

**ANSWERING
THE CALL**

Graduates called to serve
patients and country

**THE IMPACT OF
FEDERAL FUNDING**

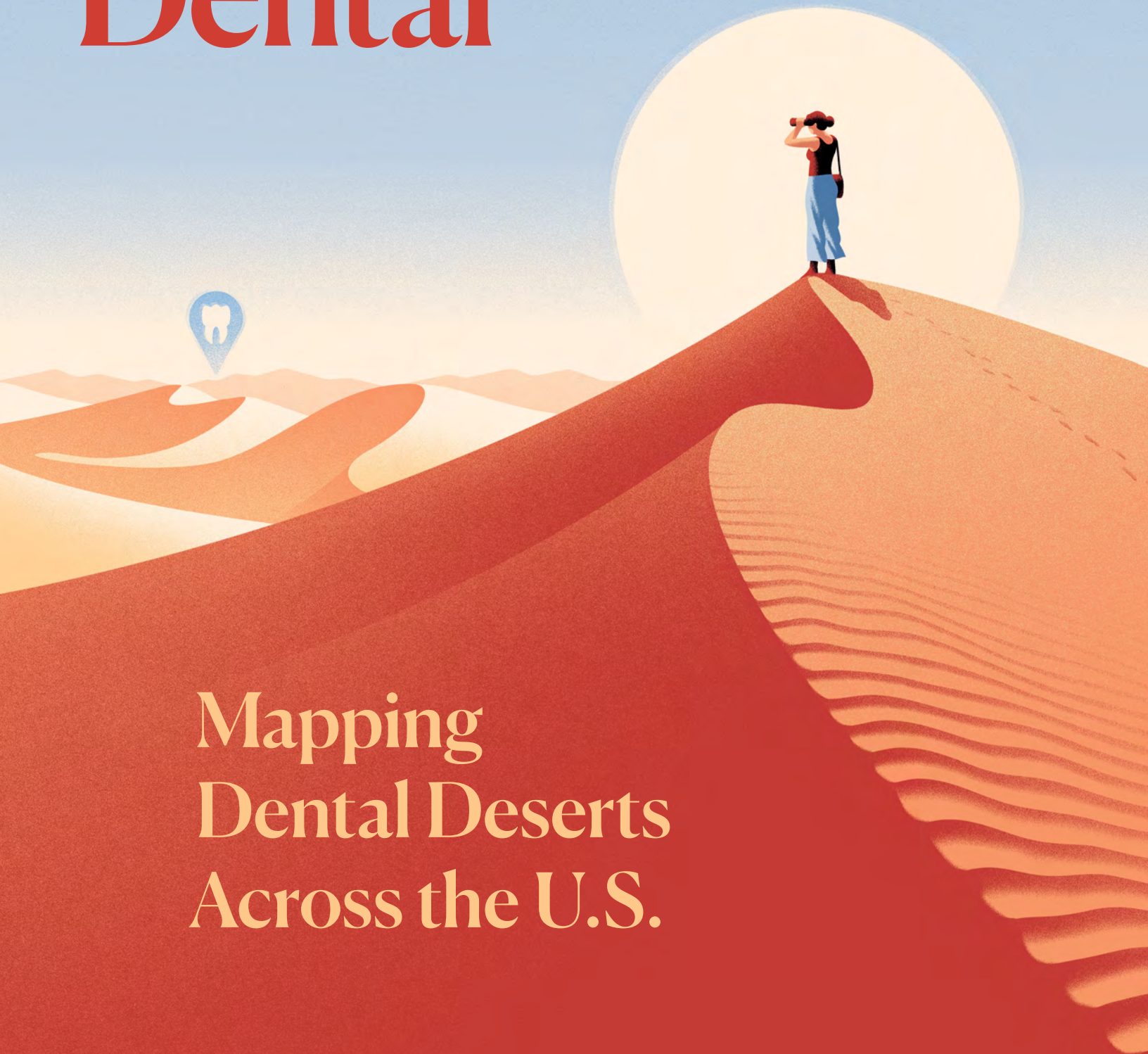
HSDM's research legacy

**A PASSION FOR
PREVENTION**

Purposeful gift launches
new initiative

Harvard School of Dental Medicine
Spring 2025 / Volume 85, Number 1

Harvard Dental



Mapping
Dental Deserts
Across the U.S.

Student Snapshot

Y. W. Stacy Cho, DMD22, DMSc26, has turned science into stunning art, earning a spot among the winners of The Koch Institute Image Awards for her striking image, "Periodontal Petals."

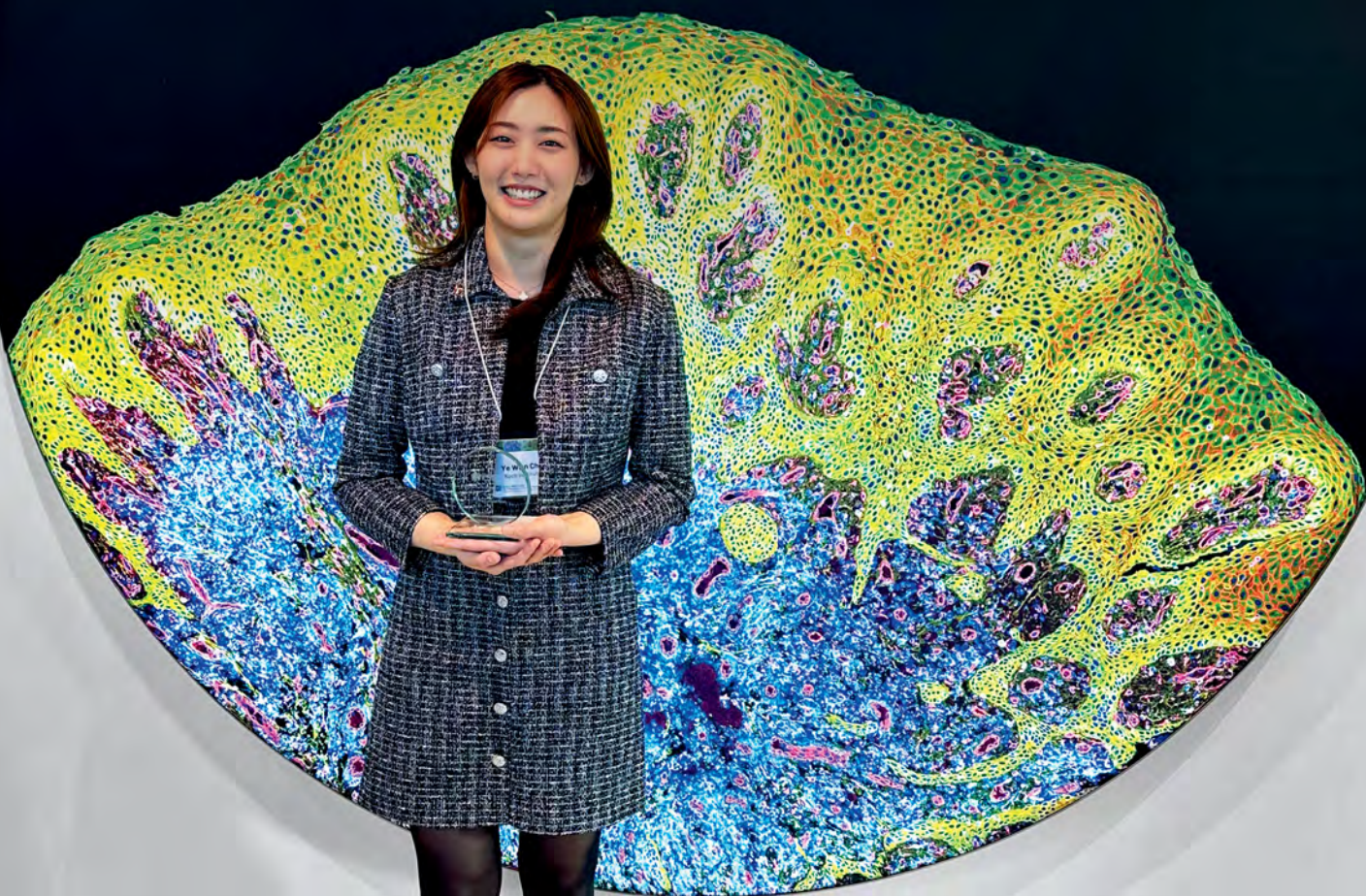
The image showcases human gingival tissue, offering a glimpse into how oral inflammatory diseases influence the spatial organization of different cell types. It was captured using a highly multiplexed imaging technique called co-detection by indexing (CODEX) as part of an

ongoing collaborative study with the Kim/Chen Lab at HSDM, Shalek Lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the Jiang Lab at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC).

