



### Decoding Dental Benefits

**Decoding Dental Benefits**  
New series examines third-party issues

12



**ADA Seal**  
Toothpaste first to earn seven categories

15



**ADA 2017**  
Coverage of Atlanta meeting

18

# ADA News

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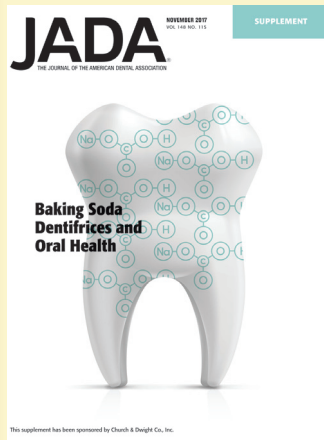
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## BRIEFS

### Baking soda toothpaste examined in November JADA supplement

Dental professionals with questions about the safety or efficacy of baking soda toothpastes can turn to a supplement to the November issue of The Journal of the American Dental Association for answers.



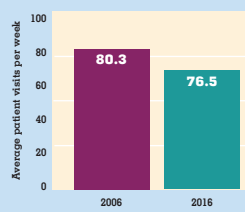
The supplement, *Baking Soda Dentifrices and Oral Health*, features a compilation of reports based on research of the effects of baking soda as a dentifrice ingredient. It is sponsored by Church & Dwight Co., Inc. "A significant amount of evidence-based research data has been generated over the years relative to the safety and efficacy of baking soda containing dentifrices," said guest editor of the supplement, Dr. Sebastian Ciancio, distinguished service professor and chair in the Department of Periodontics

See JADA, Page 31

## JUST THE FACTS

### Average patient visits per week

Among all dentists, the average number of patient visits per week was down by 3.8 in 2016 compared to 2006.



Source: ADA Health Policy Institute, ADA.org/hpi, hpi@ada.org, ext. 2588.

# \$295 million settlement reached in Stericycle class action suit

BY KELLY SODERLUND

A \$295 million settlement has been reached on behalf of a nationwide class of Stericycle customers, following a class-action lawsuit accusing the company of engaging in

a price-increasing scheme that automatically inflated customers' bills up to 18 percent biannually, according to a news release from Hagens Berman, the Chicago-based law firm that represented the class.

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois on Oct. 26 granted preliminary approval for the settlement. The fairness hearing for final approval is scheduled for Feb. 21, 2018.

The class included more than 246,000 dentists, veterinarians and other small business owners across the country. After the settlement

See STERICYCLE, Page 10

# Becoming a dentist

BY JENNIFER GARVIN

*Baltimore* — The path to becoming a dentist is not something that happens overnight.

Each year, dental schools across the nation receive more than 79,000 applications for some 6,100 spots. At the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, roughly one student for every 20 applicants was admitted in 2016.

For the students who dream of filling those spots, becoming a dentist is a way of giving back and being rewarded with a fulfilling career. Being accepted is considered an honor.

The ADA News is proud to feature three of those stories, from first year to graduation, in an ongoing series, *Becoming a Dentist*. Because you're going to get to know them through the series, we'll be using their first names in the text of the stories:

- Ben, the former naval aviator turned dental student.

- LaShonda, the public health advocate who dreams of improving access to dental care in her hometown.

- Dan, the passionate health care enthusiast who just wants to help people.

