

It is an exciting time in dentistry. I am in awe of the position that I am in. I am honored to be a part of leading the charge to new opportunities for dental hygienists to serve communities in Ohio. I know many of you do not know much about me, so hopefully as I go through you will gain a bit of insight. I want to begin my address by saying thank you to some spectacular women that I have the privilege to know. I began my career as a dental assistant. The hygienist in the practice encouraged me to go dental hygiene school. I was interested, so not only did she encourage me she drove me to Shawnee State University, introduced me to the instructors, then promptly took me to the student center where she had set up a meeting with an advisor. I graduated dental hygiene school from Shawnee State University and I have former instructors in this room. I have admired and depended on them and their teaching. Their passion for dental hygiene in and outside of clinical practice was evident in their teaching and guidance. You taught me to love public health and giving back to the community. I owe you all a great debt of gratitude that I can never repay. Not only did you give me the tools to be a successful single mother with a fantastic career you taught me what it is to really love what I do. And I love what I do. Actually, I owe a "thank you" to each and every person in this room. You have given me the opportunity to help lead this association into the future. I have been a member since my days as a student but I like many students was not sure what to do with my membership. I attended ADHA sponsored events and tried to be proactive but never really took the time to really dig in and see the opportunities afforded by being a part of the ODHA. In 2013, I was in Chicago at ADHA's Dental hygiene in a changing world course. My life as a silent member changed forever that day when I exchanged business cards with Beth Tronolone. I was ready to be involved and had spent the previous two years traveling and learning everything I could about access to care but I did not know what I was going to do with it or what that looked like. She saw potential in me that I did not see in myself. Thank you, Beth. Linda Wilson was there and said come to our component meetings, so I did. I started attending organized meetings of ODHA and saw the power of organization. Hocking Valley Dental Hygiene Association welcomed me in and from the first day I have felt like I have been there from its inception. Kelly Oberg encouraged me to take on responsibility and introduced me to members and had some hard conversations with me. Jeanne Huber encouraged me to join governmental relations. She gave me a voice. In 2013, I completed my bachelor's degree at Youngstown State University. Diane Kandray was my faculty advisor for my research project. She worked with me for two semesters. I signed up for the course then withdrew but Diane guided me to get approval for certain aspects of the project anyway and I did. That research went to Washington D.C. and I had the opportunity to speak about what I had done to some of the most prestigious leaders in the dental community. Suzanne Smith I still use what I learned in your course about stress management and I still believe it should be a requirement for every college. I met Jayne Klett at leadership retreat and found a soul sister. Our discussions about access to care and our similar experiences growing up fueled my passion to be a part of ODHA leadership. Jayne, you may not know this but the opportunity to speak with you was a great honor for me and opened the door for me to launch a speaking career of my own. Denise Bauers inspired me to apply for UYP and I was accepted. Nichole held my hand when I was going through the candidate's process and her calls were always timely to make sure I was doing ok. Debby Fulks sat up with me the night before candidate's forum last year and helped me rewrite my speech. The entire HVDH were my cheerleaders at every turn, I thank you.

Deborah Stevens spent three hours plus on the phone with me one night, we talked well after midnight and she had a 5 AM workout the next day. She ends every conversation with "I am here" or "I will help you." Gretchen Maddy got me prepared for ADHA annual Session and I thank you for your patience and the straightforward approach. Katie has been wonderfully patient with me and what I call scatterbrained she calls visionary I love you for that. From the time I began dental hygiene school I have felt like I belonged and from day one I have loved everything dental hygiene.

Dental hygienists are unique in their way of coming together and surrounding their colleagues and patients and providing what they need. No other healthcare profession can boast that. I had bronchitis when I first started working in Athens three or four times in one winter. I saw the same doctor twice a week over a month's time. Every time he had to look at my chart and we had the same discussion of why I was there I always left thinking, "is this Groundhog Day?" We are immersed in our patients' lives, they rely on us to provide them with care and advice on treatment and wedding gowns and hair color and cars purchases and we see baby pictures and puppies, in short, we form a trust relationship with the lives we touch. And we touch lives.