"By capturing this moment, we not only gain a deeper understanding of the inflammatory processes in periodontitis, but it also opens up new possibilities for investigating immunomodulatory roles of epithelial and stromal cells and uncovering novel therapeutic targets," said Cho.

The Koch Institute Image Awards recognize extraordinary visuals produced in biomedical research. Ten images a year are selected for display in the Koch Institute Public Galleries in Cambridge.

Image courtesy of Y. W. Stacy Cho (Kim/Chen Lab, Division of Periodontology, OMII) and MIT Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research.



Dear Alumni and Friends,

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, Harvard School of Dental Medicine stands out amongst dental schools for its research strengths and a curriculum that emphasizes the foundational importance of research in predoctoral and postdoctoral training. Our students have unfettered access to explore basic, translational, clinical, and public health research studies here at HSDM and throughout Harvard affiliated hospitals and labs across the Longwood Medical Area. This experience instills an appreciation for scientific inquiry that lasts well beyond their years at HSDM and serves them throughout their careers.

In this issue, you'll learn more about the evolving landscape for research and how significant changes to federal funding will impact HSDM. Recent measures taken by the federal government will have far-reaching consequences for biomedical research at Harvard and universities across the country. Research conducted at Harvard over the years has led to treatments for oral diseases, heart disease, cancer, and genetic diseases—dramatically improving human health and longevity. There is much at stake for students, scientists, patients, and millions of Americans nationwide who benefit from lifesaving research.

Our cover story highlights important research made possible by National Institutes of Health funding. Dr. Hawazin Elani undertook one of the first known studies to map spatial accessibility to dental clinics nationally at a granular level. It revealed an alarming picture of dental care access, with significant disparities across areas of the country deemed 'dental deserts.' This kind of work has the potential to inform dental workforce planning efforts and advocacy at the federal and state levels. You'll also learn about research being done by one of our newest faculty members, Dr. Ebuka Ogwo, whose studies of oral health equity using artificial intelligence earned him a prestigious award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

HSDM's numerous contributions to research, dental education, and clinical care are evident in advancements in the field and are reflected in the excellence of our alumni. During these challenging times, we know we can count on you, our alumni, as champions for public health, research, and education. We ask for your steadfast support in standing up for higher education



and for your alma mater. In the words of Harvard's President Alan Garber, "Freedom of thought and inquiry has enabled universities to contribute in vital ways to a free society and to healthier, more prosperous lives for people everywhere. All of us share a stake in safeguarding that freedom."

Joining our ranks of alumni this year will be Class of 2025 DMD and AGE graduates who exemplify our values and mission to foster global leaders. Among this year's graduates are five DMD students who will go on to serve in the U.S. military. You can read about how their interests in global health and community service motivated them to pursue specialty training in branches of the service. I know all our graduates will make us proud and will go on to make their mark in the world. Please join me in congratulating our graduates and welcoming them into the profession.

WILLIAM V. GIANNOBILE, DDS, DMSC96, PD96
Dean and A. Lee Loomis, Jr. Professor of Oral Medicine,
Infection & Immunity
Harvard School of Dental Medicine

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Spring 2025
Volume 85, Number 1
Harvard School of
Dental Medicine

Harvard Dental is published twice a year for alumni and friends of Harvard School of Dental Medicine.

We look forward to receiving your feedback and news.

Please send correspondence to:

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Printing: Puritan Press

On Longwood Ave.



COMMUNITY CARE

A day full of smiles

Students and faculty created a fun and engaging atmosphere for children to learn about positive oral health habits during HSDM’s annual Give Kids a Smile event, held on February 22 during National Children’s Dental Health Month. Nearly 50 young patients received dental care during this year’s event.

HSDM students served as dental providers, assistants, and oral healthcare education volunteers. Routine dental exams, prophylaxes, and radiographs were provided to children ages one to 17. This year, children from Natick Public Schools attended the event and received free dental care and education. For some, it was their very first time in a dental chair.

“We are so grateful for Harvard School of Dental Medicine and Give Kids a Smile. They provided kind, compassionate, and thorough care to our students,” said Natalia Dimitrova-Topaloff, a social worker for Natick Public Schools. “Some of our students who had never seen a dentist before now have a dental home. It was incredible to attend such a fun, educational, and inspiring program.”

STUDENT ADVOCACY

Students arrive on Capitol Hill

HSDM students traveled to Washington, D.C. for the 2025 ADA Dentist and Student Lobby Day. They joined dentists and students from across the country to advocate for important issues shaping the future of oral health. On Capitol Hill, students spoke directly with senators and representatives about key legislation, including student loan reform, community water fluoridation, and improving access to dental care.

“Lobby Day gave me an interest in politics and a desire to step into a larger role in advocacy,” said Heidi Shen, DMD27. “Systemic change created by policy impacts everyone in every community.”





BEYOND BOSTON

Lessons from Costa Rica

Nithika Sivakumar, DMD26, Abbey Kim, DMD27, Chidilim Menakaya, DMD27, Val Ortiz Jimenez, DMD27, and Piper Boswell, DMD27, spent spring break in rural southern Costa Rica for a weeklong field course at Centro Interamericano para la Salud Global (CISG). The course explored innovative health systems through daily discussions and field visits, highlighting the impact of social, political, cultural, and economic factors on healthcare. During field visits, the students visited the Costa Rica-Panama border, community clinics, and hospitals to learn about health interventions, patient care integration, and efforts to reduce barriers through education.

“Public health is knitted in the fabric of our field, and it is our responsibility as future oral healthcare providers to consider how we can improve the oral health of the public in our practice,” said Chidilim Menakaya, DMD27.

IDEAS IGNITED

Creating space for innovation

HSDM hosted its inaugural Innovation Symposium, an exciting event that featured a dynamic mix of industry experts, entrepreneurs, and leaders in clinical innovation and translational medicine. The symposium featured several engaging panel sessions on topics such as developing intellectual property and technology, and translating scientific discoveries into clinical applications.

“It was truly a special event uniting a community of leaders and pioneers at the intersection of academia, industry, and clinical innovation,” said David Wu, instructor in Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity and organizer of the event. The event was made possible with the support of donors Drs. Anne Koch and Allen Ali Nasseh, MMSc97, PD97.





Student Focus

Answering the call to serve patients and country

Five HSDM graduates in the Class of 2025 will pursue specialty training and service in the U.S. military

WHILE MANY OF THEIR CLASSMATES will pursue specialty training in academic settings or enter private practice after graduating from Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), five students—representing 15 percent of the class—will go on to serve in branches of the U.S. military.

Graduates Jen Candiano, Jake Cantrell, Kaila Daniels, Michael Friedman, and Chris Nuckols, each have a unique calling to military service.

“My interest in military dentistry stemmed from the opportunity to serve those who serve,” said Cantrell. “Military dentistry offers

the chance to gain exceptional clinical experience, work in diverse environments, and take on leadership roles early in my career. I was especially drawn to the team-oriented nature of military healthcare, where dentists collaborate with medical professionals to provide comprehensive, integrated care.”

While attending HSDM, Cantrell and Candiano helped grow the School’s Give Veterans a Smile (GVAS). The event, held annually in October, provides veterans with a day of free dental care and consultations, with a long-term goal of creating a dental home for those who do not have consistent dental care.

“Working with veterans with complex dental needs solidified my desire to specialize in prosthodontics, as many of these patients require extensive restorative care and complex prosthetic solutions,” said Cantrell, who will start his residency at the Naval Postgraduate Dental School within Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

For some, an interest in community service was a natural fit. Both Daniels and Friedman served as coordinators for HSDM’s Action for Children and Teens in Oral Health Needs (ACTION), a student-run pediatric dental clinic dedicated to treating underserved young patients.

