

18th of October

INAUGURAL AAPHD STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

*Hosted at Western University of Health Sciences,
College of Dental Medicine*

2025



College of
Dental Medicine

Symposium PROGRAM

Continental Breakfast and Registration 8:00am - 8:30am

- Health Education Center, 1st Floor, Registration Table and Classroom C
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Opening Session: Welcome Remarks and Introductions 8:30am - 9:00am

- Health Education Center, 1st Floor, Classroom C
-

Public Health Dialogue - Panelist Discussion Part 1 9:00am - 10:00am

- “What opportunities are possible as a future oral health provider at the state and federal public health level?”
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Break / Networking 10:00am - 10:15am

Seminar #1 10:15am - 11:15am

- “Oral health in underserved communities”
-

Break / Networking 11:15am - 11:30am

Public Health Dialogue - Panelist Discussion Part 2 11:30am - 12:30pm

- “Pathways for success - loan repayments and careers in FQHCs”
-

Networking Lunch 12:30pm - 1:15pm

- Health Education Center, 2nd Floor Recital Hall
-

Seminar #2 1:15pm - 2:15pm

- “Creating impact on- and off-campus”
-

Break / Networking 2:15pm - 2:30pm

Closing Plenary Speaker 2:30pm - 3:30pm

- “Cut it out! Are you kidding me? Give me the F...”
-

Closing Session 3:30pm - 4:00pm

OPENING SESSION: WELCOME REMARKS AND INTRODUCTIONS

SPEAKERS



David Peña, Jr.

*American Association of
Public Health Dentistry
National Executive Director*



**Marisa Watanabe, DDS,
MS, FICD**

*Western University of Health
Sciences, College of Dental
Medicine
Professor, Associate Dean
for Community Partnerships
and Access to Care
AAPHD Co-Advisor*



Alicia Gordon

*Western University of Health
Sciences, College of Dental
Medicine
AAPHD Student Chapter Co-
President
DMD 2027 Candidate*



Edward Hernandez

*Western University of Health
Sciences, College of Dental
Medicine
AAPHD Student Chapter Co-
President
DMD 2027 Candidate*



**HEC, 1st Floor,
Classroom C**
701 E. Third Street
Pomona, CA 91766

SESSION INFORMATION

Morning Session 8:30am – 9:00am

Join us as we kick-off the inaugural AAPHD Student Chapter symposium! Mr. David Peña, Jr. will provide us a warm welcome on behalf of AAPHD's national chapter, followed by Dr. Watanabe representing Western University of Health Science, College of Dental Medicine (WesternU CDM) Student Chapter Co-Advisor and host site for the this year's symposium. Last, but certainly not least, DMD 2027 Candidates and co-Presidents of WesternU CDM's AAPHD Student Chapter will welcome everyone on behalf of the student chapters.

We welcome everyone who traveled near and far, and look forward to building knowledge, networks, and expansion toward common goals in dental public health.

Cheers to a wonderful day ahead!



Fun conference pictures
loaded here for viewing
throughout the day! Scan to
view!



PUBLIC HEALTH DIALOGUE – PANELIST DISCUSSION PART 1

MODERATOR



**Anna
Chandsawangbhuwana,
DDS**

WesternU CDM
Assistant Professor
Diplomate, American Board of
Pediatric Dentistry

SPEAKERS



**Christina Demopoulos,
DDS, MPH**

AAPHD National Chapter
Immediate Past President
*UNLV School of Dental
Medicine*
Professor, Biomedical
Sciences



**Paula Ortega-Verdugo, DDS,
MS, PhD**

UCLA School of Dentistry
Assistant Professor
Diplomate of the American
Board of Dental Public
Health

GOAL:

To explore career paths, responsibilities, and real-world impact that public health professionals can have at state and federal levels.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Understand key differences between state and federal public health roles.
- Identify career pathways and agencies to work for.
- Learn about policy impact, program implementation, and inter-agency collaboration.

“WHAT ARE OPPORTUNITIES AS FUTURE ORAL HEALTH PROVIDER AT THE STATE AND FEDERAL PUBLIC HEALTH LEVEL?”

