Dentistry's Graduation and I left inspired by the caliber of students the school is producing. Alabama AGD applied for and was awarded a National AGD Grant that will provide supplies for The LoveLady Center's dental clinic where many of our students participate. Our MasterTrack program has flourished under the leadership of Dr. Wendy Holder and draws participants from several states. The AGD Student Chapter at UAB continues to shine as one of the model student chapters in the nation. Seven of our student chapter members presented posters at the AGD Scientific meeting in Montreal in July.

I am truly excited as our annual Emerald Coast Dental Conference on September 4-6, 2025, at the

Sandestin Beach Hilton is approaching rapidly. Our continuing education offerings combined with the excellent hotel and event pricing are an unbeatable value. We have an exceptional speaker lineup of clinical speakers and Dr. Rich Madow will be present to energize you and your staff with his entertaining and unique style. We have speakers covering every Alabama Board of Dentistry required CE subject. An Alabama favorite, Dr. Ken Tilashalski, will be presenting infection control and oral pathology. Basic Life Support, a periodontics course geared to dental hygienists, practice management, and an opioid course will be offered.

We have several "hands on" learning opportunities available with an endodontics course and a laser course. Dr. Nate Lawson has a dynamic presentation on biomaterials. Dr. Jeff Osborne will be presenting on aligner therapy and Dr. Mark Malterud will present on minimally invasive dentistry. All of this great program occurs on the world's best beaches at a fabulous resort hotel, the Sandestin Hilton, at excellent negotiated pricing. Bring your family and your staff and join us for a transformational meeting in September.



ACADEMY OF GENERAL DENTISTRY HILL DAYS

MAY 6-7, 2025 • WASHINGTON, DC



*Dr. Melodie Jones with
Representative Robert Aderholt*

The Academy of General Dentistry held its Annual Hill Day where various AGD Constituent states met with Legislators in Washington DC.

States represented included Alabama, New York, California, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, Washington, Michigan, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Virginia, North Dakota, and Alaska.

Dr. Melodie Jones, President-Elect, Alabama Academy of General Dentistry, met with the staff and in some cases the legislators themselves if available. Dr. Jones met with Senator Katie Britt and representative Robert Aderholt (AL-04) and their staff. Dr. Jones met with the staff of Senator Tommy Tuberville and Representative Shomari Figures (AL-02).

The legislation discussed included Action for Dental Health Act (H.R. 2001), the Oral Health Literacy and Awareness Act, and the Resident Education Deferred Interest Act (REDI) Act (S.942/H.R. 2028).

The legislation discussed regarded the dental workforce shortages, rural health care access, practice consolidation, dental insurance reform, and the need to strengthen oral health education and public health awareness.

It is the hope of organized dentistry that the legislators' attention to these pressing matters reinforces their commitment to the well-being of Alabama's residents and to the broader health of our nation.

See copies on the One page Summaries of the Legislation.

Respectively Submitted,
Melodie A. Jones, DMD
President-Elect, Alabama Academy of General Dentistry



Dr. Melodie Jones with Senator Katie Britt



*Dr. Melodie
Jones, President
Elect, ALAGD
at Capital*

ONE VOICE, UNITED: ADVANCING DENTISTRY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND PURPOSE

*By Dr. Jennifer Hirsch Doobrow, President, Alabama Dental Association
Periodontist & Owner, Periodontal and Implant Associates – Cullman, AL*

There are moments that do more than mark time—they shape direction.

Moments when the profession we love stands not at a crossroads, but on the threshold of something greater. This is one of those moments.

Growing up in the Alabama dental community, I witnessed firsthand the quiet strength, selfless service, and clinical excellence that define who we are. From the faculty at UAB to the mentors who helped shape my path, to the colleagues who have become chosen family—this community taught me that dentistry is so much more than what we do. It's about who we are, and how we serve.

Dentistry, at its best, is not just a career—it's a calling.

And today, that calling is more unified, more collaborative, and more essential than ever before.

As President of the Alabama Dental Association, I have the extraordinary privilege of serving a profession I cherish—alongside every dental organization across our state. And I am especially grateful for the continued partnership and collaboration between the Alabama Dental Association, Alabama Academy of General Dentistry, and our other specialty organizations. Together, we are advancing dentistry—not as separate voices, but as one collective chorus—diverse in background, united in mission.

