

Home [EXCLUSIVE: The dental industry responds to the American Dental Association's site selection process](#)

## EXCLUSIVE: The dental industry responds to the American Dental Association's site selection process

By Kevin Henry  
Editor, Proofs

In this exclusive interview with the American Dental Association, you can read the logic behind the ADA's selection for the dates and locations for its Annual Sessions through 2018. Now hear the thoughts from interviews I conducted with representatives from the Thomas P. Hinman Dental Meeting, Greater New York Dental Meeting, New Orleans Dental Conference/Louisiana Dental Association Annual Session, and the Dental Trade Alliance (DTA).

### Hinman Dental Meeting

*Editor's Note: Here's my interview with Sylvia Ratchford, executive director of the Hinman Dental Meeting. The ADA will be in Atlanta in October of 2017 and (as always) the Hinman will be hosting shows in Atlanta in the Marches preceding and following the ADA session.*

**Kevin Henry:** Last year was a big year for the Hinman Meeting as it celebrated its 100th anniversary. Talk about last year's show and the milestone.

**Ratchford:** It was a very exciting year and we celebrated in a number of ways. We did something special in the exhibit hall to highlight the history of the Hinman Meeting as well as the history of dentistry. We worked with Freeman to put that together, and part of that display will now be at the Georgia Health Sciences University, College of Dental Medicine, our state dental school in Augusta. We also had a diamond giveaway every day, as well as some characters dressed as Dr. and Mrs. Hinman walking the hall and handing out \$100 bills. We had a good number of activities, and a great response to all of them. Also, our keynote speaker was Laura Bush, who talked about the importance of education and her life in the White House.

**Henry:** Would you consider the Hinman Meeting to be a regional or national meeting?

**Ratchford:** Both. We're regional in that we're always in Atlanta. The strength of our attendance really comes from 14 states, but we draw from all 50 states, so I would say we're a national meeting as well. We've never said that we're just for Southern dentists and team members.

**Henry:** Talk about how you work with exhibitors to make sure they're happy with their experiences at the Hinman Meeting.

**Ratchford:** We want to help our exhibitors build their businesses and we want them to keep coming back. We are constantly making changes in the exhibit hall because it's an ever-changing market. We make a commitment to the exhibitors to get attendees to the show floor, and we do that with attractions and table clinics featuring short CE courses that are very popular with our attendees.

**Henry:** What plans do you have for next year?

**Ratchford:** We are in the planning stages right now, but our theme is going to be "The 101st Hinman: The tradition continues." We're going to continue some of the successful exhibit hall activities and giveaways that we started this year.

**Henry:** What was your first reaction when you heard the ADA was coming to Atlanta in October 2017?

**Ratchford:** Concern and disappointment. It's truly unfortunate. There are a lot of areas around the country where the ADA Annual Session could be held. I'm concerned for our attendees and exhibitors. We have about 800 member dentists and they host 23,000 people for the Hinman Meeting each year. Our top-notch members give us our reputation, and there's no way we could deliver an event without our members and their support. They want this meeting to exude Southern hospitality, and they do that every year. Now, because they are ADA members and Hinman members, they're going to be asked to do that three times in a 12-month span (Hinman 2017, ADA Annual Session, and Hinman 2018). That's tough.

**Henry:** Do you believe there will be an impact on the Hinman Meeting? What are you doing to prepare for that?

**Ratchford:** It will definitely have an impact on us. The Hinman Society is a nonprofit organization and our excess revenue from our meeting is gifted through scholarships and gifts to dental schools. In the past, that has been upwards of \$250,000 annually. Certainly an impact on our revenue will have an impact on our giving. We don't have any definitive plans of action, but we wouldn't be honest if we didn't say we were already looking ahead. Above all, we're going to continue doing what we do best, and that's providing quality CE opportunities for the dental professionals who attend. The ability to provide top-notch continuing dental education is a responsibility passed down from Dr. Hinman. We become concerned if something endangers the ability to deliver that education.

**Henry:** Did the ADA talk to you about coming to Atlanta?

**Ratchford:** They came to Atlanta to conduct a site inspection right before the 2011 Hinman Meeting. We shared our concerns with them at that time and discussed with them that the last time the Annual Session was in Atlanta (1984), it wasn't very successful. We followed up in writing addressing our concerns, and they responded that they were selecting Atlanta. The next we heard about it was when we saw the list of cities when it was released by the ADA. Disappointment was our initial reaction, but we knew once they made the announcement, their minds were made up.

