

# ADAA/DANB Alliance

(formerly the ADAA/DANB Ad Hoc Committee  
to Enhance the Dental Assisting Profession)



MEMORANDUM  
September 2005

TO: ADAA State Presidents  
ADAA Board of Trustees  
DANB Certificants  
DANB Board of Directors

FROM: ADAA/DANB Alliance

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RE: 2005 ADAA/DANB Alliance Newsletter

**I. ADAA/DANB Alliance  
(formerly the ADAA/DANB Ad Hoc Committee  
to Enhance the Dental Assisting Profession)**

### *Mission Statement*

To come together to advance the dental assisting profession and to enhance the delivery of oral healthcare by presenting a united and strengthened voice that reflects all careers within dental assisting.

### *Goals*

1. To conduct research to determine the needs of the dental assisting profession at the grassroots level
2. To define which of these needs are within the purview of either or both organizations' mission statements
3. To attempt to address those needs that fall within either or both organizations' purviews
4. To move toward mandatory education and credentialing for dental assistants
5. To work together to enhance the delivery of oral healthcare
6. To maintain organizational autonomy while accomplishing goals 1-5

## II. Summary of the ADAA/DANB Alliance Meeting February 26, 2005

The ADAA/DANB Alliance held its second meeting in Chicago on February 26, 2005, at which time the following agenda items were addressed:

A. Review of Preliminary Results of Phase IV, DANB/ADAA Study to Define and Rank Core Competencies for Dental Assistants

Phase IV consisted of a re-survey of CDAs, directors of ADA-accredited dental assisting program, and non-DANB Certified assistants. Now that the final phase has been completed, the ADAA/DANB Alliance plans to accomplish the following steps in 2005 and 2006 :

1. Complete the resurvey and analysis of responses from non-DANB Certified assistants
2. Perform statistical analysis to compare Phase III and Phase IV data
3. Request that ADA review and potentially approve or support DANB staff's interpretation of the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA CoDA) Core Dental Assisting Curriculum points that are addressed in this study. ADA CoDA's Dental Assisting Review Committee (DARC) should receive this information for evaluation at its July 2005 meeting.
4. Provide a copy of these updated and analyzed results, with a draft cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and next steps, to Alliance members for review, by May 15, 2005.
5. Send an announcement email to all state dental assisting association presidents, notifying them that this study will be posted soon.
6. After receiving feedback and approval from Alliance members, post the cover letter and study results to the Alliance section of DANB's website (which is also linked to the ADAA website). Target date for this posting is June 15, 2005.
7. Send notices of the study results, (with the ability to request hard copies) to the following communities of interest: American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, American Association of Orthodontists, U.S. Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, State dental boards, State dental associations/societies, and Association of Schools and Allied Health Professions.
8. Investigate the possibility of scheduling Cynthia Durley and Elizabeth Koch as 'Lunch and Learn' speakers at the ADEA's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual National Allied Dental Directors' Conference, scheduled to be held in New York June 11-14, 2005. The speakers will address the results of Phases I-IV of this study, and the Alliance's next steps.
9. Draft a position paper based on the results of this study and how it may relate to the education and credentialing of dental assistants across the U.S. The Alliance plans to review and finalize the paper in Fall 2005. A survey will be sent to the position paper recipients approximately one month after the initial distribution, asking questions such as:
  - a. Does this information change the way you view the dental assisting profession?
  - b. If so, how?
  - c. How will you use this information?
  - d. How will this information help you to improve access to care? Protection of the public? Definition of a career ladder for dental assistants? Aid in recruitment and retention? (Etc.)
  - e. In order to make the best use of this information, is there anything else you would like to know about education, credentialing, recruitment, retention, and/or utilization of dental assistants? DANB and ADAA will address your expressed needs if possible. Otherwise, knowledge of your needs will assist DANB and ADAA in developing future studies.

- II. Review of Joint ADAA/DANB Article for publication in ADAA's *The Dental Assistant*, DANB's *Certified Press*, and ultimately, Dental Learning System's *Contemporary Dental Assisting*.