We represent more than our individual organizations. We represent people—dentists, educators, students, dental team members, and advocates—bound together by a belief that when we lead with purpose and walk in unity, we can shape the future of oral health—not just in our practices, but across every community in Alabama.

A Shared Mission. A Stronger Voice.

This year, we recommit to a bold and common purpose:

- To advance the practice of dentistry
- To elevate oral healthcare access and outcomes for all Alabamians
- To lead with integrity, courage, and compassion
- And to speak—not in fragments—but with One Voice, United

That unity starts with connection—and is sustained by transparency.

The Alabama Dental Association is investing in meaningful, two-way communication. We are launching monthly video updates across social media platforms—not as scripted reports, but as open, authentic conversations. Through quarterly virtual forums, we'll create collaborative space for every dental organization across Alabama to come together, exchange ideas, share challenges, and build lasting momentum.

Because true progress doesn't begin with statements.

It begins with shared purpose—and sustained dialogue.

Advocating With One Voice

Nowhere is our unity more impactful than in advocacy. In 2025, the Alabama dental community stood shoulder-to-shoulder in one of the most consequential insurance reform efforts in our state's history.

We know how broken parts of the dental insurance system harm our patients and hinder care. That's why insurance reform has remained a top priority—and in 2025, we made real strides forward.

Together, we championed four key bills to protect patients and providers. One of the most critical—our Dental Loss Ratio (DLR) bill—ensures more premium dollars go directly toward patient care. We also pushed for greater flexibility and value in dental benefits, building strong bipartisan support and media attention.

Through our “More for Your Smile” campaign, patients sent over 8,000 emails to lawmakers. We saw grassroots energy across the state: yard signs, student advocacy, social media momentum, and passionate conversations that helped elevate the issue.

Even more exciting: we reached an agreement on future DLR language with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama. That puts us in a powerful position heading into 2026 and signals to policymakers that our profession is focused, informed, and unified.

All of this was accomplished with just 10% of Alabama dentists actively engaged. Imagine the possibilities when we all get involved.

As we continue legislative discussions through the summer and fall, your involvement matters more than ever. Speak up. Educate your patients. Invite your local legislators into your office. Let them see what compassionate, comprehensive dental care really looks like.

We're equipping you with talking points, resources, and strategies—because advocacy doesn't just happen in the Capitol.

It begins at the chairside, in every operatory, every day.

Just imagine what we can accomplish with full participation.

Imagine the power of One Voice—fully mobilized.

A Future Defined by Collaboration

We grow not by working in isolation, but by walking in step.

That's why collaboration across Alabama's dental organizations – and throughout our broader dental community – is fundamental. It is how we strengthen our profession, align our efforts, and ensure meaningful, lasting impact across the state.

Because no matter your specialty, title, or practice setting, we are one profession with one shared promise:

To care with integrity.

To lead with purpose.

And to build something better for the generation that follows.

In the year ahead, we will:

- Elevate clinical excellence and advance continuing education
- Strengthen our collective voice in legislative advocacy
- Champion innovation while staying grounded in evidence-based care
- And foster a culture where every dental professional—regardless of role or region—feels seen, supported, and empowered

Let this be the year:

We listen more deeply and connect more intentionally

We lift each other higher through partnership and trust

We lead—not just with skills—but with soul

Together, we are stronger.

Together, we are better.

Together, we are One Voice, United—for the future of dentistry in Alabama

To join the Alabama Dental Association in our efforts, please send your email address and mobile phone number to Michele Huebner, ALDA Executive Director (michele@aldaonline.org)



*Dr. Jennifer Hirsch
Doobrow, President,
Alabama Dental
Association*



DR. ELYSE DENGLER FELLOWSHIP AWARDEE 2025

My initial desire to pursue fellowship in the Academy of General Dentistry came from a place of feeling kind of stuck. I was still a relatively new dentist and wanted to thrive, not just survive. I needed a goal to work toward to help motivate me. What I learned through the required continuing education has been invaluable to me in practice. I was developing practical skills while working, but having access to information that is current and evidence-based helped to elevate my career. I am now a full-time faculty member at the UAB School of Dentistry, and I am so thankful for the knowledge and skills I gained. I am able to pass this along to the students and help them flourish. If you're considering FAGD, I would say start NOW! You'll meet some amazing people along the way who are invested in your success. It will enhance your practice in many ways and allow you to evolve with the field of dentistry.