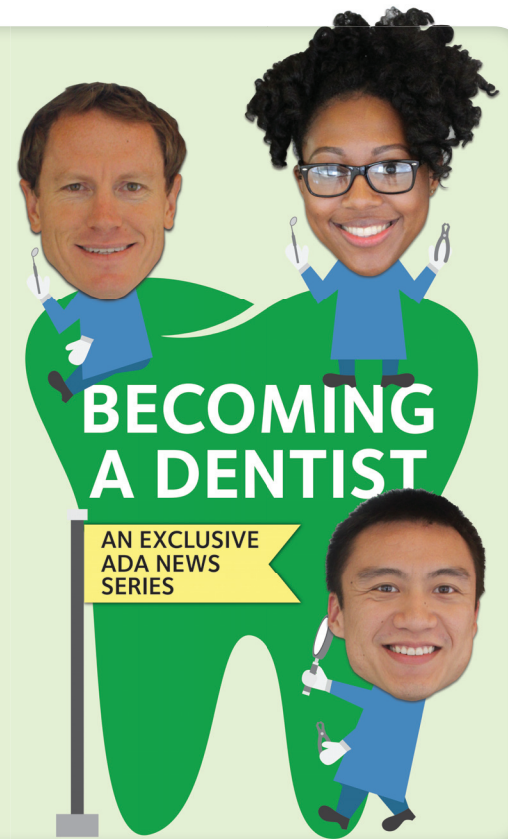
These are some of the faces of the University of Maryland's School of Dentistry class of 2021.

**Ben Horn**

For Ben Horn, school days begin early — 4:30 a.m., to be exact. Each morning, the former naval aviator wakes up to cram an hour of studying in before catching the 6:10 commuter bus that takes him from his home in Annapolis, Maryland, to Baltimore. Once there, it's more studying until it's time for his first class, usually around 8 a.m.

"I treat school like a job, almost like I have

See BECOME, Page 16



**ADA president:** Dr. Joseph P. Crowley addresses the ADA House of Delegates in Atlanta Oct. 23. See story, Page 22.



# Become

*Continued from Page 1*

working hours,” said Ben, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, who has deployed three times. “When I get to school at 6:50 a.m., I either find a spot in the dental school or library to continue studying or I go get a quick workout in at the UMB gym facility, and I mean quick, like 20-40 minutes because I know I need to study.”

As the married father of two toddler girls, Kendall, 3, and Parker, 1, Ben, 34, knows his life is a little different than that of the average dental student.

“There have already been multiple days when I make them some dinner or lunch, and then we all sit down to eat and watch an online lecture together. Kendall is so curious about what I do at dental school, and she loves watching the lectures and actually asks very intelligent questions. I love trying to include them in some way with my endeavor as a dental student. She asks me often, ‘Did you see people’s teeth today at dental school, dad?’ I reply, ‘no sweetheart, not yet. In about two more years, I will finally get to see a patient.’”

The decision to go back to school was not one Ben and his wife Caitlin took lightly. In 2013, while still flying F-18s full-time for the Navy, he began the long process of taking all the required prerequisites for dental school.

In 2016, he applied — and received — a Navy Health Services Collegiate Program scholarship. After dental school, he will resume his Navy service, this time as a dentist.

His “second career” is what he hoped it would be and more.

“Some people don’t get to follow any of their dreams in life. I consider myself immeasurably fortunate to have lived one of my dreams as a naval aviator and now I get to pursue another of my dreams to become a dentist. I am thankful for this opportunity and with that attitude and my experience as a Navy pilot, I feel like I have the right combination of skill and motivation to make this career transition successful at this point in my life. I feel I have been given an incredible op-



**Class of 2021:** From left, first-year dental students Ben Horn, LaShonda Shepherd and Dan Yang gather outside the entrance to the University of Maryland School of Dentistry in Baltimore, which opened in 1840 and is the oldest dental school in the United States.

portunity as a dental student, specifically at the University of Maryland, and I try to do my part each day to earn my spot in the class of 2021.”

## LaShonda Shepherd

As an undergraduate at the University of Maryland College Park, LaShonda Shepherd knew her future would include dental school.

But she also knew she wanted to take some time off before starting school again.

“I always knew I’d attend dental school, but I didn’t think I would take such a long break,” said the native of Grady, Alabama, a rural community just south of Montgomery.

She first landed at The Climate Reality Project, an educational nonprofit organization, where she worked as a payroll and benefits specialist.

“My initial plan was to pay off some undergrad debt and then return to school, but I met some really great people during my time at [Climate Reality] and felt like we were doing substantive work and so I continued to work when I began taking evening courses to finish my prerequisites.”