“I was especially interested in expanding our impact beyond the dental visit,” Friedman said. “My work involved connecting patients with Cambridge Health Alliance’s network of patient resource coordinators to raise awareness of and facilitate access to available healthcare resources.”

All the students were part of the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP), offered by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program offers aspiring military healthcare professionals a full scholarship in exchange for a service commitment as a commissioned officer after graduation.

“While I don’t come from a military family, I grew up in a home that deeply valued patriotism and held great respect for the armed forces. My brother’s best friend, a Navy dentist, introduced me to the Health Professions Scholarship Program,” Candiano said. She is excited to begin an oral and maxillofacial surgery residency with the Navy after graduation. “The military presented a unique avenue to combine my love for global health with my professional aspirations.”

After graduating from dental school, HPSP scholars attend Officer Training or Candidate School, then go on to complete an advanced dental residency before starting their military service.

“I am very excited to start my prosthodontics residency with the Air Force,” Daniels said. “I am looking forward to embarking on my journey in this specialty that I already admire so much. Through my didactic and clinical work, I know that I will gain a plethora of knowledge over the next three years.”

“The continuing education opportunities within the military are extensive, and their AEGD programs are renowned for their strength. I’m also excited about the prospect of treating patients without the constraints of insurance concerns,” said Nuckols, who will begin a GPR/AEGD program with the Army.

As they prepare to cross the stage at graduation, these five dentists are stepping into a future defined by service and a strong sense of purpose.

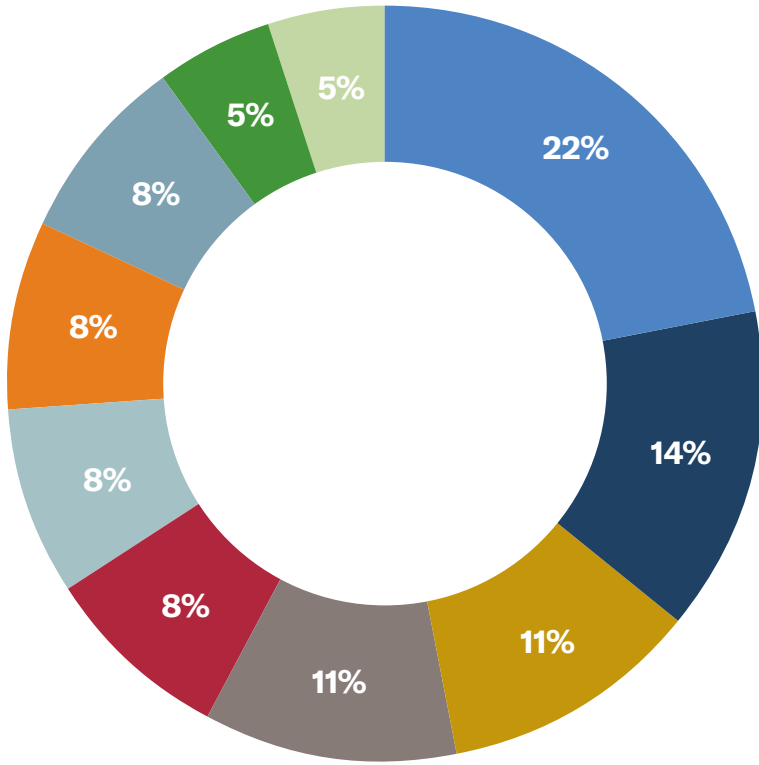
“The military provides a unique environment where dentistry intersects with operational readiness, global health initiatives, and research. I am honored to step into this next chapter and look forward to making a meaningful impact through dental care,” Cantrell said. ♥

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The military provides a unique environment where dentistry intersects with operational readiness, global health initiatives, and research. I am honored to step into this next chapter and look forward to making a meaningful impact through dental care.”

JAKE CANTRELL, DMD25



LEFT: Jen Candiano (second from left) and Jake Cantrell (right), along with their classmates, helped organize Give Veterans a Smile events.



CLASS OF 2025

MATCH DISTRIBUTION BY SPECIALTY PROGRAM

- 22% Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- 14% Health Professions Scholarship Program Scholars
- 11% General Practice Residency
- 11% Periodontology
- 8% Orthodontics
- 8% Endodontics
- 8% Pediatric Dentistry
- 8% Prosthodontics
- 5% Private Practice
- 5% Advanced Education in General Dentistry



Faculty Focus

Advancing the equitable delivery of oral healthcare with AI

Dr. Chukwuebuka Ogwo awarded a Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program Award to further his research

DR. CHUKWUEBUKA OGWO, a faculty member in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology and director of the Dental Public Health Program at Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), has received a Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program award in the amount of \$420,000 for his research on developing artificial-intelligence models for equitable delivery of oral healthcare. He is only the 11th dentist in the program's 41-year history to receive the prestigious award.

The award, which is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, offers four years of postdoctoral research support to faculty from historically marginalized backgrounds with the goal of fostering the development of medical, dental, and nursing faculty who are committed to improving the health of underserved populations, or working toward understanding and eliminating health disparities. The name of the program honors Dr. Harold Amos who was the first African American chair of a department at Harvard Medical School.

"This recognition is incredibly special as it supports our ongoing efforts to innovate in dental public health through the use of artificial intelligence," said Ogwo. "I am proud to be one of the few dentists to receive this award in its history. I want to thank the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for supporting this vision and providing me with the opportunity to advance this meaningful research."

Ogwo's research aims to develop an AI-powered tool to predict dental caries outcomes, identify social determinants of

dental caries, and detect caries from clinical photographs. It will leverage a uniquely comprehensive dataset that combines electronic health records (EHR) with census data, with the hope of creating a socially inclusive caries risk assessment tool that will help clinicians and policymakers take more targeted action in oral health prevention and management.

The work will also support the creation of an AI-driven teledentistry platform aimed at increasing access to dental care, reducing oral health disparities, and ultimately lowering the cost of care for vulnerable populations.

"The long-term vision is to build a web-based application for real-time caries prediction and management at both individual and population levels—helping us move closer to equitable oral health for all," said Ogwo.

Ogwo joined HSDM in September 2024 to lead the School's Dental Public Health Program. He previously served as an assistant professor of dentistry and the director of the Master's in Oral Health Sciences Program in the department of Oral Health Sciences at Temple University's Kornberg School of Dentistry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He also acted as the director of the Biostatistics Core at the school. He received his dental degree from the University of Nigeria, and his master's degree in international health (Epidemiology) from Vrije Universiteit in the Netherlands. Ogwo also received a master's degree in public health (MPH) from Western Illinois University and completed



his Dental Public Health residency at the University of Iowa in 2020 along with his PhD in Oral Sciences from the University of Iowa in 2021.

"I am delighted that Dr. Ogwo has joined our department at HSDM. His innovative research will bring valuable insights into improving our understanding of barriers and facilitators to improving oral health equity," said Dr. Catherine Hayes, chair of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology. "Our students will benefit greatly from his expertise and excellence in teaching, mentoring, and research."

Under Ogwo, HSDM's Dental Public Health (DPH) programs are expanding to include a part-time 3-year certificate-only program for dentists with an MPH degree. The program is expected to launch the first cohort of students in July of 2026. Additional DPH programs offered by HSDM include a Master of Medical Sciences (MMSc) or Certificate in Dental Public Health and a Doctor of Medical Sciences (DMSc) or Certificate in Dental Public Health. ♥



Brazilian graduate students gain hands-on research experience in the Feres Lab.

Research Focus

HSDM and University of São Paulo Schools of Dentistry strengthen research ties

AN ACADEMIC AGREEMENT has been established between Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) and the three schools of dentistry at the University of São Paulo (USP) in Brazil—São Paulo, Bauru, and Ribeirão Preto. It aims to strengthen academic cooperation between the institutions and advance research in the fields of dental medicine and oral science.

“This agreement opens doors for USP doctoral students to engage in cutting-edge research at HSDM in areas like oral medicine, microbiology, immunology, bone biology, data science, tissue engineering, drug delivery, artificial intelligence, and bone and tissue regeneration. We hope this is just the first step toward many more transformative projects,” said Dr. Magda Feres, chair of HSDM’s Department of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity.

The formalization of the agreement was led by Feres in collaboration with Dr. Marina Gallottini, professor at the USP School of Dentistry and secretary-general of the University of São Paulo.

