

Florida Legislative Report



by Mel Kessler, DDS, MAGD FLAGD Legislative Committee Chair

egislation is a love-hate relationship. Most people do not want to engage in it and take very little interest in it, but ultimately it does have tremendous impact on our lives and our practices. Whoever thought we would be required to have background screening and be fingerprinted to renew our licenses? Of course, there is the issue of fluoridation. Whoever thought that with the benefits of community water fluoridation, one day it would be prohibited?

I have attached the first two pages from the Florida Dental Association's Sine Die Capital Report of June 27, 2025.

Page 1: Sine Die (adjournment, "no date to return"). It speaks about the completed session and the budget, which is \$3.5 billion less than last year's budget. As a former New Yorker, 60 years ago, I would like to compare our budget to that of New York, just to show how states can differ. Florida's state budget is \$115.1 billion, while New York's budget is \$254 billion. Florida, the third most populous state, has a population of 23.4 million people, while New York, the fourth most populous state, has a population of 19.8 million people. Our budget is way less than half, even with 3.6 million more people. Why? Yes, we have hurricanes, very high insurance rates, and other problems, but there are still many pluses. And our state budget decreased by \$3.5 billion!

The FDA-approved budget priorities include \$1 million (recurring) for the Veterans Dental Care Grant and \$6 million (recurring) for the Dental Student Loan Repayment and Donated Dental Services Programs. The Mission of Mercy is a \$350,000 budget item; however, this year it is a non-recurring budget item. This must be addressed next year. Maybe we can get it from the \$3.5 billion budget savings?



From left, Drs. Nibaldo Morales, Martha Maderal, and Mel Kessler at the 2025 Dentists' Day on the Hill.

Page 2: This page deals with the disaster that is the prohibition of community fluoridation. The first health study on fluoridation for prevention of caries occurred in 1945, in Grand Rapids, MI. From 1945 to 1950, there were more studies, and some areas saw reductions up to 60% in caries among children. Other cities followed suit, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. Eventually, 73% of the U.S. water supply was fluoridated (ChatGPT search). The article explains how the legislature succeeded in this action. We will have to wait and see what happens, as dental fluoridation was one of the greatest preventative health successes in the 20th century.

Dental therapy in the U.S. started in 2009, with the opening of two advanced dental hygiene schools in Minnesota. These programs have been very small, and its acceptance has been very limited. Legislation filed this year to authorize dental therapists in Florida failed to get support from the Senate. CS/CS/HB 21 would have allowed someone right out of high school, with a minimum of three years of dental therapy training, to perform surgical procedures like extractions and administer local anesthesia. This legislation was a priority for the Florida Dental Hygienists' Association, as well as for Dr. Frank Catalanotto, who argues that this proposal is a solution to address the issue of access to dental care. The Florida Dental Association (FDA) did not support this legislation and worked to educate legislators on why this proposal is not the answer for this state. While it passed in the House this year, it failed in the Senate.

The last issue: Dentists' Day on the Hill begins with an orientation and dinner on January 26, 2026, at the Hotel Duval at 6:00 P.M. January 27 is "Hill Day," when we visit legislators from our own communities. Last year, we only had three members from South Florida representing the entire FLAGD in Tallahassee. This year, we have more time to plan and hopefully will have more doctors representing the FLAGD. Anyone that has an interest in volunteering to attend, please contact me, and I will explain what is required in more detail. Attending this function is actually a very nice heartwarming experience. You get a better understanding of how our government works, and while it takes time from our daily work, you will enjoy the experience.

If you would like to browse the whole 28-page Capital Report, Sine Die, please copy this link:

https://www.floridadental.org/docs/stateflfloridalibraries/default-document-library/capital-reports/2025/capital-report-6-27-25-sine-die.pdf?sfvrsn=b4bb440d_5

FDA budget priorities make it to the finish line*

Florida's legislative session is scheduled to last 60 days. Each year, the Legislature is constitutionally required to pass a balanced budget. However, this year, the House and Senate budget proposals differed substantially, and as a result, they had to extend the session 45 days past its scheduled end date. Instead of 60 days, the 2025 Legislature met for 105 days before coming to an agreement on the state's budget.

