

Are Extended Show, Venue Change Solutions to Crowded Spring Session?

I never write letters to the editor. The Spring Scientific Session at Anaheim is becoming unbearable. The crowds!

Let me start by saying that I cannot even imagine the complexities of putting together a convention of this size. The financial commitment must be enormous too. The big problem is the crowds at this session were way too much for anybody to get anything productive done. It took me 45 minutes to drive the last three-quarters of a mile in front of the convention center. I finally said "It's not worth it," did a U-turn, and left. This was one hour before the convention hall even opened. I live in the next town over from Anaheim and am very familiar with the area and know how to get around, but it was just a mess.

As a dues-paying CDA member for the last 20 years, I think that this is a huge disservice to California dentists. Something must be done so that the dentists who support this organization can take advantage of this meeting. Perhaps the convention needs to run longer. Perhaps the convention needs to be offered twice in Southern California. Perhaps a change of venue. Perhaps scheduling one day when only dentists or hygienists can get in. I love getting team members involved, but the dentists are the ones who are making the decisions in the practice; they are the ones who must be given access.

I never made it inside the hall, but I can imagine the scene inside. Look, we all want to see old friends and I understand these things are about making contacts etc., but I think most dentists simply

want to see what's new, get some questions answered about a couple of products, and maybe take a class or two.

I'm not some old fuddy-duddy. I'm 45 years old. We all want to have some fun, but this convention only rolls around once a year and we need this chance to be able to have all these products and services under one roof, and be able to talk to the representatives.

I enjoy the dental convention. It's a great time to get an update of what's happening out there. Let's start a dialogue about the best ways to handle crowd control so this valuable meeting best serves its members.

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You Can Lead a Horse to Water, but You Can't Make Him Brush

I wanted to thank you for Dr. Gold's editorial on parental responsibility for dental health in the May issue of the *Journal of the California Dental Association* (36:321-2).

As you say, we could question what parents value in their family lives — the \$60K SUV, keeping up with the Joneses, etc., but the bottom line is that they will need to answer to the health of their children. Many times children are treated like a possession ... my SUV needs maintenance, I take it to the mechanic. My child has cavities; I send them to the dentist to deal with it.

In my practice, I reinforce the concept that parents have a daily responsibility and accountability to their children to keep their teeth clean. I explain to them

that I only see their children twice a year; who will keep their teeth clean the other 363 days? When parents complain their children don't like having their teeth brushed, we talk about the usual techniques mirroring the parent, having the parent brush after the child brushes, etc., but that's all part of being a parent; brushing isn't the only thing a child doesn't like to do. How do you respond when your child acts that way? Merit reward? Flat out bribery? Whatever works?

I am not an uncaring soul; I have four children's worth of experience. But at some point in our lives as parents, we must communicate a sense of responsibility by the parent AND by the child.

I recently sat in on a focus marketing group where there was a discussion about electric toothbrushes for kids. Most dentists' opinions about children and toothbrushing seemed to be that WE as a profession need to find the magic wand that will solve all our children's brushing problems; even the pedodontists in the group seemed intent on finding that instrument vs. creating accountability of the parent for the child's dental health. A suggestion that the manufacturer create an interactive brushing program that involves the parent and the child got a lukewarm reception. If the parent cannot motivate the child at home, who can?

We as dentists can only do so much for our patients. I don't think we need to feel bad if parents don't recognize their accountability. Like the saying goes, you can only lead a horse to water ...

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