“One of the key pillars of the agreement will be to establish postgraduate student exchange programs, allowing Brazilian students to participate in ‘sandwich PhD’ programs in research laboratories at HSDM, broadening their academic experiences and contributing to scientific progress,” said Gallottini.

The agreement, which was signed February 3, 2025, by Dean William V. Giannobile along with the deans of the three USP Schools of Dentistry (Dr. Giulio Gavini, Dr. Marília Afonso Rabelo Buzalaf, and Dr. Ricardo Gariba Silva), reinforces the institutions’ shared commitment to advancing research and academic training.

“
My experience at HSDM has been transformative for my training. Being immersed in such a stimulating and collaborative environment has allowed me to refine my research skills and expand my scientific perspective.”

CAROLINA RUIS FERRARI
POSTDOCTORAL STUDENT FROM THE
BAURU SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

It furthers current work underway in the Feres Lab with dental students from USP. As part of a grant award from the Lemann Brazil Research Fund at Harvard, the lab has been engaged in work with co-investigators from USP that explores the effects of a novel hybrid protein on oral proteome dynamics and microbiome composition, among other ongoing research projects.

Carolina Ruis Ferrari, a postdoctoral student from the Bauru School of Dentistry – University of São Paulo, is currently working in the Feres Lab as part of the grant. Her research focuses on evaluating the antimicrobial effects of CaneStat in both healthy individuals and patients with gingivitis. The study explores how the new mouth rinse influences the oral microbiome, particularly in modulating bacterial communities associated with periodontal health.

“Through microbiological analyses, we aim to assess its potential in preventing and managing gingivitis, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective therapeutic strategies with a broader impact on oral disease prevention,” said Ferrari.

During her time at HSDM, Ferrari has been immersed in a laboratory environment that she credits with having a crucial role in her development.

“My experience at HSDM has been transformative for my training. Being immersed in such a stimulating and collaborative environment has allowed me to refine my research skills and



ABOVE: Image by Eugene Ga / Alamy

LEFT: Dean William V. Giannobile and Dr. Magda Feres from HSDM formalized the agreement with University of São Paulo’s Dr. Marina Gallottini.

expand my scientific perspective. The support from faculty members and fellow researchers has been invaluable, fostering a space where innovation and critical thinking thrive,” she said.

After completing her PhD, Ferrari intends to pursue a career path in research and academia, focusing on the development of innovative strategies for the prevention and treatment of oral diseases.

“My goal is to continue contributing to oral health research, driving innovation, and ensuring that science continues to improve lives worldwide.” ♥



Research Focus

Mapping dental deserts across the U.S.

HSDM research reveals 1.7 million lack access to care

IMAGINE HAVING TO TRAVEL FOR HOURS to receive routine oral healthcare, such as a dental cleaning, or waiting in agony for days to get treatment for a painful toothache. For nearly 1.7 million people in the United States, this is a harsh reality. A recent study published in *JAMA Network Open* takes a fresh look at the issue of access to dental care, using a more nuanced approach to identify areas with limited access to dental services across the U.S.

Led by Dr. Hawazin Elani, assistant professor in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology at Harvard School of Dental Medicine, the study is the first to map spatial accessibility to dental clinics nationally at a granular level. By analyzing data at the block group level—the smallest geographical unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau defined by clusters of blocks—the researchers provide a more detailed picture of dental care access, revealing significant disparities within specific geographic areas of the country.

“These areas are really ‘dental deserts’ where you’d have to go to great distances to find a dentist. Our findings highlight a concerning geographic maldistribution of dentists, with many rural and disadvantaged communities left without access to care,” Dr. Elani said.

The study’s approach builds on existing efforts to understand dental care access, including the Health Resources and Services Administration’s designation of Health Professional Shortage Areas for dental services, but takes it a step further by using an advanced gravity-based method to assess the availability of clinicians, accessibility, and adjustments for demand and supply factors at the block group level.

“We were able to identify areas with limited access to dental care that may have been missed by previous studies,” said Md Shahinoor Rahman, coauthor of the study.

This disparity is evident in the ratio of dentists to population, with rural areas having one dentist available for every 3,850 people, compared to urban areas, which have over two and a half times more dentists, with one dentist for every 1,470 people.

By state, Alaska had the highest percentage of the population (10.4 percent) living in dental deserts, followed by Montana (7.8 percent) and North Dakota (7.7 percent). Only four states—Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, and New Jersey—along with Washington, D.C., were identified as having no dental deserts.

Elani and her co-authors also examined socioeconomic data to contrast racial and ethnic composition, population by age group, poverty level, educational attainment, median household income, and health insurance. The results showed that nearly 24.7 million individuals lived in dental care shortage



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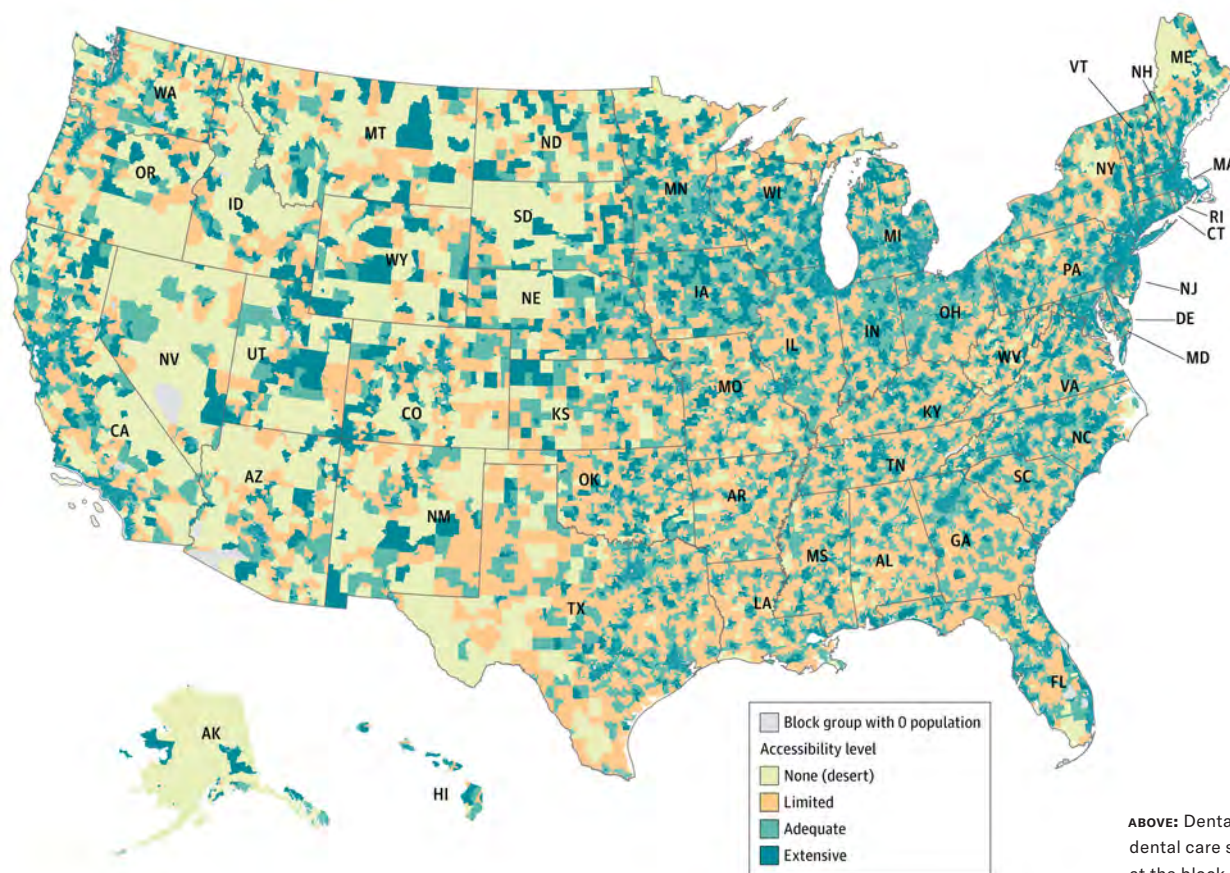
**MD SHAHINOOR RAHMAN
VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ORAL
HEALTH POLICY AND EPIDEMIOLOGY AT
HARVARD SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE**

areas. In these counties, nearly 15.6 percent of the population lived below the federal poverty level. Racially, more White populations lived in rural areas with a shortage of dentists, as compared with Hispanic and Black populations. However, in urban areas where there is segregation and a concentration of poverty, Hispanic and Black individuals were more likely to live in areas with a shortage of dental care. A high proportion of individuals in rural shortage areas were also uninsured and more likely to experience spatial disparities in access to dental care.