On Monday, June 16, the white handkerchiefs finally dropped on the fourth floor of the Capitol around 11:20 p.m., signifying adjournment



of the 2025 session, or Sine Die. The final budget approved by the Legislature totals approximately \$115.1 billion for the next fiscal year, including a \$1.3 billion tax cut package. The 2025-2026 budget is \$3.5 billion less than last year's budget, which totaled approximately \$118 billion. A significant part of this year's tax package includes eliminating the tax on business rents, which is projected to lower revenue by \$904.8 million. The budget also includes a recurring sales tax exemption on back-to-school items during the entire month of August, as well as some year-round tax exemptions on supplies for hurricane preparation, state park admissions and other items. As a result of a reduction in the overall budget, many programs and projects were substantially reduced in funding allocation or eliminated from the budget altogether this year.

Florida Dental Association (FDA) budget priorities approved in the budget include \$1 million (recurring) for the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program, \$6 million (recurring) for the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program and Donated Dental Services Program and \$350,000 (non-recurring) for the 2026 Florida Mission of Mercy Program in Jacksonville. The FDA was also successful in getting a provision included in the statute to allow for dental students and dental hygiene students to be eligible to apply for the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program. Currently, dental students and dental hygiene students are considered ineligible for the program based on the way the Department of Health (DOH) has chosen to implement it. This language will require the DOH to allow them to be considered during the open enrollment process. Below is the language outlining the process:

•(5) A dental student or dental hygiene student who demonstrates an offer of employment in a public health program or private practice as specified in paragraph (2) (a) may apply for the program prior to obtaining active employment but may not be awarded funds from the loan program until he or she meets the requirements of subsection (2).

The final budget still needs to be approved by the governor. Once the governor receives the budget, he will have the discretion to administer line-item vetoes of certain programs and projects before he signs it into law. Once this process is completed, the final budget will take effect on July 1, 2025.

Governor signs bill to prohibit community water fluoridation**



On Nov. 22, 2024, Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo issued new guidance for community water fluoridation during a press conference in Winter Haven. He advised all counties and municipalities to stop fluoridating their water supplies, calling it "public health malpractice," and referred to fluoride as a neurotoxin. In the following months, fluoridation was debated throughout the state at the local level, with city and county commissions voting on whether to start or stop water fluoridation. During the 2025 Legislative Session, CS/CS/CS/SB 700 by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) was filed on behalf of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to address several priority issues. This bill contained provisions relating to farming and agriculture services while preempting local government authority. One section of the bill preempted local governments from adding anything to their water supply that does not directly pertain to water quality or purification. Ultimately, the bill prohibits local governments from adding fluoride to their water supply. Despite decades of research and sciencebased evidence supporting community water fluoridation, the proponents of the bill stated the focus was more about consumer choice. The Florida Dental Association (FDA) continuously opposed this legislation in committee and met with legislators throughout session to educate them on the importance of community water fluoridation. After CS/ CS/CS/SB 700 was approved by the legislature, the FDA sent a letter to the governor urging him to veto the bill. Click here to view the letter opposing CS/CS/CS/SB 700.

On Tuesday, May 5, Gov. Ron DeSantis held a press conference in Miami with Dr. Ladapo, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Roberto Gonzalez, and Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson to discuss their support to stop fluoridating public water supplies. On Thursday, May 16, Gov. DeSantis signed CS/CS/CS/SB 700 into law. CS/CS/CS/SB 700 will take effect on July 1, 2025.

Mel Kessler, DDS, MAGD, has been an Academy of General Dentistry member for over 50 years. He served as President of the FLAGD from 2006-09 and was the FLAGD newsletter editor for approximately 20 years. He served on the Legislative and Governmental Affairs Council from 2011 to 2017 and attended the AGD DC Legislative Hill visits in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2018. He has "pretty much" been the Legislative Chair for 20 years, until Covid and retirement in 2021.

Dr. Kessler is a Life Member of the ADA, FDA, & SFDDA. He served as an FDA Legislative Contact Dentist and attended multiple FDA Capitol Hill Visits with our lobbyists. He has attended Dentist Day on the Hill for the FDA; and then, as Legislative Chair for the FLAGD, he attended about 25 times over the years.

Dr. Kessler has been a member of the Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity since 1963, having joined while in

In Tallahassee, Florida Commissioner Jerry Joseph meets with (from left) South Florida District Dental Association Trustee Dr. Richard Mufson and FLAGD Drs. Nibaldo Morales, Martha Maderal, and Mel Kessler.

dental school. He also was the president of the Greater Miami AO Chapter.