The issue of access to care and dental shortage areas is very dear to my heart. I work in the poorest Appalachian county in Ohio, I've traveled to Washington D.C. to discuss research I have conducted concerning Appalachian children but even more than that I am a child of Appalachia. I chose daisies for a very specific reason for our installation ceremony. Without going into a lot of detail because of some challenges when I was young not much was expected of me. My favorite thing to do when I was a little girl was to sit in a field full of daisies. I would pick them, think about how happy they looked, and dream about all the things I thought I would never do. So, imagine the disappointment when the most successful long-term relationship of my life turned out to be with...periodontal disease. I have graduated university not once but three times, I am studying for my masters and now I am the President of the ODHA. This is the greatest achievement of my dental hygiene career to be entrusted by my peers to lead the focus on our future. So, when you look at your daisy let it serve as a reminder that everyone in this room had a hand in putting a girl from Appalachia where she is today. This is the special gift of the dental hygienists; to give of themselves, to encourage and to inspire.

Which brings me back to this exciting time in dentistry. We are living in a world that is progressing at an exponential rate. It has been a 330-year journey to where we are today. Bacteria were discovered from scrapings of teeth in 1674. Dr. Willoughby D. Miller a dentist was intrigued by the germ theory of disease and decided to study the association between oral bacteria and systemic illness. He began traveling and lecturing on oral infection as a cause of systemic disease. In 1910, dentists began advertising as "100 percenters," that meant the dentist, would remove all a persons teeth to prevent or cure disease. In 1938, a group of rheumatologists did a study on 200 of their arthritis patients. As treatment all the teeth were removed. None of the patients improved and three became worse. At the same time the dental cosmos suggested that the concept of oral bacteria causing all human disease was irrational and JAMA charged dentistry and medicine with reviewing the concept of oral sepsis and systemic illness in 1952. We had reached the era where our knowledge had outstripped our technology to treat or prevent and therefore the mouth and body were disconnected until 1989 when a new study found a relationship

between periodontitis and coronary heart disease. Inflammation and plaque and bleeding gums are bad.... who knew? We do.

We are in control of our future. We are ready. We don't need new workforce models the workforce is sitting in this room and its in dental offices and colleges all over Ohio.

And just like the oral systemic link has come back around (kind of like fashion's twenty year cycles), hygienists aren't trying to do something new. We don't want to reinvent the wheel we want to be where we were before, in the schools, in the hospitals, in the factories and clinics, and why not in a pharmacy. Because who is the preventive specialist? And I assure you we are specialist. Who works one on one with inflammation everyday? The dentist, the nurse, the physician.... no it is the dental hygienist who is the prevention specialist. What we do is a specialty. What we do can change lives and helps communities achieve optimum total health but people are not coming to the dental office. They cannot afford it or they can't take off work or their children cannot miss school. Hmmmmm what's the solution to that problem? Restricting the dental hygiene profession to a traditional setting i.e. dental office threatens the health of communities and not just at-risk populations. In a list of top ten items that the middle-class in America can no longer afford dentistry is #7. The return on investment for having an oral prevention specialist in a school or a hospital or a factory, a nursing home, or obgyn is priceless and we are the one's responsible for bringing this priceless message not just to our fellow hygienists and legislators...this message has to go to the community.

Anytime I am in a meeting or presenting a course and trying to inspire progress, I always do two things: (because this is how my mind works) I listen to the song, "This Girl is on Fire" by Alisha Keys and I don't know how many of you have seen the movie "Gladiator," but I always think of the seen where Russell Crowe is going to Rome to try to earn his freedom and take revenge on Caesar and the owner of the Gladiators says, "If you control the mob you can control Rome and earn your freedom." We are on fire, so, here is my if/then statement: If we raise awareness in our communities utilize the support to be gained through collaboration and public media then we can earn our freedom.

Here's to an exciting year!

Thank you, enjoy this gift of a day.
Amy Kinnamon RDH
ODHA President