Dr. Elani noted that this has serious implications for oral and overall health, saying, “The situation is likely even more dire for Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries, who face additional barriers due to low dentist participation, worsening existing disparities. This can lead to people putting off much-needed care due to access challenges.”

“With this more precise data, we hope our findings can inform dental workforce planning efforts and targeted interventions at the federal and state levels to encourage dentists to practice in underserved areas and reduce disparities in access to dental care,” Dr. Elani said.

This work was supported by the National Institute on Minority Health And Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health under Award No. R01MD017093. ♥



ABOVE: Dental deserts and dental care shortage areas at the block group level. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the CC-BY License. © 2024 Rahman MS et al. JAMA Network Open.

“

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DR. HAWAZIN ELANI
 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN ORAL HEALTH POLICY
 AND EPIDEMIOLOGY AT HARVARD SCHOOL OF
 DENTAL MEDICINE



Research Focus

The impact of federal funding on HSDM's research

HARVARD SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE'S longstanding commitment to research and scientific discovery dates back more than a century. Funding to support research at HSDM began with an early philanthropic gift from Harriet Newell Lowell in 1901 and continues to this day with nearly \$9 million in federally funded research and 61 active projects. HSDM stands out among dental schools for its research strengths and a curriculum that emphasizes the foundational importance of research in predoctoral and postdoctoral training. In January, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced plans to impose deep cuts to an important source of research funding known as indirect costs. By April, the federal government froze \$2 billion in research funding to Harvard.

"For three-quarters of a century, the federal government has awarded grants and contracts to Harvard and other universities to help pay for work that, along with investments by the universities themselves, has led to groundbreaking innovations across a wide range of medical, engineering, and scientific fields. These innovations have made countless people in our country and throughout the world healthier and safer," President Alan Garber said in a statement on April 14. "For the government to retreat from these partnerships now risks not only the health and well-being of millions of individuals but also the economic security and vitality of our nation."

Harvard's Vice Provost for Research John Shaw described the longtime partnership between universities and the

federal government, "It's a partnership that is the envy of the world—one that's driven scientific progress, economic growth, and American leadership in innovation and discovery. The relationship is built around the recognition of the importance of fundamental research in driving scientific discovery," he said in an interview with the *Harvard Gazette*.

"At HSDM, our researchers are working on basic, translational, and global health research studies that advance dental medicine and generate breakthroughs that exemplify science in service of humanity," said Dean William Giannobile. "With federal funding support, HSDM researchers have advanced our understanding of oral diseases, craniofacial biology, and inflammatory diseases, nutrition and





In addition to slowing medical progress, these drastic cuts will mean job losses and real economic pain at the state and local levels.”

CHRISTOPHER FOX, DMD87, DMSC91
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR DENTAL, ORAL, AND CRANIOFACIAL RESEARCH

oral health, study of rare bone diseases and facial anomalies.”

Research funding makes up 16 percent of HSDM’s operating budget and enables the study of infectious disease, functional genomics, craniofacial and bone biology, stem cell biology and regenerative medicine, molecular and mucosal immunology, bioinformatics, tissue engineering, cellular, molecular and developmental biology, human genetics, and population health.

A HSDM researcher who studies rare genetic conditions underscored the importance of federal funding to finding potential cures. “We are extremely grateful for NIH funding, as it is critical and essential for conducting mechanistic investigations of rare genetic diseases. This research lays the foundation for diagnosing, preventing, and developing treatments,” she said. “Potential cuts could compromise research infrastructure and training, potentially deterring talented students from pursuing research careers.”

A recent report from the nonprofit organization United for Medical Research shows that every dollar of research funded by the NIH delivers \$2.56 in economic activity, a multiplier effect that extends the agency’s impact as the largest public funder of biomedical research. The report found

that in 2024 all 50 states benefited by the creation of 408,000 jobs nationwide and over \$94.5 billion in new economic activity.

“In addition to slowing medical progress, these drastic cuts will mean job losses and real economic pain at the state and local levels,” said Christopher Fox, DMD87, DMSc91, Chief Executive Officer of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research.

“I am deeply appreciative of the HSDM educational model, where research experiences are thoroughly integrated into the curriculum,” said Fox. “It taught me

early on that research can’t be separate from patient care for any length of time. At best, we will stall health improvements; at worst, we will devolve into clinical practices that cause harm. It’s why I take any cuts to medical and dental research so seriously.” ♥



READ MORE ABOUT WHAT IS AT STAKE





Alumni Focus

Leading the HDAA with a mentorship mindset

As she prepares for her 20th reunion, HSDM alumna reflects on what drew her to HSDM and the impact it had on her career

MINDY GREENBLATT STREEM, DMD05, has always credited Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) with shaping her career and instilling in her a deep sense of purpose. Now, she's giving back to the school in a meaningful way as she steps into her new role as president of the Harvard Dental Alumni Association (HDAA). After previously serving as vice president, Greenblatt Streem is eager to create the same sense of community and mentorship that she believes were instrumental to her own success.

ABOVE: HDAA council members Adesegun "Shola" Tewogbade, DMD04, and Mindy Greenblatt Streem, DMD05

“Soon after I graduated from HSDM, I knew that I wanted to come back as a mentor or lecturer in some way. This new role as president gives me the opportunity to look back and see how I can help the future of our students and School,” Greenblatt Streem said.

Greenblatt Streem’s path to dentistry wasn’t always clear, but her passion for medicine was. During the summers as an undergrad student, she worked as a dental assistant at a pediatric dental office and shadowed a pediatric cardiologist and a neonatologist. It wasn’t until she attended Harvard School of Dental Medicine and visited the craniofacial team at Boston Children’s Hospital that she fell in love with orthodontics. Today, she’s turned that passion into practice as an orthodontist in Ohio.

“I was surrounded by the best minds around me as professors and fellow students. I met people that brought out the best side of me—both emotionally and intellectually,” she said. “It was mind-blowing that me, a girl from Toledo, Ohio, had the opportunity to be around so many brilliant minds. It opened my world.”

From mentee to mentor

While at HSDM, Greenblatt Streem credits much of her success to the mentors who guided and supported her throughout her journey, including Bruce Donoff, DMD67, MD73, former dean of HSDM and Walter C. Guralnick Distinguished Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, and Howard Howell, A. Lee Loomis Professor of Periodontology, Emeritus.

“Dr. Donoff was someone that I could go to for help, as I was very far away from home,” said Greenblatt Streem. “Dr. Howell was very much there for me every step of the way—from when I had a hard time in an externship, to questions about my future in the dental profession.”

For Greenblatt Streem, she hopes to be there for other students who are thinking of pursuing dentistry as a career or for those who are already navigating dental school. She recognizes that life planning often takes a backseat during training and hopes to help bridge that gap, offering guidance and support outside the classroom.

“For example, nobody tells you when you become an orthodontist that your busiest time is from 3–5 p.m., but that is the time that your kids get out of school and you need childcare,” she said. “There are many obstacles in going into dentistry while having a partner and children. This is something that I very much like to discuss with my fellow female practitioners.”

Greenblatt Streem currently serves as a mentor for the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD) and for HSDM students.

“Dentistry is such a broad field, and it has to be more than just a profession—you have to work in a position

that is enjoyable to you each day,” she said. “I want other students to know that I am there for them if they have questions about practice ownership, associating, partnerships, and beyond. I truly love helping the next generation navigate how to merge their love of dentistry with a future long-term job.”

Now Greenblatt Streem is taking her mentorship to the next level as she steps into her new role as president of the Harvard Dental Alumni Association. Moving from her previous role as vice president, she hopes to use the next two years to create and maintain mentorship opportunities with HSDM students and increase engagement with young alumni of the School.