For the Dade County Dental Research Clinic, aka Community Smiles, he has been the Chairman of Orthodontics for the General Practitioner. The clinic is CODA-approved to provide dental services, and it also provides a 2-year residency program to update skills so that foreign dentists can become licensed in the US. Dr. Kessler has been teaching the orthodontic component since 1984 and served as President of the Dade County Dental Research Clinic from 1994-95.



Recognize Outstanding Contributions: FLAGD Awards Nominations Are Open!

Do you know someone who dedicates their time to medical missions or tirelessly serves in free clinics? Nominate them for the FLAGD Humanitarian Award!

Have you invested countless hours in continuing education? Consider applying for one of our prestigious CE Awards!

Award Categories:

- Continuing Education Award (Participation and Lecture Hours)
- Humanitarian Award
- · Distinguished Service Award
- · Frank J. Collins Lifetime Achievement Award

Save the Date:

The awards will be presented at our General Assembly Luncheon on January 31, in Tampa, FL.

Celebrate excellence and nominate or apply today!

Join Us!

Register for the luncheon and/ or CE courses:



& Member Appreciation Luncheon

Date: January 31, 2026

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Location: Aloft Tampa Midtown

3650 Midtown Drive

Tampa, FL 33607

Join us as we celebrate our members, install the 2026 Board of Directors, and recognize this year's awards recipients during a special lunch!



Seeing From the OUTSIDE In

A look at how leading dentists are staying ahead of the curve

by Scott Mahnken

t's sad but true, and I've heard it hundreds of times: "My dental school provided minimal, if any, business related courses; it was 99% clinical."

As we look into the future, there's a high likelihood that dental schools will include more business and marketing courses within their curriculum. Why? Because of the voices of current students and past graduates and to differentiate themselves.

If this vision proves true, future dentists will have to take a look at the school's position on both clinical and business aspects before they make their decision on what school to attend. This would be great news for the profession and frankly, it's long overdue.

Yet, how do you stay ahead of the curve regardless of your school's stance on business management? In your case the horse has already left the gate.

Partnering with a practice management organization (PMO) is one way to get your operations and marketing in order. If you are considering investing in a practice manager, don't make that common mistake.

PMO's "know" how to uncover your pain points. They will bring all of your weaknesses, gaps, and missed opportunities to the forefront; and this is good!

What I don't recommend is making an emotional decision and signing on the bottom line before you take a few steps.

Ask to speak with a few current customers. In most cases, they will deflect that request and say that they don't want their customers bombarded with inquiries. Consider this to be a bit of a yellow flag.

Do your due diligence; they probably have customer / practice names on their website or social media. Check in with those customers and measure their satisfaction. One question I like to ask is "What do they do best and what is their weakness?" Many times the "weakness" response will uncover something you may not be able to tolerate.

Can a PMO help you achieve success? Absolutely, but don't make a rush to judgement. Remember, you're a dentist for life, and this decision is as important as any you'll make. Especially consider a PMO if you're lost when it comes to marketing and optimizing production at the front desk.

Education is another way to stay ahead of the curve. The term "Key Opinion Leader" emerged as great communicators with visionary products or ideas shared their platforms at state or national dental meetings.

There's a bit of a matrix for staying one step ahead. Align with and learn from KOLs that you find valuable. Become a regular follower of a dental journal for broadly distributed education in several forms. Get out, attend state or national dental meetings, join a study club, and find some forward-thinking online CE.

Here are a few options for free CE:

- Viva Learning, vivalearning.com, a broad platform with many topics.
- AGD, Free CE for members
- Dental CE Academy, a recognized provider of AGD PACE

I've spent the majority of my career on the product side. Practices need to be smart about purchasing. Virtually every dental manufacturer offers quarterly promotions or buying incentives. Be smart, understand how frequently you use commodity products, and bulk up. Think Sam's Club. If storage is an issue, use your home or ask your team.

What about the big ticket items?

My recommendation is always "take your time!" Why? Because the price will never go up and in 75% of the cases, you will be offered an even lower price than the "lowest price they could offer you two weeks ago." The end of the quarter is a great time to buy.

Where does AI come in?

Well, AI actually wrote this article and I'm not a real person. Gotcha! AI is part of the equation for the visionary dentist. But like anything that's new, it has to be policed and monitored. If you plan on using AI within your practice management software, both you and a trusted member of your team needs to provide quality control.