2025 FULLER AWARD

By Bill Chesser, D.M.D., MAGD

Dr. George Petznick was named the 2025 Fuller Award winner at our Gulf Coast Dental Conference in early June. This prestigious honor was presented at the annual UAB Alumni Luncheon, with over 50 in attendance to witness this event.

This award was named in honor of Dr. Moren Fuller, who was instrumental in founding the UAB School of Dentistry in 1947. An additional point of interest is that, after George returned to the table following the presentation of the award, he confided that Dr Fuller himself personally encouraged George to enter Dental School!

Dr. Mike O'Brien announced this year's winner, and George was completely surprised. His loving family had been able to keep it an absolute secret, and many of them were in attendance at the Alumni Luncheon to cheer him on.

George is a 1963 graduate of UAB School of Dentistry, but the pursuit of his chosen profession was not exactly conventional. After earning a degree in Pharmacy at Auburn in 1955, he leapt right into the US Air Force, where he served with valor as a Fighter Pilot! He even held a leadership role in the Cuban Missile Crisis!

After his term in the military, he completed his earlier plans for Dental School, then began what would become a course of 58 years working in a thriving private practice in Birmingham.

During his exceptional career, Dr. Petznick filled the posts of President of the Birmingham Dental Society, as well as the Alabama Dental Association. In addition, he has earned the Mastership in the Academy of General Dentistry.

He has also been involved in support of our School of Dentistry. He served on the SOD Admissions Committee for years, holding the position of President in 1986-87.

George has hosted countless UAB SOD alumni events through the years. He has always been eager to arrange our annual UAB Dental School Senior Events at the elegant Birmingham Country Club.

Dr. Petznick has certainly left his unique mark on our honorable profession. Here is a man who has made a difference in Dentistry, and we are better for it!



*Dr. Michael O'Brien presents the
Plaque to Dr. Petznick*



MONTREAL NATIONAL AGD MEETING



Students from UAB School of Dentistry with Dr. Wendy Holder, Dr. Toni Neumeier and Dr. Harrell Bullard



*Congratulations to our two UAB School of Dentistry students for receiving first places in E-Poster competition held at National AGD meeting in Montreal, QC recently.
From left: Vicky Delany, generous sponsor of E-poster session, Kate Stuardi, Dr. Chetan Chetty, president of National AGD, Dr. Toni Neumeier, Camilla Clarke*



Dr. Harrell Bullard and Dr. Kuntal Pandit at AGD meeting in Montreal, QC



Congrats to Drs. Wendy Holder and Toni Neumeier for receiving LLSR awards at AGD meeting in Montreal, QC

WENDY HOLDER, DMD, LLSR

At the annual scientific session for AGD, I received my second LLSR award. This achievement was possible from serving as the program director for the Alabama Master Track program.

When our master track group has participation, classes, and homework assignments, I strive to try and keep up with my colleagues. This is no small feat with these highly trained and motivated younger dentists. In the role as a director and sometimes mentor, I must set an example for continuous learning of new techniques and modifications. Hence the CE hours for the award allowing me to provide the best dental care for my patients.

TONI NEUMEIER DMD, MS, LLSR

I received the MAGD award in 2010. I have been very involved with AGD and teaching at the Dental school. The Master Track program in Alabama AGD was revitalized under Dr. Wendy Holder's leadership. I was invited as a first speaker. The program started with nine participants and their enthusiasm stimulated me to complete all the requirements for LLSR, it took me three years to meet this goal. Receiving an award or certification from the organization is a statement that informs patients and colleagues that you have spent time and worked harder to be a better Dentist than others in this field. Participation in AGD strengthens the organization because you are sharing your talents. You are also providing service to dentistry and your community. The rewards for any kind of volunteer service are not something that can be bought, but they leave a permanent, positive mark on someone's mind and life, which is priceless.



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