



INTRODUCTION

Public Health Dentistry

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I was quite honored to be asked to put together an issue of the *Journal of the California Dental Association* devoted to dental public health. Not many practicing dentists think of public health as a dental specialty.

Professor Silverstein's paper presents the pathways and programs that dentists can take to become part of the specialty. Dr. Yamamoto, who recently became board eligible for the specialty, provides a personal view of his transition from private practice to public health dentistry.

We felt that the scope of this issue should also go beyond that of the specialty itself, and discuss areas where nonpublic health dentists become involved in the issues and programs that concern the public's oral health.

This involvement extends to research, public policy, advocacy, and education. Professor Weintraub provides a perspective of dental public health research that includes classic epidemiological detective work and examples of public health research projects undertaken at the UCSF School of Dentistry. Dr. Reifel provides a clinical perspective of public health dentistry in California, describing the various federal clinical programs throughout the state.

Finally, Professor Maida and I use broad strokes to examine the various players involved in oral health public policy and programs in the state, and areas where we are moving ahead and trailing behind.

We hope that these papers will provide you with a helpful view of dental public health as a specialty and as a process in California.