Recently, I had a conversation with Scott Siegel, the founder of Cleartooth, a digital imaging company out of Colorado. When I asked Scott if he planned on integrating AI into Cleartooth, he explained how their technology uses specific methods to produce the clearest image with the best depth of view. He shared that features such as enhancements and Al within imaging, which are perceived helpful, can actually be misleading.

Dentistry has always been about clinical excellence, but today's leaders also embrace the business side, lifelong education, and emerging tools like AI. Staying ahead of the curve doesn't require rushing into every new trend; it means asking the right questions, learning from peers, and making deliberate, informed decisions. After all, you're not just running a practice, you're shaping a career that will last a lifetime.



Scott Mahnken has spent more than 20 years helping dental professionals and brands grow through strategic, results-driven marketing and sales programs. Having led and founded his own dental marketing agency, Scott has partnered with many of the industry's most recognizable brands to develop innovative

campaigns that elevate visibility and drive measurable growth.

He has attended more than 100 dental conferences worldwide and continues to stay at the forefront of dental innovation, including his upcoming participation at AEEDC Dubai in January 2026. Scott's insights have been featured in multiple dental publications, where he shares proven strategies that leading dentists use to boost revenue and patient engagement.

When he's not immersed in the dental industry, Scott promotes local dining experiences as NJ FOOD GUY. He lives in New Jersey with his wife, Dr. Joy Mahnken, and together they're proud parents of two accomplished daughters, one an educator and the other a product engineer at Apple.



Prevention Over Panic – A Dentist's Guide to Smart Handpiece Maintenance

By Rick Ball, Summit Handpiece Express

"The best repair is the one you never need—good maintenance turns costly problems into minor inconveniences."

You wouldn't drive your car 100,000 miles without an oil change—yet many dental practices run their handpieces through hundreds of sterilization cycles with minimal maintenance beyond a quick rinse and oil spray. The result? Unexpected breakdowns, costly repairs, and preventable downtime.

In this final installment of the Handpiece Lifeline series, we're focusing on prevention: the simple, science-backed habits that keep handpieces running smoother, longer, and more reliably. Whether you run a solo practice or manage multiple ops, adopting these tips can dramatically extend the life of your equipment—and your investment.





About the Author

Rick Ball is the owner and CEO of Summit Handpiece Express, a family-owned dental handpiece repair company trusted by practices nationwide.

Since 2009, Rick has helped dentists extend the life of their equipment through expert repairs, fast turnaround, and straightforward advice.

Summit Handpiece Express is known for its personal service, affordability, and commitment to helping dentists keep their schedules running smoothly.

Need a hand with your handpieces? Let's talk.

www.SummitHPX.com

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(877) 342-0101

Why Maintenance Isn't Just About Lubrication



It's easy to think of handpiece care as a quick squirt of oil between patients. But modern handpieces are complex tools with multiple systems that need attention—especially under repeated autoclaving. Bearings, O-rings, turbines, chuck mechanisms, and air/water lines all face stress from heat, moisture, and debris.

Regular maintenance protects these systems by:

- · Preserving bearing performance and preventing dry runs
- · Reducing internal corrosion by ensuring moisture is expelled
- · Improving chuck grip by keeping debris and oils from hardening inside
- Maintaining power and torque, reducing chair time and fatigue

Skipping or rushing these steps doesn't just lead to wear—it can void warranties and reduce the effectiveness of even a brand-new handpiece.

Daily Maintenance Routine (That Doesn't Take All Day)

Here's a simple but highly effective routine your team can adopt between uses:

- Flush thoroughly in the operatory. Run water through the handpiece for 20-30 seconds immediately after use. This removes blood, saliva, and debris before it hardens inside.
- 2. Clean the exterior. Use a soft brush under warm running water. Avoid harsh chemicals-especially bleach, heavy alcohol or cavicidewhich can damage seals or dry out components. Do NOT soak or saturate the handpieces in these chemicals either.
- 3. Lubricate correctly. Use the manufacturer-recommended lubricant and the correct applicator tip. Spray until oil comes from the head, ensuring it reaches the bearings.
- 4. Run the handpiece postlubrication. With a bur installed, run the handpiece for 20-30 seconds to evenly distribute oil and expel excess. Never use a bur blank-only ISO-compliant burs.
- 5. Dry before bagging. Excess moisture in the sterilizer leads to rust. Use an air station or allow the handpiece to sit in a warm, dry area paper-side-up post-cycle.
- 6. Inspect fiber optics. Gently wipe with alcohol and a cotton swab to remove oil or buildup and maintain light transmission.