“I hope we can create more informed paths for those getting out into the real world while juggling working, being parents, and leading productive and mentally healthy lives,” she said. “The alumni association has grown a lot over the past few years. Together, we have so many wonderful ideas. I can’t wait to see what comes next.”

By working to build a supportive network, she aims to inspire the next generation of dental professionals and ensure that students not only succeed academically but also thrive in their careers and leadership roles.

Greenblatt Streem also looks forward to advancing the HDAA’s mission, ensuring HSDM alumni stay connected and engaged, no matter where they are.

“It is so hard to put into words how absolutely life changing my experience at Harvard was. During that time, I met my forever friends. I found a place that finally felt like home to me. I very much look forward to seeing many of them at our 20-year reunion in June.” ♥

BELOW: Greenblatt Streem with family and friends at the HSDM tailgate before the 140th annual Harvard-Yale game



Donor Profile

A passion for prevention inspires a purposeful gift



AFTER PRACTICING DENTISTRY for nearly 60 years, Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM) faculty member Dr. Paul Levi has seen more preventable tooth decay and periodontitis than he'd like to admit.

"The cause of dental diseases is straightforward—bacterial plaque produces toxins and acids that cause gum inflammation and tooth decay. However, the difficulty is that these toxins cannot be seen by the patient, and thus when doing their daily dental plaque removal patients cannot self-correct," Levi said. "Coaching is a major part of what clinicians can and must do."

Teaching clinicians to be better coaches and advocates for the prevention of oral disease inspired Paul and his wife Patty to give a \$250,000 gift to HSDM to establish a Prevention Initiative, which in December of 2024 was dedicated to inspiring dental students to incorporate prevention principles into their future practice.

"When I attend dental meetings there are rarely any courses in how to teach plaque removal techniques, how to motivate patients, the psychology of patient motivation, or the sociology of understanding cultures and how to properly communicate with our patients. The vast predominance of lectures are about new and innovative ways to repair the damage caused by diseases. Since, when doing repair, we are not treating the cause of the diseases, they will recur unless the patients understand and are motivated as to how to prevent their recurrence," Levi said.

"We're so grateful to Paul and Patty for making this generous gift that will have a lasting impact at HSDM and well beyond," said Dean William Giannobile. "Paul is a true champion for preventative oral healthcare and a role model for all clinicians."

Levi has been a part-time lecturer at HSDM for 30 years and also serves as an adjunct lecturer at Tufts. He has an accomplished career as a periodontologist, teacher, researcher, and mentor. He's lectured in U.S. dental schools as well as in Barcelona, Spain, where he taught at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya and was recognized by the university with an honorary doctorate degree. He

was also named Clinician of the Year by the Massachusetts Dental Society.

For Paul and Patty Levi, making the gift to HSDM was an opportunity to give back to the profession and raise the level of awareness for a topic that's too often overlooked.

"Harvard, by virtue of its name and excellent reputation for research and quality of education, is known throughout the world. To draw attention to the need to teach prevention, having Harvard School of Dental Medicine inaugurate this most important health-producing effort is critical to gain worldwide exposure."

The inaugural Prevention Symposium took place in December 2024 and brought together nearly 300 students and faculty from HSDM, Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, and Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine to learn about effective patient communication strategies to improve both oral and systemic health. The event included several keynotes and thematic panel discussions about motivational behavior, nutrition, brushing techniques, healthy lifestyles, and the oral-systemic connection.

David Kim, DMSco5, associate professor of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity at HSDM, helped organize the inaugural symposium. He deeply admires Levi's dedication and passion.

"I have known Dr. Levi for over 20 years, and it's uncommon to maintain such a long-lasting connection with a mentor. He is always available to speak, whether it's early in the morning or late in the evening. Many of us fondly recall waking up at 4 or 5 a.m. to meet with him in his office and review treatment plans," said Kim. "It's rare to encounter someone so passionate about periodontics—especially in the area of prevention—who has given so much to multiple generations of dentists."

Levi is already looking ahead to the next Prevention Symposium in 2026 and anticipates expanding the reach of the event by inviting students from the dental and medical schools in the Boston area,

as well as the schools of public health and dental hygiene. An avid runner, Levi knows the road to prevention is a marathon rather than a sprint. He draws connections between the dedication to one's physical fitness and one's oral health.

"Oral health is physical health. One cannot separate an infection in the mouth from an infection in any other part of the body. If an individual has the commitment to do physical exercise to maintain the health of their body, to eat a correct diet to be nutritionally healthy, then doing the correct dental hygiene daily and having regular dental appointments that include proper coaching are absolutely essential." ♥

“
Oral health is physical health. One cannot separate an infection in the mouth from an infection in any other part of the body.”

DR. PAUL LEVI
LECTURER ON ORAL MEDICINE, INFECTION, AND IMMUNITY
AT HARVARD SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE



LEFT: The inaugural Prevention Symposium featured several engaging panels with faculty, students, and industry experts.

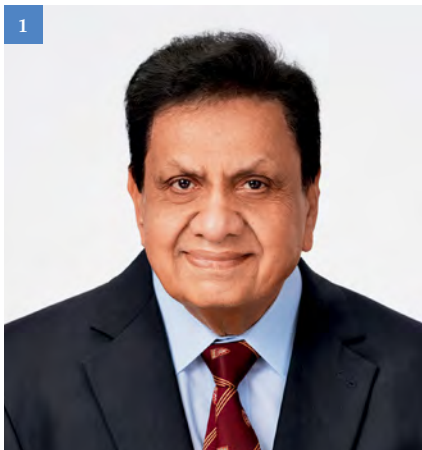
ABOVE: Paul and Patty Levi (center) with HSDM Periodontology faculty

News & Notes

Alumni News

Abdul Abdulwaheed, PD03, president of the Massachusetts Dental Society authored and successfully championed two statewide bills: the Dental Diversion Bill (H.300) and the Hygiene Workforce Expansion Bill (H.4842). H.300 creates a confidential rehabilitation pathway for dental professionals facing challenges with mental health and substance use, prioritizing support over punishment. H.4842 addresses Massachusetts' critical hygiene workforce shortage by broadening licensure pathways.

1 A. Razaque Ahmed, DMSc88, PD88, MPA95, was honored with the 2025 Presidential Citation Award from the American Academy of Dermatology for his scientific contributions to the specialty and to advancing the understanding of autoimmune diseases. He is considered an expert on blistering diseases and has published numerous scientific papers on the topic.



2 Shaima Bahammam, DMSc22, organized an HSDM alumni gathering in Saudi Arabia during the Saudi International Dental Conference. More than 15 alumni gathered to reconnect and socialize during the event.

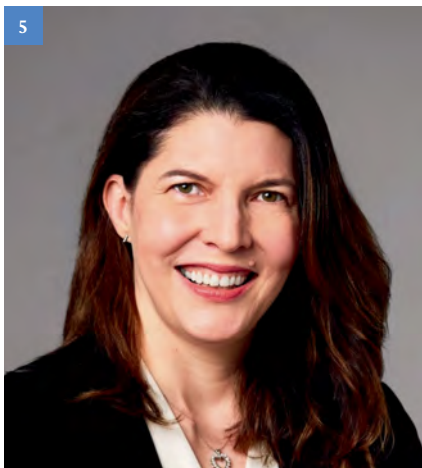
Robert Lewando, PD83, received the Pierre Fauchard Distinguished Service Award from the Pierre Fauchard Society at the Yankee Dental Congress held in January 2025 in Boston, MA.

3 Raul I. Garcia, AB75, DMD81, MMSc85, was elected to serve as vice president of the International Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (IADR). Garcia is professor and chair of the Department of Health Policy and Health Services Research at the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine at Boston University.



4 Chris Bonebreak Jackson, DMD14, will serve as chair of a new HSDM Clinical Innovation Advisory Board comprised of key thought leaders in oral medicine, dental education, science, and industry. The inaugural board will engage in discussions around emerging topics in clinical care delivery, clinical dental education, workforce outcomes, and clinical research. Their insights will help inform HSDM on advances in a rapidly expanding field. Board members include: Natalia Chalmers, Mostafa Khairzada, Marta Revilla León, Amir Mansouri, **Allen Ali Nasseh, MMSc97, PD97**, **Michael Newman, PD74**, Victoria Sampson, Miguel Stanley, Hom-Lay Wang, and Edward J. Zuckerman.