### Greater New York Dental Meeting

*Editor's Note: Here's my interview with Dr. Robert Edwab, executive director of the Greater New York Dental Meeting. The ADA will be in Washington, D.C., in November of 2015, just two weeks before the start of the GNYDM.*

### TOPIC INDEX

[View DentistryIQ Articles by Category A-to-Z](#)

### EDITOR'S PICKS

[Thursday Troubleshooter: The pediatric dentist ignores cavities!](#)[How dentists can maximize their potential through online reviews](#)[Hanging your single shingle...are you ready?](#)[Thursday Troubleshooter: Do dental labs need to sign business associate agreements?](#)[Definitive treatment for baby bottle syndrome and early childhood caries, part I - Strip crown success](#)[Definitive treatment for baby bottle syndrome and early childhood caries, part II - Primary anterior tooth pulpectomies](#)[Tuesday Tip from Pride Institute: Dental pros CAN achieve a work-life balance](#)["Mayumi" - A Story About Pediatric Dentistry](#)[Private practice: How dental therapists can increase profits](#)[Thursday Troubleshooter: Should team report dentist's incompetence?](#)[MORE EDITOR'S PICKS >](#)

**Henry:** Can you give me a short overview of how things are shaping up for the 2012 Greater New York Dental Meeting?

**Dr. Edwab:** Our numbers for both exhibitors and attendees are ahead of last year, as well as our numbers for international visitors. Attendees and exhibitors realize that more products are sold at this meeting since more exhibitors attend, and there is the end of the year tax situation, and that drives a lot of visitors and exhibitors to our meeting.

**Henry:** Talk about the difference of having the GNYDM on the upper level of the Javits Center versus previous years on the lower level.

**Dr. Edwab:** When we moved upstairs it allowed exhibitors to put up larger banners and signs. Now, exhibitors can have unlimited signage anywhere in the exhibit hall and the registration area as the ceilings are 28 feet in height. We were also able to expand onto the exhibit floor with education. The GNYDM has always wanted to make sure all of our education is kept within the Javits Center and not at hotels as this takes attendees off the exhibit floor. We now have 1,200 education seats on the show floor, which changes every morning and afternoon and includes our arenas, seminar room, and glass workshop classrooms. Lots of other meetings are calling us to get information on how to incorporate this, so I think you'll see a lot of copies of our design at meetings around the country very soon.

**Henry:** What steps do you take to make sure the exhibitors are happy?

**Dr. Edwab:** We speak to exhibitors all the time. The GNYDM decided about eight years ago to change the platform of our meeting. We realized that sponsoring a meeting is a business and exhibitors who are the main "customer" must come before education. Things changed when the Internet came around. Today, you can find any speaker who is going to be at any meeting on the Internet. We realized that to accommodate our exhibitors we have to attract people for sales rather than education. We made a rule that non-exhibitors cannot sponsor anything during our meeting or have any listing in any of our publications. We want to make sure we are enhancing the exhibitor's experience in every way. A meeting has an obligation to its exhibitors to work for them and ensure they have a good return on their investment. I think the business model of dental meetings has to be changed to realize that.

**Henry:** The GNYDM doesn't charge registration fees for its meeting. How does that change your meeting's business model?

**Dr. Edwab:** Attendees are always concerned with registration fees. Even if they belong to an organization, dentists, their staffs, and families are sometimes charged a fee. We eliminated our registration fees six years ago because we didn't want any hinderances and we wanted everyone to come to our meeting. This increased our attendance from 38,000 to over 50,000. We changed our model, and now we invest in exhibiting and attending at least 20 domestic and international meetings each year. This is not to draw more exhibitors to our meeting, only attendees. As the chosen meeting of the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Buyer Program, we partner with them and investigate ways to attract buyers, not exhibitors. We have exhibited together in Dubai, Beijing, Central America, and South America. We work together to increase international buying and exports. We do not try to attract exhibitors because that means importing. We have even started distributing a brochure of DTI members interested in exporting products at our booth to help the trade. We believe that we have to think like an "exhibiting customer" and not just a "rental agent" that sells booth space to exhibitors. That attitude is lacking at certain meetings.

**Henry:** In November of 2015, the ADA Annual Session will be held in Washington, D.C. What are your thoughts on that?

**Dr. Edwab:** It will be the first time ever that the ADA Annual Session has been held completely in November. Look at the dates of their schedule. In 2013 they are going to New Orleans, and for the first time ending in the first week in November. In 2014 they go close to New Orleans to San Antonio. Every time the ADA has gone to the East Coast, their meeting has suffered. In 2015, their meeting will not only be on the East Coast in Washington, D.C., but also two weeks before the start of the Greater New York Dental Meeting. Exhibitors and attendees are going to be forced to make a choice between the two meetings, and that isn't fair. Why should the trade have to make some uncomfortable decisions that they shouldn't have to make? The ADA Annual Session should travel to every region in the country and not compete with established trade shows. Once they start competing, their numbers get hurt. Remember what happened when the ADA was held in Chicago (in 2000) and then in Philadelphia? I remember the last time they went to Washington, D.C., and that meeting also suffered.

When the ADA Annual Session suffers, ADA members suffer. The ADA leadership should be taking the Annual Session where they not only will make money, but the exhibitors have success. A business shouldn't do anything that hurts its own business or its members. Dental meetings should be doing everything they can to enhance the sales opportunities of its exhibitors, distributors, and manufacturers. That is good for the industry and good for business in America. It makes our country stronger. At the Greater New York Dental Meeting, we look at things in a business sense.