Weekly and Monthly Checks

In addition to daily habits, schedule these touchpoints into your routine:

- Weekly chuck testing Use a bur retention gauge or gently tug on the bur to check for looseness.
- Monthly o-ring inspection Look for cracks or deformation that affect turbine suspension.
- · Quarterly performance audit Note changes in cutting efficiency, noise, or vibration. Keep a log and compare against previous performance.

These micro-maintenance moments are easy to delegate to trained staff and take less than 5 minutes when integrated into sterilization cycles.

Common Maintenance Mistakes to Avoid

Even with the best intentions, some practices inadvertently shorten their handpiece lifespan through avoidable missteps:

- · Using heavy alcohol or harsh cleaners
- · Over-lubricating or skipping the post-lube run
- Neglecting to dry handpieces fully before bagging
- Running handpieces without burs installed (unless specified)
- Failing to train new team members on care routines
- Putting hot autoclaved handpieces under water to cool down
- outside the Operating manufacturer's recommended

Consistency is the real secret. A well-maintained handpiece can last several times longer than one that's neglected-even under the same clinical load.



Final Thought: Maintenance is Practice Protection

Handpiece care isn't just about preserving a tool-it's about protecting your schedule, your team's productivity, and your patient's experience. By making smart maintenance part of your daily rhythm, you reduce emergencies, save money, and ensure every procedure starts with a tool you can trust.

Want help training your team or reviewing your handpiece care systems? Summit Handpiece Express offers consults, repairs, and customized maintenance guidance for practices nationwide.



Injection Molding and the Bioclear Technique for Composites Workshop

Course Description:

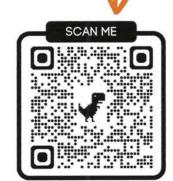
Get started with Bioclear and the Bioclear Method in this live, hands-on workshop with Bioclear Certified instructors.

The Bioclear Method allows you to create predictable, repeatable, outcomes that look natural when using composite. By offering a compelling minimally invasive alternative that meets a patient's needs and exceeds their expectations, you will no longer have to turn to implants or computer-assisted ceramics. Diastema closures, black triangle closures, and Class II, III, and IV composite restorations are just the start of what can be done with the Bioclear Method.

Learn first-hand from Bioclear Certified Instructors as they introduce attendees to the benefits of the Bioclear Method.

Participants will:

- · Build familiarity with the principles of warmed composite
- Learn the injection molding technique using warmed flowable and paste composite resin
- Discover the benefits of injection molding into special Black Triangle matrices
- Close a black triangle and create a mirrorlike finish with invisible margins
- Understand how to avoid common mistakes that lead to less-than-satisfactory results when performing anterior composites
- Receive an updated, hands-on evaluation of modern matrices, wedges, and separators
- Learn and perform the three steps to achieve rock-solid posterior composite







Nationally Approved PACE Program Provider for FAGD/MAGD credit Approval does not imply acceptance by any regulatory authority or AGD endorsement

1/1/2024 to 12/31/2027 Provider ID# 219295

Thank you for supporting us!



Location: Aloft Tampa Midtown

3650 Midtown Dr Tampa, FL 33607

Time: Friday 8:00 AM- 4:00 PM Subject code: 250 (8 HRS) Delivery: Participation Tuition: AGD: \$449

Non - AGD: \$599

SPEAKER: Dr. David Carroll is a fervent believer in specialized care. "Patients, especially those who need advanced care, benefit more from a dentist with a specialized concentration." Dr. Carroll is an expert in dental implants and patients receive the benefit of his extensive expertise and passion for the specialty.

His relaxed, warm chair-side manner combined with his specialized skill has earned him the respect of colleagues and loyalty of patients. Dr. Carroll is also a leader in innovation, and an early adopter of ground breaking technology like the T-Scan III used by less than 5% of offices in South Florida. His attention to new developments that can improve the comfort and outcomes of patients has made him one of the most sought after dentists in the region. "It is important to be attentive to the changes in the industry because advances can improve care, lessen discomfort and increase the predictability of procedures. I adopt new techniques and materials not because they are new and shiny but because they will improve the care of patients.