Award to help dental students offer dental care to troops

The ADA Foundation awarded its 2009 Bud Tarrson Dental Student Community Leadership Award to the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Dental Medicine in recognition of an oral health treatment program for National Guard troops.

The UNLV School of Dental Medicine will receive $5,000 with the award to enhance student education and outreach to underserved populations.

“This selfless effort by these dental students exemplifies what the ADA Foundation and the Tarrson Access to Oral Health Care Award are all about,” said Dr. Arthur A. Dugoni, president of the ADA Foundation.

“We are improving the lives and dental health of others by connecting people and investing in the human potential of so many individuals.”

In 2008, UNLV dental students founded a Student Access and Ferrin Memorial Clinic to help meet the oral health needs of National Guard troops deemed non-deployable because of dental problems.

Some of these troops cannot access dental care because they are not on active duty, making them ineligible for military benefits. The program has since expanded to include all local military veterans with limited access to dental care.

The first clinic, held in July 2008 at the UNLV School of Dental Medicine, treated 19 patients. Since then, there have been six additional clinics, with approximately 50 patients receiving free treatment at each session, including more than 100 veterans. UNLV dental students, supervised by Nevada licensed dentists, provided treatment that included restorations, root canals, extractions, crowns and dentures.

The clinic honors the memory of a UNLV dental student’s brother killed in action in 2004, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Created in 2005 in memory of philanthropist Bud Tarrson, former CEO and owner of the John O. Butler Co., the Tarrson Award recognizes one exemplary volunteer community service project developed by dental students enrolled in a predoctoral dental education program.

A Chicago native, Tarrson was a director of the former ADA Health Foundation (now ADA Foundation) from 1994 to 1999.

Between 2004 and 2008, the Tarrson Award honored outstanding community service on the part of a practicing dentist or lay person. In 2009, the ADA Foundation rededicated the Tarrson Award program to highlight significant dental student outreach to vulnerable communities.

“The new approach to this annual award program supports the efforts and acknowledges the initiative and outreach of dental students across the country,” said Linda Tarrson, who initiated the initiative and outreach of dental education programs in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Many outstanding student programs to help dental students navigate the system, linking them with dentists to provide care. Participants at a kickoff event at the ADA Foundation, please visit www.adafoundation.org.

About the ADA Foundation

The ADA Foundation’s primary goal is to connect people and organizations in order to effect a positive difference via improved oral health.

For more information about grants awards through the ADA Foundation, please visit www.adafoundation.org.

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Meridian chart shows teeth and organ relationships

Many people are familiar with Chinese medicine or acupuncture and have heard about meridians, the channels through which energy flows in the body. Each organ, gland and body structure has an associated meridian, including the teeth.

What does all this mean to health and wellness? Well, if someone has a bad tooth, the energy flow through the meridian belonging to that tooth will be altered. This in turn can affect the health of all the other organs on that meridian.

For example, tooth #14, the upper left first molar tooth, is on the same meridian as the kidneys, liver, spleen, stomach and breast. So, if this tooth has a problem, it will be altered. This in turn can affect the health of all the other organs may be affected as well.

So, if this tooth has a problem, it will be altered. This in turn can affect the health of all the other organs on that meridian.

McConnell also recommends a remineralizing paste specifically designed to strengthen the tooth surface and make it less susceptible to decay. A secondary benefit of the paste is that it also helps to balance the pH of the mouth and support dental health.

The paste is applied to the teeth once a day after brushing. Patients may find these products online or in stores, if they are not available from their dentists.

Other products, such as Biotene, help promote saliva flow, and different toothpastes have shown the ability to remineralize weak tooth surfaces, McConnell said. He said the Closys, Breath Rx and remineralizing paste like MI Paste are easiest to use and most effective.

The key, he said, is for patients to avoid any products that promote dryness to and incorporate products that are antibacterial, help mineralize the teeth and help balance the health of the mouth.

One holistic dentist was so inspired by Stone’s statement that he wrote a book titled “Rescued By My Dentist,” which is an account of his patients with health problems related to their mercury amalgam fillings.

Experienced biological dentists who have an understanding of the teeth and body connection are able to consider the oral cavity for the possible cause of symptoms in patients who have been unable to secure a diagnosis through regular allopathic medicine channels.

The Interactive Meridian Tooth Chart is located at www.talkinternational.com/toothchart.html.

Kootenai College in Montana, whose graduates will work in Native American areas.

The recent kickoff event provided current students from the University of Oklahoma and UCLA, who began their training a year ago, an opportunity to share their experiences as they prepare for their six-month internships.