Morning Session 9:00am – 10:00am

Christina Demopoulos, DDS, MPH is the AAPHD National Immediate Past President, Professor, Biomedical Sciences–UNLV School of Dental Medicine. Dr. Demopoulos, DDS, MPH, is a faculty member at the UNLV School of Dental Medicine (SDM). She attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) for her undergraduate and her Master of Public Health (MPH) training. She received her dental degree from the University of Southern California (USC) and her dental public health training from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA). She completed her Applied Behavior Analysis training and is eligible for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) exam. She is the current Faculty Advisor for the UNLV AAPHD Student Chapter and the Program Director for the UNLV School of Dental Medicine Advanced Dental Education Program in Dental Public Health. She is also the Immediate Past President for AAPHD and a Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Public Health (ABDPH). She serves on various local, state and national organizations.

Paula Ortega-Verdugo, DDS, MS, PhD is currently a full-time (tenure-track) Assistant Professor at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Dentistry, in the section of Public and Population Health. She obtained a Master of Science, a Certificate in Operative Dentistry, and a Ph.D. in Oral Sciences with emphasis in Dental Public Health. Earlier in her career, she worked in private and public health systems, in several primary care public health centers. Among her honors, she obtained the 2020 Keith E. Heller Dental Public Health Graduate Research Award for outstanding achievement among dental public health graduate students in The University of Iowa. In 2022, Dr. Ortega became a Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Public Health (ABDPH). Dr. Ortega-Verdugo specializes in key areas vital to advancing public oral health, including minimal intervention dentistry for managing dental caries, dentists' clinical decision-making, and Caries Management by Risk Assessment (CAMBRA). Her expertise further extends to understanding dental utilization among children, developing impactful oral health interventions, and promoting diversity within the dental workforce.

SEMINAR #1

SPEAKER



Jennifer Holtzman, DDS, MPH

Center for Oral Health
Interim Executive Director
Former Dental Officer at Health
Resources and Services
Administration



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"ORAL HEALTH IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES"

Morning Session 10:15am – 11:15am

Jennifer Holtzman, DDS, MPH is the interim Executive Director of the Center for Oral Health. Dr. Holtzman formerly served as the Dental Officer at the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bureau of Health Workforce where she advised on workforce programs, led the postdoctoral and clinician educator oral health programs and served as Subject Matter Expert for the Advisory Committee on Training in Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry. Prior to joining HRSA, Dr Holtzman had careers in both private practice and academia. Dr Holtzman's academic career focused on public health dentistry establishing school-based/mobile oral health promotion and disease prevention programs. Her academic research included investigating the association between oral health literacy and clinical outcomes, the use of non-invasive laser technology to detect caries, and the integration of oral health into primary care. She is a Diplomate of the American Board of Dental Public Health, serves as Secretary on the Board of the American Association for Public Health Dentistry, and is the incoming Chair of the American Dental Association's Council on Scientific Affairs.



*Interested to learn
more about
challenges in rural
health America?
Read AAPHD's White
Paper!*



PUBLIC HEALTH DIALOGUE – PANELIST DISCUSSION PART 2

MODERATOR



**Krystle Rapisura, DMD,
MS, FAAPD**

WesternU CDM
Associate Professor, Assistant
Dean for Community Patient
Care
Diplomate, American Board of
Pediatric Dentistry

SPEAKERS



**Arlet Arratoonian, DDS,
MSHS**

*ParkTree Community Health
Center*
Chief Dental Officer, *WesternU*
CDM Clinical Assistant Professor
Adjunct Faculty



**Abhi Thakkar, DDS, FICD,
FACD, FPFA**

Camarena Health Clinical
Dental Director
WesternU CDM Clinical Assistant
Professor Adjunct Faculty

GOAL:

To educate healthcare students/professionals about career opportunities in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and provide insight into loan repayment options.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Explain FQHC's role in community health.
- Showcase various career paths within FQHCs (clinical, administrative, behavioral health, public health).
- Discuss the impact of working in underserved areas.
- Outline loan repayment and financial incentive programs for working at FQHCs.
- Offer practical advice on applying, succeeding, and growing within an FQHC.

"PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESS - LOAN REPAYMENTS AND CAREERS IN FQHCs"

Morning Session 11:30am - 12:30pm

Arlet Arratoonian, DDS, MSHS earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the USC School of Dentistry and has more than 20 years of experience spanning private practice, academia, and community health. She currently serves as Chief Dental Officer at ParkTree Community Health Center and has also served as an Assistant Clinical Professor at the USC School of Dentistry. A first-generation immigrant, Dr. Arratoonian enjoys mentoring future dental professionals and remains actively involved with her local health department, advocating for improved access to oral health in underserved communities. She also holds a Graduate Certificate in Community Oral Health from USC and a Master of Science in Health Systems from Cedars-Sinai, focusing on AI, digital health and health economics. A recipient of the Visionary Leader Award from the American Institute of Dental Public Health, she is passionate about advancing equity in oral health and inspiring the next generation of Dentists.

Abhi Thakkar, DDS, FICD, FACD, FPFA is a dedicated dentist driven by a deep-seated passion for helping others and a commitment to advancing oral health equity. After earning his Bachelor's in Dentistry in 2016, he pursued Advanced Training in Esthetics and Restorative Dentistry at the UCLA School of Dentistry in 2019, focusing on smile design, cosmetic dentistry, and minimally invasive techniques. As Dental Director at Camarena Health in Madera, California, he leads quality initiatives and community outreach while also serving as a Clinical Assistant Professor at Western University of Health Sciences. Dr. Thakkar is actively engaged in organized dentistry through the FMDS, ADA and CDA, where he participates in professional advocacy and lobbying efforts to advance oral health legislation. He also works with local health departments and serves on multiple advisory committees focused on education, quality improvement, and public health-bridging leadership, academia, and community service to elevate the collective impact of dentistry while shaping the next generation of dental professionals.

SEMINAR #2

SPEAKERS



TBD



TBD



Alicia Gordon

Western University of Health Sciences, College of Dental Medicine AAPHD Student Chapter Co-President
DMD 2027 Candidate



Edward Hernandez

Western University of Health Sciences, College of Dental Medicine AAPHD Student Chapter Co-President
DMD 2027 Candidate



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"CREATING IMPACT ON- AND OFF-CAMPUS"

Afternoon Session 1:15pm - 2:15pm

Roundtable sharing time - enjoy as UNLV School of Dental Medicine and Western University of Health Sciences, College of Dental Medicine share their past successes and challenges as AAPHD student chapters. Share in the triumphs, empathize in the moments of frustrations, and share stories of your own! Following the presentations, this is an open session where the audience can actively participate and share their own experiences in ways community impact has been achieved on multi-levels through different avenues.

Only through shared learning and successes can we collectively and more efficiently work toward common goals. Take this session to ask each other questions in this peer-engaged seminar!

to teach to heal
together



CLOSING PLENARY SPEAKER

SPEAKER



Brian Novy, DDS, FACD, FADI, FICD

Often described as “The tenth dentist,” Dr. Nový has faculty appointments at Virginia Commonwealth University, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Western University of Health Sciences. He served the American Dental Association Council of Scientific Affairs from 2010–2014, and in 2016 was appointed the consumer representative to the United States Food & Drug Administration Dental Products Panel. His papers are published in various journals including the Journal of the American Dental Association, the Journal of Dental Research, the Journal of Evidence Based Dentistry, Dentistry Today, Inside Dentistry, Dental Economics, Compendium, the National Academies of Medicine, and the International Journal of Equity in Health.



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CUT IT OUT! ARE YOU KIDDING ME? GIVE ME THE F...

Afternoon Session 2:30pm – 3:30pm

Caries management is not merely risk assessment, and certainly more than increased fluoride concentrations with greater application frequency. When the public is literally being led towards more tooth decay and away from time-tested interventions, the oral healthcare infrastructure finds itself at a crossroads on a frontier. Can prevention be cost effective if it's not evidence based? Who are the oral health champions in dental settings?

In a world where preventionists are sidelined while the public hears nanohydroxyapatite cures tooth decay and fluoride will lower your IQ, will clinicians reach for an increasing volume of caries treatments with no peer reviewed research to back them up? The oral healthcare ecosystem is poised for some sort of revolution, but where are the weapons and what might they accomplish? Will you decide to offer patients cold surgical stainless steel and sunshine or sponges soaked in scaffolds and slippery silver particles applied with a paintbrush? What could go possibly go wrong?

