

NEW YORK DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

Mission

- Supports the *advancement of the art and science of dental hygiene* in order to ensure access to and delivery of quality preventive and therapeutic oral health care services to all New Yorkers in a cost-effective manner.
- Through education and outreach to the public, strives to increase awareness of the benefits of preventive dental hygiene services.
- Promotes the highest standards of dental hygiene education, licensure, practice and research
- Seeks to integrate dental hygiene as a component of interdisciplinary health care to improve the public's total health

Board of Directors Meeting**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026 – 9 a.m.****Virtual Meeting****Welcome, introductions and board procedures**

President Belangie Perez Torres called the meeting to order at 9:01am. President Perez Torres greeted new and returning board members for 2026. She reviewed meeting procedures, duties of the board and how we can utilize zoom features to make our board meeting run smoothly and effectively, particularly using the “raise hand” feature.

Roll call**Board:**

President	Belangie Perez Torres	Present
President-Elect	Audra Haynes	Present
VP Govt Affairs	Donna Hickey	Present
VP Mem. Dev. & Engt.	Shaquantia Wyche	Present
VP Prof Dev	Janine Love	Present
Treasurer	Jeff McMinn	Present
Secretary	Jen Baker	Present
Immediate Past Pres	Marlyce James	Excused

Directors:

NYC	Vermell Ford	Present
Westchester/Mid-Hudson	Kristen Hofer	Present
Adiron. /Cap. Region	Jeff McMinn	Present
Central Region	Tiffany Kerns	Present
Rochester/Finger Lakes	Wendy Nupp (alt)	Present
Buffalo	Melisa Devaney	Present
Long Island	Jean Hall	Present

Executive Director:

Beth Krueger	Present
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Additional Attendees

Guests	Robin Grasso, Doris Stockton, Elizabeth Simpson
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Review of and action on agenda

Tiffany Kerns made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 1**) to approve today's meeting agenda, and Melisa Devaney seconded. With no discussion, the board voted to approve today's agenda.

Review of and action on minutes

a. October 26, 2025 post-House BOD meeting

Jean Hall made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 2**) to approve the October 26, 2025 post-House BOD meeting and Jeff McMinn seconded. With no discussion, the board voted to approve these minutes.

b. October 24, 2025 first House meeting

Janine Love made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 3**) to approve the October 24, 2025 first House meeting minutes, and Tiffany Kerns seconded. With no discussion, the board voted to approve these minutes.

c. October 26, 2025 second House meeting

Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 4**) to approve the October 26, 2025 second House meeting notes, and Jeff Mc Minn seconded. With no discussion, the board voted to approve these minutes.

Board orientation: Board members' roles

a. NYDHA mission, vision, strategic goals

President Perez Torres thanked the board for their dedication this year, and reviewed our roles, responsibilities and opportunities for growth in order to support NYDHA's mission (see top of minutes for mission statement). President Perez Torres discussed strategic goals such as supporting New York RDHs, advocating for the profession, strengthening NYDHA infrastructure, and advocating for optimal oral health for New Yorkers. Our vision statement and mission statement in full can be found on the NYDHA website.

The board reflected on our current actions to meet our mission, goals and vision, what we are doing successfully and where we can improve or focus in the coming year. Donna Hickey stated she would like to see more cohesiveness between board members through utilizing each other's roles and committees, and she celebrated the successes and strengths of our board. Tiffany Kerns felt we were fulfilling our vision statement with our success regarding collaborative practice legislation the end of last year, and with how successful our Annual Sessions are. Robin Grasso also shared her excitement about our recent collaborative practice legislation success.

Audra Haynes had the idea of adding an "FAQ" section to our website for our board and/or our members, and Executive Director Beth Krueger agreed to come up with a rough draft to bring back to the board and our VPs for their contributions.

b. Organizational structure

President Perez Torres discussed how NYDHA as a professional association is organized, our relationship with ADHA, and how we are categorized legally. She

discussed the NYDHA House of Delegates and the board as the administrative body of our association. She reviewed the three fiduciary duties of board members and our governing documents.

c. Annual conflict of interest disclosure and governing documents

Executive Director Beth Krueger previously sent out our annual conflict of interest forms to board members, and asked for them to be returned promptly if they have not yet been sent.

d. Election of representative from Board to Executive Committee – see description provided in materials

A detailed description of the elected representative from the board to executive committee role was shared with board members. Tiffany Kerns nominated Vermell Ford (to continue on as elected representative), and Janine Love seconded (**Motion 1-10-26, 5**). With no discussion, the board voted to have Vermell Ford continue as elected representative from the board to the executive committee.

e. Strategies: How can Board members make a difference—together and individually?

