

The review of pediatric dentistry: a chance to share

Accountability, peer review, quality assurance, and specialization are all terms that we have heard over and over again during our professional careers. Each of us is affected differently by their meaning and how they may impact on us both professionally and personally. Because of actions taken by the 1983 ADA's House of Delegates all of the specialties in dentistry now have the responsibility to demonstrate that they continue to meet established requirements for specialty recognition.

The review of the specialties by the Council on Dental Education is a process of submitting justifying explanations (accountability) to our peers (peer review) that we should continue to exist to protect the public's health and welfare by delivering quality dental care (quality assurance) in a distinct area and well-defined field requiring unique knowledge and skills (specialization) beyond those commonly possessed by general practitioners.

In 1947, the ADA House of Delegates recognized pediatric dentistry as a specialty. In 1990, at their scheduled meeting in Boston, the ADA House of Delegates again will have the opportunity to continue our recognition as a specialty based upon the recommendations of the Council on Dental Education's review of our application in late 1989.

Sponsoring organizations have been requested to assist the Council in its review by submitting appropriate information. Your Academy, the sponsoring organization for the specialty of pediatric dentistry, has appointed a Task Force to prepare and submit the application to the ADA Council on Dental Education. The Task Force's plan for completing the application was approved by the AAPD officers and Board of Directors at the 1985 Ad Interim Session in Colorado Springs.

The two-part application developed by the Council on Dental Education is primarily interested in receiving supporting information on the sponsoring organization, its membership, and its activities. The second

part of the application responds to the five criteria for specialty recognition as identified in the Council's *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties*. These criteria relate to the unique knowledge and skills, the scope of the specialties, the public need and demand for services, the clinical activities of the specialties, and finally the availability of formal advanced education programs, all relating to the specialty of pediatric dentistry.

The review by the Council on Dental Education provides the specialty an opportunity to share with the profession the many contributions we have made to dentistry. Whether you are in private practice, academics, or research in an institution, or in the uniformed services, each of you is providing health services to the children and young adults who someday will represent the future adults of our country. We in pediatric dentistry deal with the future. We can all be justly proud of our past accomplishments, our present responsibilities and activities, and the future role we will play in the delivery of oral care. This is your review; this is your application; this is your specialty. Your input, support, and guidance are not only requested but are mandatory.

Although most of the Task Force's activities to date have been involved in the collection of data, AAPD members have had the opportunity to participate. At the 1987 meeting in New Orleans and again at the 1988 San Diego meeting, membership forums have allowed for your input. Just recently you have all received a membership survey requesting information that will allow the Task Force to document the public's need and demand for our services. We urge you to complete this survey and return it *immediately*. Periodically in the AAPD *Newsletter* we have provided information to you, the members, on the application process or have requested additional information; for example, authorship of chapters, textbooks, and monographs in the dental, medical, or

allied health literature by you the members. Prior to the submission of the application in July of 1989, you may be called upon again to provide additional information.

It has been reported that Dr. M. Evangeline Jordon of Los Angeles and Dr. Paul A. Barker of Denver, Colorado, were the first dentists to limit their practices to pediatric dentistry sometime between 1915 and 1917. How proud they would be to know that 75

years later their concept of a specialty responsible for an age group and not restricted by procedures continues to thrive and grow, and that we continue to lead the dental profession in delivering quality health care. On their behalf let us share our history, our present and our future directions.

Arthur J. Nowak, Chairman
Task Force for Evaluation of the Specialty

You deserve a break today

Dentists are extraordinary people. One must first pass the rigorous tests and training required to practice. Once in practice, the demands increase dramatically. The job requires that the dentist be both a skilled technician and diagnostician. In addition to the actual treatment, one must be a psychologist and an effective communicator...not only with patients, but with the staff as well. The dentist also has to be a shrewd businessman. On top of all that, there are the never ending malpractice concerns.

Sound like an impossible job? This multitude of mixed roles played by the dentist is not an easy task. In fact, it's downright stressful at times. The best way to maintain the necessary high level of concentration needed to perform and run the business of dentistry is to eliminate the stress...by either retiring or taking a vacation.

A vacation does not have to be a Caribbean cruise...simply time away from the office. The brief relief from the responsibility of practice will work wonders for wandering minds. When you return from your break, you will work with renewed energy and enthusiasm. No longer will small setbacks or difficulties seem like major disasters. In other words, practice will be enjoyable once again.

When you decide to take some time off, be sure to have adequate emergency coverage for your patients. Do not simply have the dental society number on your machine or with your service.

Dr. Michael A. Wong
May, 1987 Editorial, *The Mouthpiece*
San Mateo (CA) County Dental Society