5 Rachel Ramoni, DMD99, PDO6, was named director of Kaiser Permanente Division of Research (DOR). She previously led research at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs since 2017. In her new role, she becomes the sixth DOR director in the organization's 64-year history and leads more than 720 employees, including 73 research scientists and staff scientists, along with 17 research fellows.

Miguel Roque, DMD16, MMSc19, was elected president of the Massachusetts Association of Endodontists for the 2024–2025 calendar year.

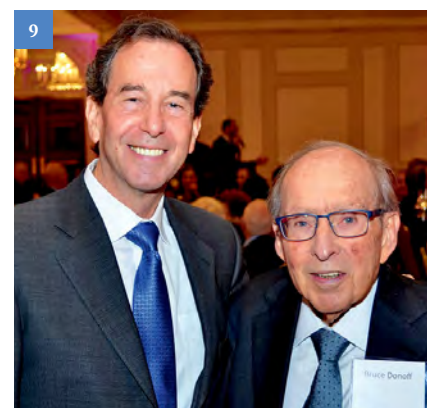
6 Steve Roser, DMD68, was honored with the 2024 Beckman Award for his mentorship and guidance to HSDM students. The award honors a faculty member—or members—who, through their teaching, have inspired students to create an organization or establish a concept, procedure, or movement that delivers a lasting and demonstrable benefit to the broader community.



Amit Sachdeo, DMSc06, released a new book called, "Building Wealth through Rental Properties: A Beginner's Guide to Real Estate Investing."

7 HSDM alumni, friends, and dental professionals gathered at the PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, for a sun-filled weekend of learning and connection. Over 40 participants learned about artificial intelligence advancements in dentistry, led by **Magda Feres, DMSc99**, chair of HSDM's Department of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity. After an engaging continuing education program, attendees enjoyed a warm reception and a relaxing round of golf.

8 Nearly 100 attendees—including alumni, faculty, and students—gathered to celebrate and reconnect during an alumni reception at Yankee Dental Congress in Boston, MA.



Faculty News

9 Bruce Donoff, DMD67, MD73, Walter C. Guralnick Distinguished Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and former dean of HSDM, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Dental Science (AADS). Throughout his tenure at HSDM, Donoff moved the School forward with a broad vision for global and community oral health. A skilled oral surgeon and educator, he has been an advocate for the integration of oral health and medicine as a way to ensure improved outcomes for his own patients and dental patients everywhere. Several HSDM faculty and alumni were also inducted into the academy, including Drs. **Dominique Rousson, Jie ("JJ") Sun, DMD17, MMSc20, Sam Barr**, and **Supattriya Chutinan**.



10 Joel Dunsky, Anne Koch, and Shep Goldstein reconnected over lunch at BallenIsles Country Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Hawazin Elani, MMSc15, assistant professor in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, was named a mentor on the NIH AIM AHEAD program for AI research. The program will establish mutually beneficial and coordinated partnerships to increase the participation of researchers and communities from underserved and rural areas in the development of AI/ML models and enhance the capabilities of this emerging technology, beginning with electronic health record (EHR) data.

Ozge Erdogan, DMSc22, instructor in Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences, received the Anne D. Haffee Fellowship at the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research Annual Meeting.



11 Magda Feres, DMSc99, chair of the Department of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity, was honored with the Inspiring Women of the Year award in the science category by Mulheres Inspiradoras, a partner of the United Nations (UN) Global Compact – Brazil Network. The award honors and recognizes female leaders in Brazil and Latin America, celebrating their impact while driving progress for gender equality and female representation in leadership across all sectors.

12 Dean William Giannobile, DDS, DMSc96, PD96, received the American Dental Association’s prestigious Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Dental Research. The award recognizes an individual who, through basic or clinical research, has contributed to the advancement of the profession of dentistry or to major improvement in the oral health of the public. Giannobile was acknowledged for his achievements and research contributions in many fields including bone and tissue regeneration using stem cell therapy, biomimetic nanoscaffolds, anti-sclerostin, and periodontal regeneration, along with his commitment to dental student mentorship.



12 Catherine Hayes, SM89, DMSc93, PD93, and Lisa Simon, DMD14, PD15, MD20, along with other collaborators at Harvard Chan School and Harvard Medical School were awarded an R03 from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research entitled, “Medicaid coverage and treatment for periodontal disease and its impact on health outcomes.”

Stephen Hoffman, lecturer in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, Advanced Education in General Dentistry Program and Lecturer in Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, received the Alphonse J. “Skip” Homicz Jr. Legacy Award from the New Hampshire Oral Health Coalition for his unwavering effort to increase access to oral health in New Hampshire.



13 Tien Jiang, DMD14, assistant professor in the Department of Oral Health Policy and Epidemiology, received the 2025 Gies Award for Junior Faculty Achievement in Oral Health Education from the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) for her work and significant contributions to the profession. She was presented with the award at the 2025 ADEA Annual Session.

Leon Klempner, lecturer in Orthodontics, recently received trademark approval from the United States Patent and Trademark Office for PatientCue, a HIPAA-compliant platform that enables medical, dental, and veterinary practices to communicate and schedule appointments with potential new patients.

Elizabeth Shin Perry, DMD93, lecturer on Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences, has been elected to serve as vice president of the American Association of Endodontists for the 2025–2026 calendar year. She also served as co-editor for the second edition of the book, “Pitt Ford’s Problem-Based Learning in Endodontology.”



14 Lakmali Silva, assistant professor of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity, has been honored with an Eleanor and Miles Shore Fellowship. The Shore Program funding will support her exploration of the processes that cause and drive the progression of periodontal disease.

Student News

15 An Oral Health Day event for first-year dental and medical students at HSDM and HMS integrated oral health into the medical curriculum. Led by HSDM faculty and students, the event featured several interactive sessions, including hands-on training in performing dental exams. The program, now in its tenth year, also included in-depth discussions on oral-systemic health and the importance of early detection and recognition of oral disease.



First and second-year DMD students hosted an event with the Harvard University Pre-Dental Society where they shared their personal experiences and insights into applying to dental school. The event was part of the HSDM x Harvard University Pre-Dental Mentorship Program spearheaded by **Heidi Shen, DMD27**, and **Joseph Heo, DMD27**.

16 HSDM's chapter of the American Student Dental Association hosted its annual Pre-Dental Day, offering a chance for nearly 70 pre-dental students to learn more about dental school. The day included a panel led by current HSDM students and several hands-on workshops. The event offered a chance for participants to connect personally with current dental students and learn more about the student experience at HSDM.

HSDM's Division of Periodontology had an impressive showing at the 2024 American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) annual meeting. **Joe Montesano, DMD24, MMSc27**, was recognized with the Patty and Paul Levi Award, and HSDM faculty member **Jennifer Chen, DMSc19**, was honored with the Nevins BioHorizons Fellowship from the AAP Foundation.



17 Residents from HSDM's AGE Prosthodontics program attended the American College of Prosthodontics Annual Meeting in Marco Island, Florida. **Sang-bin Byeon, MMSc25, Diana Lopez, MMSc25, Manavi Nagai, MMSc25, Chu-Chi Huang, MMSc26**, and **Jessica Poon, MMSc26**, presented their clinical cases and research during the poster competition. Huang was awarded first place in the clinical presentations for his poster on digital workflows for complete denture fabrication.





Periodontology resident **Y.W. Stacy Cho, DMD22, DMSc26**, was selected to receive the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) Travel Grant to present her research at the AADOCR 2025 Annual Meeting in New York.

18 Betty Ben Dor, DMD25, and **Tara Zhou, DMD25**, were honored for their leadership and service to the dental community. Ben Dor was recognized as the recipient of the Student Leader Award from the American College of Dentists (ACD) for her outstanding leadership, academic performance, and impact on the dentistry profession. Zhou was named a recipient of the Matthew Boylan Scholarship, awarded annually during Yankee Dental Congress to a Massachusetts resident and dental student who has provided distinguished service to organized dentistry and the community.

Kailing Ho, DMD22, MMSc25, was selected to receive the Academy of Osseointegration (AO) Travel Grant to present her research at the AO 2025 Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA.