The initial student class from the program’s most recent site addition, Temple University, met enrollees affiliated with the two other schools at the event. They received laptop computers, an orientation to their online instructional training and a program overview.

“We look forward to seeing these individuals return to their communities as trained community health workers and members of the dental team, playing an important role in resolving barriers to help improve residents’ dental care,” said Raymond F. Gist, DDS, ADA president-elect.

“That’s what the Community Dental Health Coordinators program is all about.”

Although the CDHC is a new position, it is modeled on the community health worker, a demonstrated member of the public health team who focuses on health education, prevention, disease management and increasing access. Because the CDHC will function much like community health workers, the ADA believes that they, too, will have a positive impact on the oral health of their communities through education and outreach.
Considering the anatomy of a professional-looking Web site

By Mary Kay Miller

Your Web site is where your business resides online and the hub of your Internet marketing campaign. It is the virtual representation of who you are and what you are all about. Always incorporate good design principles to ensure your Web site reaches out to the maximum number of new patients and engages as many people as possible.

When you are promoting your treatment and services online, people cannot see you physically like they would if they met you in your office. People do judge you by your cover. This is where a good Web site design comes in.

In any professional practice, dentists and doctors spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on office design, decorating, marketing materials and customer service. Convenient locations should be chosen and appropriate signs displayed so patients have little if any difficulty finding your office.

As you grow your practice in today’s tech-savvy society, your Web site, along with your business cards, letterheads and promotional materials, become the face of your business. Every marketing tool, both online and offline, has its place and matters.

Attention should be paid to every aspect of your Web site. Make sure it performs optimally to serve its purpose by attracting and engaging patients to contact your office for a new patient exam.

In today’s ADHD society, do not give visitors a reason to click on the “back” button. Time is precious to visitors, so get to the point quickly and without fluff. Statistics show:

• You have less than 8 seconds to engage a visitor once he or she clicks on your site.
• On average, a visitor reads only 2.5 pages on your site.
• If a page has more than 500 words and is not neatly organized, most of the content will go unread.
• If your site is difficult to navigate, visitors will click away from it immediately.

Here are ten important rules of thumb to make sure your Web site performs well.

No. 1: Do not use ‘splash’ or ‘flash only’ intro pages

Splash pages are the first pages you see when you arrive at a Web site. They normally have beautiful imagery with words like “Welcome!” or “Click here to enter.” They are pictures with no real purpose other than to entertain. Visitors are not on your site to be entertained; they are there for content rich information. If they want entertainment, they will go to YouTube.

No. 2: Have simple and clear navigation

Provide a simple and straightforward navigational menu that even a young child will know how to use. Stay away from complicated flash-based menus or multi-tiered dropdown menus.

If your visitors cannot figure out how to navigate your site, they will leave it. Design your site for an Internet-challenged newbie. Keep it easy and simple.

No. 5: Allow users to always know where they are on your site

When visitors are deeply engrossed in your pages, they need to know they know which part of the site they are in at that moment.

This way, they will be able to browse relevant information or navigate to any section of the site easily. Don’t confuse your visitors because confusion means “abandon ship!”

No. 4: Write the content on a fifth grade reading level

Make the content easy to read for all ages and educational levels. If visitors don’t understand what is being said, they will click away. A Web site is provided to inform and impress visitors on a basic level. It’s all about them, not you. Don’t speak to them on your level; speak to them on their level.

No. 7: Reduce the number of images on your Web site

Images make your site load slowly and, in many cases, a profusion of images is unnecessary. If you think every image is essential on your site, make sure each one is optimized correctly for quick loading.

No. 6: Make sure your Web site complies with Web standards

Go to www.w3.org and make sure your Web site is cross-browser compatible. If your Web site looks great in Internet Explorer but doesn’t work properly in Firefox and Opera, you will lose prospective new patients. With all the problems with Microsoft, Firefox and Opera browsers are becoming more popular every day.

No. 9: Extra large/small text size

There is more to Web design than graphics. User accessibility and comfort is a big part of it also. Design the text to be legible and correctly sized. This enables your visitors to read it without straining their eyes.

No. 10: Text and background page color

On a computer, some colors are more difficult to read than others. Studies report black text on a white background is the easiest to read.

While text on a black background, although it looks nice, causes eye-strain and is difficult to read. A light background with dark colored text is always your best option.

As a business owner, it is your job to make sure your Web site does what it’s meant to do effectively.

Even though you are not a Web designer, it is your marketing responsibility to ensure your Web site does what it is supposed to: engage and direct new patients to contact your office for a new patient exam. Don’t let minor mistakes in design stop your site from performing.