Learning Objectives [at the end of this presentation, attendees will be able to]:

- 1.Improve the prognosis of patient care with science-based therapies
- 2.Explain why disease management often fails before patients leave the office
- 3.Identify an effective disease management strategy
- 4.Describe critical components of caries management that improve success
- 5.Discuss roles and goals within an oral healthcare ecosystem



SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM MODERATORS

MEET THE FACILITATORS



**Anna
Chandsawangbhuwana, DDS**

WesternU CDM
Assistant Professor
Diplomate, American Board of
Pediatric Dentistry



**Krystle Rapisura, DMD,
MS, FAAPD**

WesternU CDM
Associate Professor, Assistant
Dean for Community Patient
Care
Diplomate, American Board of
Pediatric Dentistry



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Anna Chandsawangbhuwana, DDS often known as Dr. Chand to her patients and students, is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. She earned her DDS from the UCLA School of Dentistry and following her dental education, she returned to New York to complete her specialty training in pediatric dentistry at Lutheran Medical Center. She was an associate pediatric dentist and a private practice owner for over 17-years, which also included her passion to serve others. This led her to participate in numerous medical and humanitarian mission trips around the globe, including Mexico, Tanzania, and Thailand. In November 2022, she transitioned from private practice to WesternU CDM to join the Community-Based Dental Education team leading the clinical pediatric at the WesternU CDM school-based and school-linked oral health centers. In addition, Dr. Chand plays an integral role in the Biomedical Sciences, preclinical education, and clinical pediatric education of WesternU CDM students.

Krystle Rapisura, DMD, MS, FAAPD is a fellow of the American Association of pediatric dentistry, Associate Professor, Assistant Dean for Community Patient Care at Western University of Health Sciences, College of Dental Medicine, and co-advisor for the WesternU AAPHD. She is also a recipient of the HRSA DFLRP. She helps oversee the community-based dental education at WesternU CDM with the overarching goal of introducing and submerging dental students in dental public health and to encourage their continued care to underserved communities after graduation. She is particularly interested in minimally invasive dentistry, providing opportunities for students to serve those with limited access to care, and increasing dental knowledge for all.

Important Travel Information

4 TIPS YOU NEED TO KNOW



1 Airport



- Ontario (ONT) is the closest airport to the University and hotels and is your best option for convenience.
- Should you need to fly into LAX, you should allow approximately 1 ½ hours of travel to your hotel from the airport.

2 Hotels



- *The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Claremont (10 mins from campus)
 - *Sheraton Fairplex Hotel (5 minutes from campus)
 - Ayres Hotel Chino Hills (15 minutes from campus)
- *Ask for the WesternU rate

3 Event Parking



Use address: 701 E. Second St. Pomona, CA 91766. See below for driving instructions to park in Lot #24. Parking is free.

Pomona 5K and 10K occurs so please take this into account for arrival time.

4 Driving Directions

- From the 10 Freeway Exit Towne Avenue. Go South on N Towne Ave. Turn right on E 2nd St. Turn right at the stop sign (Allen Ave). Turn left on 1st St. Turn left on S Eleanor St into Parking Lot #24, just past Public Storage.
- From the 210 Freeway Exit Towne Avenue. Go South on N Towne Ave. Turn right on E 2nd St. Turn right at the stop sign (Allen Ave). Turn left on 1st St. Turn left on S Eleanor St into Parking Lot #24, just past Public Storage.
- From the 60 Freeway Exit Reservoir Street. Go North on Reservoir St. Turn left on E Grand Ave. Turn right on S San Antonio Ave. Turn left on 1st St. Turn left on S Eleanor St into Parking Lot #24, just past Public Storage.
- From the NORTHBOUND 71 Freeway Exit Peyton/Riverside Drive. Go North on S Towne Ave. Turn left on E 2nd Street. Turn right at the stop sign (Allen Ave). Turn left on 1st St. Turn left on S Eleanor St into Parking Lot #24, just past Public Storage.
- From the SOUTHBOUND 71 Freeway Exit Riverside Drive. Go North on S Towne Ave. Turn left on E 2nd Street. Turn right at the stop sign (Allen Ave). Turn left on 1st St. Turn left on S Eleanor St into Parking Lot #24, just past Public Storage.



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