19 Nika Mehrinia, DMSc28, earned first place in the graduate student competition at the American Association for the Advancement of Science 2025 Annual Meeting. Her research, titled “Enhanced Alveolar Bone Regeneration Using SPM Releasing Graft: A Preclinical Study Using 3D-Printing Technology,” explores a novel approach to improving bone healing. She was also recognized with the Dr. Joshua E. Neimark Award during the conference.

Nithya Ramesh, DMSc25, was elected to serve as the Governing Councilor for the Oral Health Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA). In the 3-year term, she will serve as the Chair of the Policy Committee and represent the section in the larger Governing Council meetings at APHA at the Annual Conference.

Camila Tussie, DMD25, was honored with the American Dental Education Association/MouthWatch Predoctoral Dental Student Scholarship for Innovation. The scholarship recognizes students pursuing a career in dentistry who demonstrate leadership, professional excellence, and strive to make a difference in the field of dentistry through the use of innovative technology.

Juanna Xie, DMD25, was selected to receive the American Dental Education Association/Haleon Preventive Dentistry Scholarship. The scholarship supports predoctoral dental students who have demonstrated academic excellence in preventive dentistry.



20 Three Harvard School of Dental Medicine advanced graduate students are the newest recipients of Harvard Presidential Scholarships for the 2024–2025 academic year. This year’s scholars are Drs. **Ching-Shuan (Jolly) Huang**, a DMSc candidate in Endodontics; **Ben Swanson**, an MMSc candidate in Periodontics; and **David Cruz Walma**, a DMSc candidate in Orthodontics.

The talented recipients are pursuing a range of research interests including investigating the underlying causes of auto-immune diseases, studying the mechanism underlying developmental processes in tooth morphogenesis, and exploring therapeutics to support advances in molecular and personalized medicine.



HSDM News

21 The HSDM community gathered for the 140th annual Harvard-Yale game. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni braved the chilly air for a morning of fun, food, and games at the HSDM tailgate before heading to Harvard Stadium to cheer on the Crimson.



BE THE CATALYST

Your gift drives learning and discovery

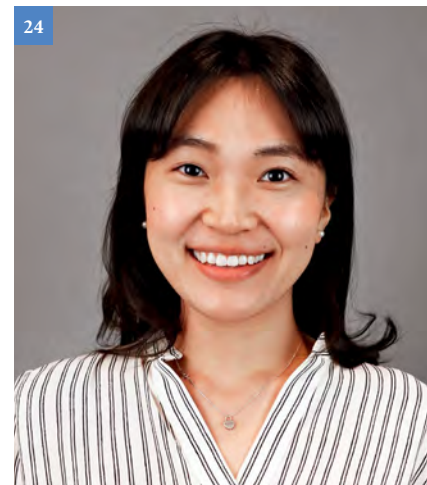
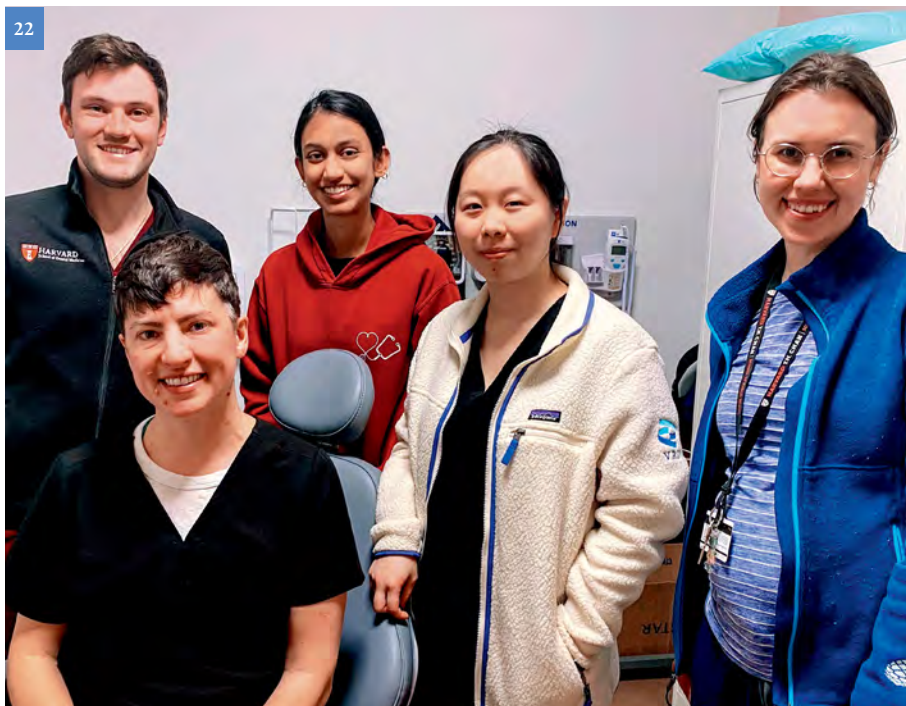
Every gift—no matter the size—fuels progress at HSDM.

Your generosity funds scholarships, expands opportunities, enhances learning spaces, and powers the research shaping the future of oral health.

Together, we can accelerate discoveries and transform lives.

Scan here to support research and more at HSDM





22 HSDM faculty and students from the Geriatric Student Interest Group piloted oral and overall health needs assessments for community-dwelling older adults at Element Care’s Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

23 Harvard School of Dental Medicine hosted a successful Continuing Education course in Da Nang, Vietnam. The weekend-long in-person program provided a comprehensive learning and training experience for dentists seeking to enhance their skills in advanced implant treatment.

HSDM’s Department of Restorative Dentistry and Biomaterials Sciences hosted its second annual Alvin Krakow Northeast Endodontic Research Symposium. Named in honor of the first endodontic program director at the School, nearly 70 participants joined the symposium. The day-long event featured a keynote address by Hal Duncan, associate professor at Trinity College Dublin School of Dental Medicine, and presentations by students and faculty from HSDM, Boston University, and Tufts University on topics including dentin repair mechanisms, dental pulp stem cells, and endodontic microbiology.

Stacy Chauviere has joined HSDM as a financial analyst. Before arriving at HSDM, Chauviere worked for the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University. In this role, she provides guidance on financial systems and policies, analyzes financial data and requests, and provides recommendations for departments and the School.

24 Lisa Huh has joined HSDM as the new assistant director of marketing, bringing in-depth marketing experience from roles in higher education and business. Most recently, she served in a digital marketing and communications role at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she contributed to

the promotion and growth of both the Supply Chain Management Master’s Program and the online MicroMasters Program. At HSDM, she will lead new marketing efforts with a primary focus on reaching audiences interested in HSDM’s external education programs and clinical care services.

Stacy Langenderfer joined HSDM in a new role as director of Corporate Relations. She recently served as senior director of National Corporate Development at Cleveland Clinic, where she led corporate relations, engagement, and fundraising with industry partners. She also brings experience from academia working previously for Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, OH.

Sophie Spengler has joined HSDM as a Department Administrator for the Department of Oral Medicine, Infection, and Immunity.



Upcoming Events



May 29
Class of 2025
Commencement
and Class Day

Harvard Yard and Harvard
Medical School Quad



June 13–14
HSDM Alumni Days

Harvard School of
Dental Medicine



July 7–August 29
Summer Preceptorship
Programs

Harvard School of
Dental Medicine



August 4
White Coat Ceremony

Harvard Medical
School Quad



September 16–19
Fixed Implant
Rehabilitation of
Edentulous Patients

Harvard School of
Dental Medicine



September 22–December 1
Modern Restorative
Dentistry

Online



October 17
HSDM American Academy
of Periodontology Dinner

Toronto, Ontario



November 14–15
HSDM 2nd Global
Symposium on Artificial
Intelligence in Dentistry

Joseph B. Martin
Conference Center



SEE A FULL LIST OF EVENTS AT:
[HSDM.HARVARD.EDU/CALENDAR](https://hsdm.harvard.edu/calendar)





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HARVARD
School of Dental Medicine

Alumni Days

Friday, June 13 – Saturday, June 14

Enjoy engaging discussions and campus tours, followed by an elegant dinner at the Four Seasons.

Continue the festivities Saturday with family fun on the Quad—food trucks, games, and more!

Register and learn more