The board brainstormed key characteristics that are valuable for a board members to demonstrate at meetings and as a representative of NYDHA. President Perez Torres discussed high-functioning board member characteristics.

Financial reports

a. 2025 financial report

Treasurer Jeff McMinn reviewed the end of year 2025 financial report with board members, which was provided to the board. Overall, expenses were up when compared to 2024 and most of our budget income was used as planned for our budgeted expenses, which is a success. Registration for our annual session was down this year, but was on par with what we budgeted and expected. Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 6**). to accept the 2025 financial report, and Jean Hall seconded. With no discussion, the board voted to approve this report.

b. Strategies: 2026 financial procedures and outlook

Treasurer Jeff McMinn thanked our board and previous treasurers for their support in transitioning him to this role, and when it comes time to Ways & Means duties, he will be seeking help from board members.

Annual Session/Empire Conference

a. Post-2025 conference review

President Perez Torres and Executive Director Beth Krueger shared that we received strong positive feedback for our speakers and topics from our 2025 annual session.

b. 2026 conference

i. Planning updates

Our 2026 conference will be held at the Hyatt in Hauppauge, Long Island. President Perez Torres is in the process of forming a task force committee for this year's annual session. Robin Grasso shared that we really want to work hard to promote this year's conference as the cost of hosting an event in Long Island is very expensive. She is hoping that our advances in increasing our practice act will lead to more engagement and desire for in-person networking at our conference to compete with the convenience of online CEs available for hygienists.

Some preliminary speakers and topics were discussed. Elizabeth Simpson asked how we will be promoting this year's conference and the task force will address this early on in their planning for early promotion and publication. Audra Haynes shared that we may want to focus on collaborative practice, especially with recent practice act wins. Board members wanted to also focus on student involvement in particular this year and make it easier financially for them to attend.

Committee appointments

- Belangie Perez-Torres: NYS Oral Health Coalition (Liaison), Social Media/Technology (Co- Chair)
- Tiffany Kerns: Social Media/Technology (Co – Chair)
- Audra Haynes: Infrastructure (President-Elect, Line Officer), NYS DH Educators (Liaison)

- Donna Hickey: NYSDA House of Delegates (Liaison), NYS Board for Dentistry (Liaison), Governmental Affairs & Public Policy
- Shaquantia Wyche: Task Force on Workplace, Membership Development & Engagement (Co- Chair)
- Harold Jennings: Membership Development & Engagement (Co- Chair)
- Robin Grasso: ADHA Foundation (Liaison)
- Jen Baker: BOD Action, HOD Action
- Jeffery McMinn: Finance, Ways & Means
- Janine Love: Education
- Marlyce James: Awards, Nominations, Ethics
- Jean Hall: Student Services
- Marianne Belles: Course Approval

Component structure and organization update

a. Governance and operation survey

Our charter agreement sets duties and requirements of each party involved in our charter agreement with ADHA. Under the ADHA agreement, state associations have comparable charter agreements with their components. Our component leaders will soon receive a survey from NYDHA regarding compliance with charter agreement requirements, e.g., meetings, insurance, governing documents and filings. This process has been done before, and functions as an assessment survey. When directors receive this survey, they should be turned around and submitted ASAP.

b. Strategies: Increasing engagement

Board members brainstormed ways to increase engagement and connect as a board and with members. President Perez Torres stressed we want to select the right tool that people will use. Tiffany Kerns noted that we had previously used a service platform named Base Camp.