During this time, LaShonda also shadowed Dr. Demion Cornwall at private dental practices in Oxon Hill and La Plata, Maryland, and volunteered at Community Clinic Inc., a public health clinic in Silver Spring, Maryland, so she “wouldn’t be totally removed” from the field.

Now that her dental school career is in full swing, she’s still trying to find balance between studying, commuting and squeezing in time with her fiancé, Victor.

“Dental school is intense,” she said. “Each class has a different attendance policy, so I try not to miss one unless absolutely necessary. I attended every lecture until we had our first round of exams but, now, I occasionally tune in to the live lecture [online] if I can’t make it to campus.”

She also joined the American Association for Women Dentists and Student National Dental Association and regularly participates in study groups with her classmates. When she has more time, she’d like to sign up to be a middle school mentoring — one of her passions is serving as a positive role model and resource to children less fortunate.

She isn’t sure of what kind of dentist she wants to be but she does know she’d like to return to her public health roots someday.

“My dream is to return home and help out

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See BECOME, Page 17

# Dental students are ADA members, too

BY JENNIFER GARVIN

There are more than 161,000 members of the American Dental Association, including some 24,000 student members.

Predoctoral students join the American Student Dental Association and the ADA at the same time and receive benefits from both organizations.

What's the difference between ASDA and the ADA?

The American Student Dental Association is a national student-run organization that protects and advances the rights, interests and welfare of dental students.

The ADA develops resources for students, manages student membership operations, connects students to the ADA and mentors future leaders of the profession.

ADA student members have access to the same benefits that ADA member dentists get, including:

- Member access to the ADA Center for Professional Success website at Success.ADA.org.
- Access to the ADA Library and its extensive electronic journals, resources and research databases.
- No-cost life and disability insurance

from ADA Insurance Plans.

- Access to the Journal of the American Dental Association, ADA News, ADA New Dentist News and all e-communications and alerts.
- Travel benefits.

For more information about your student member benefits, contact the ADA by email at [studentaffairs@ada.org](mailto:studentaffairs@ada.org). ■

—garvinj@ada.org

## Become

Continued from Page 16

people in my hometown who don't have access to many of the dental outreach programs that are offered in larger cities."

Dan Yang

Dan Yang didn't always know he wanted to be a dentist. He did, however, know he was drawn to health care.

As an undergraduate at the University of Maryland College Park, he majored in bio-engineering and figured he'd apply to medical school. He even worked at the University of Maryland Medical Center doing research before an opportunity to shadow Dr. Katelyn Niu convinced him dentistry was where he wanted to be.

"I always knew that I wanted to be in health care because I really enjoy that special patient-health care provider interaction/relationship," said Dan, whose family immigrated to the U.S. from China when he was 8. "Dental school made a lot of sense to me because I really enjoy working with my hands."

Two months in, he's already thrown himself into numerous student organizations — including the Chinese Student Association, Korean Student Association and Hispanic Dental Association — in addition to being the class secretary. The groups regularly meet during their lunch, which makes a nice change of pace from the intensity of the curriculum. The gatherings also occasionally come with a free lunch.

"Everyone always says that first year will kick you in the butt and it turns out to be true!" he said. "The upperclassmen walking around school are living proof that [it] won't completely kill me so I have nothing to worry about, right? I am sure when I finish this year, I can be proud no matter what because of what a challenge this year will be."

In addition, he's appreciative of the school's Big/Little program, which assigns second-year students to act as mentors to first-years.

"I feel very lucky that I get along so well with my 'Big,'" he said of his new friend, second-year Kevin Son.

All dental lectures are recorded and posted online, but like many of his peers, Dan prefers to go to class in person.

"My approach for dental school has evolved — or devolved, depending on how you look at it — to living from exam to exam simply because of the sheer volume of them during the course of a semester."

Once a week he volunteers for Project Jump Start and makes bagged lunches to feed to Baltimore's homeless.

"No matter what kind of dentist I become, I hope that I can be a compassionate health care professional who is competent at what I end up doing. I hate it when someone comes to me for help but I am unable to help them. That is not a situation that I want to be in when I am practicing." ■

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