

THE OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE FOR DENTAL PRACTICE LEADERS 2020 EDITION TWO

OBSERVER

A Publication of the American Association of Dental Office Management
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#AADOM CARES

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AADOM MEMBERS TAKE THE LEAD

to Build Their Infection Control Expertise

| SUBMITTED BY DANB/THE DALE FOUNDATION

Following proper infection prevention and control protocol has always been essential in the dental office. Dental team members are among the most at-risk professionals given the close interactions they have with patients. And now, in today's environment, taking proper safety precautions is even more critical. AADOM members are dedicated professionals who are eager to advance their knowledge and enhance the impact they can make on their dental practices.

Several AADOM members have already taken the lead to ensure they have the expertise to guide their practices in implementing proper infection control protocol by completing the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate Program™.

The OSAP-DALE Foundation Certificate Program was recently launched by the Organization for Safety, Asepsis, and Prevention (OSAP) and the DALE Foundation, the official affiliate of the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). The program includes two online educational components and an online assessment:

1. OSAP-DALE Foundation online CDEA® module: Understanding CDC's Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings
2. OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control eHandbook™
3. OSAP-DALE Foundation eHandbook Assessment™

Steps 1 and 2 can be completed in any order, and step 3 can be accessed after successfully completing steps 1 and 2.

Earning the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate™ is also one of the requirements to become an AADOM Master (MAADOM), and several AADOM Fellows (FAADOM) couldn't wait to get started.

GOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Shelly Otte, FAADOM, is the practice leader at Mountain Wellness Dentistry and was among the first to earn the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate. She was eager to complete the program right away as she is currently working towards earning the MAADOM distinction.

"When AADOM announced there would be an additional level of professional recognition, I immediately knew I would get started on the process," Otte recounts. "Receiving my FAADOM was such a pivotal moment for me personally and professionally, and I knew that achieving my MAADOM would also be equally, if not more, rewarding. The OSAP-DALE Foundation Certificate requirement seemed like the perfect addition to the MAADOM requirements, and I was excited to get started."

Carla Collier, FAADOM, who is a consultant at Global Team Solutions, had a similar response. "As a team leader, it is important to continue to expand your knowledge and keep up with any changes that are happening, in order to help every team member be the very best they can be," she explains.

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...TAKE THE LEAD CONTINUED

"I am a true believer that when you stop learning, you stop growing personally as well as professionally. It is important to keep your brain sharp and open to learning. I said last year at the AADOM conference that I am doing this!"

GAINING INFECTION CONTROL EXPERTISE

Valarie Caulfield, FAADOM, also recently earned the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate. Caulfield is the practice administrator at Sodorff & Wilson Family Dentistry. Although she has worked in dentistry for several years, she says she learned a lot by completing the program. "What surprised me the most was how little I understood about the disease and germ process and how it could affect us if we don't follow standard precautions strictly," she explains. "I also learned that my office and team members are spot on and I'm very proud of that."

Likewise, Collier notes that she found the program to be informative and challenging.

"I was a bit nervous about completing the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate Program," she says. "I am a people person and a numbers girl who has no desire to work in the back part of the office. While I knew many of the items covered from having annual OSHA training, I was surprised at how many items were included and at the great detail in which they were covered."

PRACTICE MANAGERS' ROLE IN INFECTION CONTROL

Even though some practice managers will never work on the clinical side of the dental business, having complete and accurate dental infection control knowledge is critical for them to be able to guide their

practice appropriately, and hire qualified dental team members in the future. Caulfield notes that it is essential for practice managers to be educated in this area, saying that "in light of what we are all experiencing currently with COVID-19, we will be answering questions from our fellow team members and patients about our sterilization and disinfection practices - and discussing best practices with our doctors and team when we get back to practicing daily."

Caulfield says that one of the biggest benefits she sees to earning the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate is that she now better understands standard precautions and best practices for infection control. "I can use my resources to develop training for new and established team members," she notes, going on to call out that "it's always a nice refresher for us all - and a great reminder of how we can best keep our team and our patients safe."

Jennifer Randall, FAADOM, office manager for Dr. William Kaylakie, agrees. "It is our job to protect the doctor and the practice...if we don't know the rules, how can we enforce them?" she asks. "I need to be knowledgeable in this area, so I can better understand concerns of employees and patients that deal with infection control."

Otte shares a similar sentiment. "It is extremely important for practice managers to have this information to ensure our offices are up-to-date and compliant," she states. She goes on to note that "there are a good number of practice managers that do not have a clinical background, and this program will better equip them for their role. This is more important now than ever before."

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MEET THE AUTHOR

About OSAP

The Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP) is a growing community of clinicians, educators, researchers, and industry representatives who advocate for safe and infection-free delivery of oral healthcare. For additional information, visit www.OSAP.org.

About DANB

The Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB) is recognized by the American Dental Association as the national certifying board for dental assistants. For more information, visit www.danb.org.

About the DALE Foundation

The DALE Foundation, the official DANB affiliate, offers interactive online educational courses and resources to advance the dental team. To learn more, visit www.dalefoundation.org.

...TAKE THE LEAD CONTINUED

For Otte, earning the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate was a way to help her stand out among her peers. "I believe my team and doctor have a greater respect for my experience and knowledge with an achievement like this...it gives my team, doctor and patients the peace of mind, knowing that I work hard to stay current, relevant and committed to best practices," she says.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Caulfield encourages all AADOM members and other practice administrators to consider completing the OSAP-DALE Foundation Certificate Program themselves and recommend it to their teams. "Especially with COVID-19, the more education we

can receive, the more prepared we are to return to everyday procedures in our offices," she explains.

Collier agrees, noting that the level of detail covered in the educational components was eye-opening. "The program will help you understand in great detail all of the things you hear covered in your annual OSHA training and more," she says.

Beyond the knowledge and outside recognition, for Otte, earning the OSAP-DALE Foundation Dental Infection Prevention and Control Certificate was a point of personal pride. "Investing in yourself, personally and professionally, is the greatest gift you can give yourself and your team," she says. "The amount of pride, accomplishment and reward you feel from achievements like these are priceless!" ■



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