2026 initiatives and committee engagement

a. Membership engagement and development

VP Shaquantia Wyche shared membership renewal numbers as of January 2, 2026. We have many members that have not yet renewed; however, 59% of our members have done so as of the first few weeks of the new year. This represents a significant opportunity for improvement and growth. The membership renewal drop date is

February 15. Plans for the membership committee this year will include frequent meetings, member monthly spotlight in our monthly emails, and establishing quarterly events for members in coordination with our Professional Development and Workforce committees. Discussion was had on difficulty accessing our membership numbers and data lagging in the ADHA database which houses and maintains membership information regarding national, state constituents and components.

Jean Hall made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 7**) to accept the membership report and Tiffany Kerns seconded. The board voted to accept this report.

b. Professional development

VP of Professional Development Janine Love shared her ideas for the coming year, with a priority being education on the collaborative practice effort. She would like to make our members more aware of details regarding collaborative practice. She would like to develop a template to share with local components with ideas for in – person events. Webinar CE topics for 2026 could include risk management, collaborative practice, and Teledentistry. Lastly, she asked for contact info for components and shared that we have a student mentee for her Professional Development committee this year. Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 8**) to accept the Professional Development report and Tiffany Kerns seconded. Discussion was had on how the student mentee was established, and opportunities to replicate this with other schools. Janine is still seeking committee members for Professional Development, particularly educators. The board voted to accept Janine's report.

c. Governmental affairs and public policy

i. State legislation and regulations

VP of Governmental affairs and public policy Donna Hickey gave an update on the successful passage and enactment of our expanded collaborative practice legislation which was signed into law December 19 by the Governor. There is a technical amendment for Collaborative Practice Law. This legislation, introduced this month, adds foster care settings. This change was called for in the Governor's signing message and NYDHA had supported this addition. The change is expected to be enacted in this session.

The Governmental Affairs committee will be working to urge RDHs and dentists and designated sites to participate in collaborative practice; helping develop CEs, resources and models and additionally, encouraging the use of teledentistry with RDH involvement, helping develop resources and models. Donna Hickey and Beth Krueger have been in contact with state boards and various legislative groups and individuals, and at many in-person meetings

Donna will be speaking on public policy issues on behalf of NYDHA at the Greater NY Dental Meeting and also will be offering CE courses to components and offering to speak at schools.

January 7 was the start of the session for 2026. As this is the second of a two-year legislative cycle, our targeted legislation introduced in 2025 will not start from the beginning again but are already introduced. Block anesthesia is in the Assembly Ways and Means committee and will resume progress there. NYDHA advocates for legislation for RDHs to provide block anesthesia, and legislation for dental therapy. Our priority legislation for 2026 is block anesthesia; we also are advocating for dental therapy and the dental/dental hygienists compacts, but as NYS does not have a history compacts, this is challenging.

NYDHA also continues to speak in opposition to proposals for oral preventive specialists to perform scaling and other measure that weaken education and safety. NYDHA is monitoring actions in other states on such proposals. No legislation has been introduced in New York.

This committee continues to participate in state dental board meetings, speaking at conferences, participating in meetings with ADHA and working on multiple ongoing initiatives and campaigns. There is an article in “Dimensions of Dental Hygiene” on the NY Bill to expand RDH Collaborative Practice, and ADHA publicized our recent success. Donna observed that it is encouraging to be asked to the table to contribute as an organization.

Kristen Hofer made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 9**) to accept Donna’s report and Belangie Perez Torres seconded. The board voted to accept Donna’s report.

d. Social media

Tiffany Kerns and Belangie Perez Torres will be co-chairs for this committee in 2026. Melisa Devaney and Harold Jennings will serve as committee members. The committee will continue ongoing campaigns in 2026. Tiffany discussed plans to conduct registration for webinars that have fees through our webinar platform rather than separately. Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 10**) to accept Belangie's report, and Jean Hall seconded. There was no further discussion, and the board voted to accept the report.

e. Workforce Issues

i. Task force report

Belangie Perez Torres and Shaquantia Wyche will together on the workforce issues taskforce this year and a focus will be on developing action plans and resources from our previous surveys. Plans for this year include completing an initial workforce toolkit and creating a log of resources for different "workforce-related" categories. Shaquantia will set up meeting times with the task force and also to meet with other committees to incorporate the Workforce task force into CE events. The board discussed current workforce issues such as shortages of hygienists in some areas, a growing culture of hygienists who are only interested in temping, and limited educational opportunities for students due to limited clinic chairs. Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 11**) to accept this report, and Jeff McMinn seconded. The board voted to accept this report.

