**IMPLANT TRIBUNE U.S. Edition Interview 11**

**AGD’s Jones works on building relationships**

***Dr. Paula Jones, vice president of the Academy of General Dentistry, outlines the organization’s goals and objectives in an interview with News Editor John Hoffman of Dental Tribune.***

## Please introduce yourself and provide a brief biographical back- ground.

Paula Shannon Jones, DDS, FAGD, of Naperville, Ill. I was elected vice president of the Acad- emy of General Dentistry (AGD) during the first session of the House of Delegates at the AGD’s annual meeting on August 3, 2006, in Denver, Colo.

I have served the AGD in many capacities. I was appointed to the Council on Membership in 1993, served two terms, which included five years as Chair, and then was elected Regional Director of the Illinois AGD. I served three years on the AGD Council on Annual Meetings and International Confer- ences (CAMIC) and then was elect- ed to the national AGD Board of Trustees to represent Illinois in 2002. I have also has served three terms as a member of the AGD’s Foundation Board of Directors. I have also been a SmileLine Online volunteer since its inception and a spokesperson since 1994. In 1995, I was awarded the AGD Distin- guished Service Award for my work with the new dentists.

I began my career in dentistry as a dental hygienist after gradu- ating from Indiana University. I attended Case Western Reserve School of Dentistry and completed my dental degree in 1984. To stay up-to-date in dentistry, I earned the Fellowship award from the AGD in 1995.

I am also a member of the American Dental Association, the Illinois State Dental Society, the Chicago Dental Society and the American Association of Women Dentists. I am a Fellow of the American College of Dentistry and the Academy of Dentistry Interna- tional and soon to be inducted as a Fellow of the International College of Dentistry at the September 2007 meeting.

## What does AGD see as the main issues facing American dentistry? What do you plan to do to address these issues?

The main issue facing American dentistry is the low utilization of oral health care services by Ameri- cans. This issue has many con- tributing factors including eco- nomics, education and access to services. The goal of dentistry is to ultimately eliminate dental dis- ease. Dental disease impacts both children and adults physically, functionally, emotionally, and so- cially. It also affects the nation’s

*Dr. Paula Jones*

productivity. Studies show that more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness. A second issue of impor- tance to dentistry is that of ensur- ing that there is an equitable rela- tionship between insurance com- panies/third party payers, general dentists and the patients they serve.

The third issue affecting the fu- ture of dentistry is the increasing faculty shortage in the dental schools. Many of our members are qualified to volunteer as a faculty member in the dental schools and would be a great asset in the edu- cation of the new dentists. The AGD can aid in making this des- perate situation known and can en- courage its members to take on this most important challenge.

In an attempt to address these issues, the AGD lobbies Congress for funding for Title VII programs that help fund the dental residency programs and also lobbies for in- creased Medicaid expenditures so that dentists are better able to serve the needs of those patients affected.

The AGD is partnering with the national Special Olympics Special Smiles (SOSS) organization to aid in serving the needs of the devel- opmentally disabled and to help educate patients and parents re- garding the need for a dental home for all children.

The AGD has also joined forces with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in an effort to eliminate oral health disparities,

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increasing the public’s under- standing of oral health issues, and expanding access to and utilization of dental care services.

## What are AGD’s goals for the coming year? What steps or pro- grams are you doing to achieve your goals?

Our goal is for the AGD to be the recognized voice of general den- tistry. We will strive to build aware- ness about the importance of contin- uing education for general dentists, publicize the importance of seeking an AGD dentist and also to educate the public and the dental profession regarding the high regard for our Fellowship and Mastership awards. The AGD plans to enhance the ben- efits of membership and will focus on addressing the needs of students, residents and recent graduates.

The programs to address the above issues will include: working to educate the public on oral health issues through our tooth erosion PSA and dry mouth campaign and the Student Manual for dental stu- dents as they make the transition into dental practice. The guide will provide up-to-date and relevant in- formation and tips drawn from the real-life experiences of the AGD members.

We have also partnered with Huf- ford Financial Advisors, LLC to cre- ate a program called “Mastering Fi- nancial Freedom.” This program will focus on creating and providing quality continuing dental education financial programs for general den- tists to help them secure financial freedom.

## Any awards, programs or charitable efforts you wish to call attention to?

In support of the mission to em- power people with intellectual dis- abilities to reach their full potential, SOSS has partnered with the AGD and the AGD Foundation to help identify providers of primary dental care for Special Olympics athletes. SOSS is part of the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes initiative.

Three major awards are our Fel- lowship (FAGD), Mastership (MAGD), and Life Long Learning and Service Recognition (LLSR) awards. The FAGD honors members who have earned more than 500 FAGD-approved CE credits and suc- cessfully completed the FAGD exam. A member achieving the MAGD has completed a challenging course of hands-on study in 16 dental disci- plines, totaling 600 hours of contin- uing education beyond their FAGD. The LLSR awards were created to recognize the continued achieve- ments of AGD Masters who clearly recognize an obligation to remain current in their profession. Active members create an example that re- minds each member of the dental profession to never lose sight of this obligation.

At our Annual Meeting and Ex- hibits, which takes place June 27 – July 1, 2007 in San Diego, Calif., the AGD will award its Albert L. Borish award posthumously to Congress- man Charlie Norwood for his out- standing contributions to dentistry.

## Any comments on government policies or programs?

The AGD is concerned that at the state level, some state dental boards are impinging upon the freedom of the dental profession to retain their autonomy by restrict- ing the use of the FAGD and MAGD labels. The AGD fully supports informing the public of dentists’ qualifications, but believes that its members should be allowed to inform the public of the fact that they’ve earned a Fellowship or Mastership in the AGD.

## Anything further?

The AGD is continuing to build relationships with allied dental or- ganizations such as the American Student Dental Association (ASDA). Together we are working towards building mutually cooperative rela- tionships, advocating for the rights of general dentists, and building awareness regarding the important issues faced by other members of the dental community. IT