The ADAA/DANB Alliance reviewed the drafts of the Introduction and ADAA/DANB Alliance sections of this joint paper, as well as the ADAA section authored by Anna Nelson and the DANB section authored by Judy Anoff. They discussed benefits of ADAA membership and DANB certification, for inclusion in a Table of Benefits to accompany the article. **(Update: This article was published in the Summer 2005 issue of *Certified Press* and the May/June 2005 issue of *The Dental Assistant*.)**

- III. Discuss issues that could have a positive impact on national dental assisting credentialing, including:
- A. Workforce Investment Act
  - B. Cynthia Durley's work with NOCA as President-Elect in 2005 and President in 2006
  - C. Department of Defense initiative to identify optimal dental assisting education and credentialing in 10 states with high military population
  - D. DANB's potential future work with ACT on the state level, in state Offices of Workforce Development
  - E. DANB's *State Fact Booklet, Volume II*
  - F. DANB's work on upcoming *Dental Assisting Career Ladder Templates by State*
  - G. Distribution and potential publication of *DANB/ADAA Study to Define and Rank Core Competencies for Dental Assistants*
  - H. ADAA suggestions/initiatives
- IV. Discuss other potential joint DANB/ADAA initiatives, including:

- A. PennWell Corporation's plans to sponsor "Professional Dental Assisting Conference 2006" with DANB Forum and ADAA Continuing Dental Education. The group discussed the fact that PennWell had contacted both DANB and ADAA to discuss plans for 'Dental Assistants Under One Roof' – a professional dental assisting conference to be held in early 2006, to include a DANB Forum and ADAA continuing education.  
**(Update: This conference will be held in Indianapolis on May 11-13, 2006. Contact [www.professionaldentalassisting.com](http://www.professionaldentalassisting.com) for more information.)**
- B. How the two organizations might work together during Dental Assistants Recognition Week (DARW).
- C. Expanded information about our organizations on each other's websites.
- D. Standing notices about how to contact ADAA for membership information (in *Certified Press*) and how to learn more about becoming Certified (in *The Dental Assistant*).
- E. Jointly developing a publication or workshop to highlight how some dental assistants have been successful in initiating legislative change related to dental assistant responsibilities in their states.

**III. Summary of ADAA/DANB Alliance Meeting and ADAA/DANB Forum  
July 14, 2005**

- A. The ADAA/DANB Alliance Meeting was held on July 14, 2005, in Washington, D.C.

At this meeting, Cynthia Durley, DANB's Executive Director, distributed copies of the draft DANB/ADAA position paper on the results of the core competencies survey to the Alliance members present. The group discussed the fact that the American Dental Association will be holding its 2005 Annual Session October 6-9, and that the ADA's Task Force models on Work Force Issues would be reporting to the ADA House of Delegates on its recommendations at this meeting. With that timeframe in mind, and a desire to ensure

that the ADA Task Force has access to the DANB/ADAA position paper prior to the ADA meeting, the Alliance agreed to a schedule for draft review, feedback, and publication (including review by the Alliance, DANB Board review, and ADAA Board of Trustees) that will result in approval of the final draft no later than September 16, 2005. By September 20, DANB will post the Executive Summary of the position paper on the Alliance section of DANB's website, and forward it to all appropriate communities of interest.

B. The ADAA/DANB Forum was held on July 15, 2005, in Washington, D.C.

The ADAA/DANB Forum was held from 7:00 AM to 8:45 AM on July 15, with approximately 150 individuals in attendance. Each attendee at the ADAA/DANB Forum received a meeting agenda, an overview of the results of Phase IV of the DANB/ADAA Study to Define and Rank Core Competencies for Dental Assistants, a preliminary outline of the DANB/ADAA position paper, and definitions of key terms.

Based on questions and comments from the audience after ADAA and DANB presented the study results and discussed the position paper outline, the following topics may be added to the paper:

1. Clearly define the six types of dental assisting education:
  - a. ADA-accredited dental assisting program
  - b. Dental assisting program located in a vocational/technical school in an institution accredited by some agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, that is not ADA
  - c. Dental assisting programs located completely within a high school curriculum (currently not eligible for ADA accreditation)
  - d. State Dental Board-approved courses in expanded duties for dental assistants
  - e. Programs in dental assisting developed by dentists and delivered either in the dental office during the workday, or in the evenings or on weekends
  - f. Continuing dental education courses for dental assistants
2. Review progress the Canadian Dental Assistants Association has made in adopting a national role delineation for Canadian dental assistants, and encouraging eight of the 10 Canadian provinces' dental regulatory bodies to state a preference that dental assistants be formally educated, and if not that they require on-the-job trained dental assistants to pass the Canadian counterpart to the DANB CDA exam (the National Dental Assisting Examining Board [NDAEB] exam).
3. Some Forum attendees wanted the Alliance to note that the responses of the CDAs surveyed was much greater than those of the non-CDAs, "because CDAs believe that appropriate education and credentialing of dental assistants is crucial as more duties are delegated to dental assistants." (However, ADAA and DANB cannot speak for all CDAs who participated in the study, nor do the organizations believe that the number of non-CDAs to respond to the study was low because they were not interested in attempting to define their future. Perhaps these non-CDAs never saw the postcard from DANB requesting their participation, so had no opportunity to do so.)