Identification of Association priorities and projects for 2026

1. Enhancing membership development and engagement and building opportunities for member involvement
2. Assessing and supporting the needs of dental hygienists in the state of New York
3. Advancing the profession through interprofessional collaboration
4. Enhancing communication through all modalities to engage and promote awareness of the dental hygiene career and profession.
5. Strengthening systems and promoting avenues to increase access to care for all of New York State

Audra Haynes made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 12**) to accept these priorities for 2026, and Jeff McMinn seconded. The board voted to approve.

ADHA matters

President Perez Torres encouraged board members to attend ADHA advocacy events and programs this year.

President's report

President Perez Torres shared the importance of clarity and communication this year, her desire to be involved in any component events, and her willingness to help and be available wherever the board needs. She is willing to listen to and accept any feedback from the board.

Submission of component reports - Component Directors - *[key items – submitted reports to be included following minutes]*

Unfinished and new business

Unfinished business – Melisa Devaney made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 13**) to go into executive session, and Jean Hall seconded. The board voted to go into executive session at 1:39pm.

Tiffany Kerns made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 14**) to leave executive session, and Jean Hall seconded. The board voted to exit executive session at 1:45pm.

Adjournment

Donna Hickey made a motion (**Motion 1-10-26, 15**) to adjourn and Jean Hall seconded. The board voted to adjourn at 1:52pm.

Westchester Mid-Hudson Dental Hygienists' Association (WMHDHA) Component Update to NYDHA

The Westchester Mid-Hudson Dental Hygienists' Association (WMHDHA) is pleased to share highlights from the past year reflecting our continued commitment to advancing the profession of dental hygiene through advocacy, education, and service.

Student Recognition

This spring, WMHDHA had the honor of recognizing three outstanding dental hygiene students from within our component:

- Veronica Orgera, New York University
- Xiomara Leal, Orange County Community College
- Collette Reynolds, Hostos Community College

We congratulated these students and warmly welcomed them into the profession.

Continuing Education Programs

WMHDHA successfully hosted two in-person continuing education programs this year:

- **April 30, 2025 – Advocacy in Action**
Held at Tesoro D'Italia in Pleasantville, NY, this CE program focused on legislative updates, advocacy, and expanding access to care. The session was presented by Donna Hickey, RDH, NYDHA Vice President of Governmental Affairs and Public Policy.
- **October 16, 2025 – Emerging Technologies for Patient Care**
Hosted at Van Vliet Orthodontics in Highland, NY, this program explored the integration of emerging technologies to improve treatment outcomes and quality of life. WMHDHA was honored to welcome Dr. Bradford Ganz as the featured speaker.

State-Level Engagement

WMHDHA was proud to send four delegates to the NYDHA Empire Conference, held October 24–26, 2025, at the Marriott Downtown in Syracuse, NY:

- Robin Grasso
- Danielle Murphy
- Chetna Rana
- Elizabeth Kaylor

NYDHA CE Weekend & House of Delegates

Delegates reported a highly successful NYDHA Continuing Education Weekend, offering meaningful in-person learning opportunities and up to 13 CE credits. Sessions addressed clinical advancements, artificial intelligence in dentistry, implant maintenance, digital scanning, professional practice models, and current legislative and regulatory updates.

Student poster presentations demonstrated strong participation and engagement from multiple dental hygiene programs, highlighting emerging issues and innovative research topics.

WMHDHA congratulates all award recipients recognized at the NYDHA Annual Session for their outstanding contributions in community service, mentorship, professional advancement, and volunteerism.

Closing

WMHDHA remains dedicated to supporting NYDHA's mission through advocacy, education, and professional engagement. We look forward to continued collaboration as we work together to strengthen and advance the dental hygiene profession throughout New York State.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin Hofer, RDH, MSDH, FADHA

WMHDHA Component Director and Treasurer

Central Region DHA Report

We have been in contact with our members with newsletters and social media. We thanked our members for their attendance to Empire Conference. We are working on meetings/social gathering for 2026.

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany Kerns, Director

Tiffany Kerns, BT, RDH