**Henry:** Did the ADA talk to you about holding its meeting in Washington and the effect it might have on your show and the industry in 2015?

**Dr. Edwab:** No. We didn't know anything about Washington until the ADA released its list of cities. We didn't know they were going to the East Coast again in 2017 until we found out they would be in Atlanta. Think about this — 2014 November GNYDM in New York; January 2015 Yankee Dental Congress (another large and excellent meeting held every January in Boston); 2015 East Coast again, in Washington, D.C., within two weeks and 200 miles of the GNYDM; 2016 Yankee; 2017 October, on the East coast again in Atlanta seven months after the previous 2017 Hinman in Atlanta, and five months before the next 2018 Hinman in Atlanta. There are great cities in the United States that the ADA could go to that the membership would enjoy attending away from the East Coast. Did anyone at the ADA look at the attendance figures the last time an ADA Annual Session was held in Washington or Philadelphia? If they did, why in the world are they going back? If you're an attendee from the West Coast, you're not going to fly cross-country twice in two weeks for meetings. It's that simple. You're almost telling your West Coast, South, and Midwest attendees to just get used to flying to the East Coast. It's not fair to them, and it's not fair to exhibitors.

**Henry:** How will the ADA's decision affect the 2015 Greater New York Dental Meeting?

**Dr. Edwab:** For us, it will be business as usual. We might be a little more aggressive with our marketing but we haven't really discussed it. We enjoy being the last dental meeting of the year as attendees plan their end-of-year purchases due to the tax advantages. Competition is good for attendance. There is always the option to make all education programs free, and to help the exhibitors we can reduce booth space charges by 50%. I'm not worried about the competition because the Greater New York Dental Meeting will be just fine, but I think it's a very poor business decision by the ADA for their membership and the exhibitors.

To help lower the costs for exhibitors we have worked out a deal with Freeman Decorating to have an exhibitor caravan from all ADA meetings to New York. The exhibitors are being put in a tough spot here, and we want to do everything we can to help them control their exhibiting costs.

#### **New Orleans Dental Conference/Louisiana Dental Association Annual Session**

*Editor's Note: I recently had the chance to sit down with Normalee Ward, executive secretary for the New Orleans Dental Conference/Louisiana Dental Association Annual Session, to talk about their 2012 meeting, recent attendance and exhibition trends, and how the ADA coming to New Orleans in 2013 will affect their meeting.*

**Henry:** Can you give me a quick recap of the 2012 New Orleans Dental Conference (NODC)/Louisiana Dental Association

Annual Session?

**Ward:** 2012 was a great meeting. Everything flowed very well. We had nearly 900 dentists attend and our total attendance was over 3,200. A lot of people still have the perception that New Orleans is still underwater from Katrina, and that may hurt our attendance a little. In reality, New Orleans is doing very well. We have had a record number of tourists here so far in 2012, and we are expecting and hoping for the same or better in 2013.

**Henry:** Do you consider your show a regional show?

**Ward:** Well, our draw is mostly regional. We have attendees from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, the panhandle of Florida, and some parts of Texas. However, we did have dentists from 38 states and seven countries represented at the last meeting.

**Henry:** How will the ADA being in New Orleans next year affect the NODC/LDA Annual Session?

**Ward:** Next year we won't have a meeting since there's just a six-month difference between our annual meeting time and the 2013 ADA Annual Session (scheduled to start on Halloween). Knowing that, we made our decision to go dark. We knew it would be a lot to ask of our exhibitors to do three meetings in a 12-month time frame. We also didn't want to create a "burn-out" situation with our attendees or volunteer labor pool.

**Henry:** What is your opinion about the ADA being in New Orleans?

**Ward:** I've been here since 1984 and this is the fourth ADA meeting to be held in New Orleans. The ADA is banking on past success and they are hoping a large crowd will come to New Orleans. We want the national meeting here and we want it to be successful. A large meeting like this certainly takes precedence over our local meeting, but we'll do everything we can to make it successful. We hope people will have a great experience at the ADA and will want to come back for our meeting.

**Henry:** How are you keeping in touch with your exhibitors with the "dark year" in 2013?

**Ward:** Our exhibitors have been great to us in the past and very loyal despite the downturn in the economy. We are a little concerned about a short turnaround between the ADA and our 2014 meeting, so we are keeping in touch with them on a regular basis. We are not one of the larger meetings in the country, but we are trying to put together a top-notch scientific program to attract a large pool of registrants and consequently get them into the exhibit hall.

**Henry:** How do you work with exhibitors to ensure their success?

**Ward:** It's been a challenge for years to get the doctors into the exhibit hall. We give them two hours for lunch and hope they will go into the hall during that time. However, if they walk out of the convention center to get lunch in the area, we know we've lost them. We've asked exhibitors to be a part of our "Parade of Prizes," and attendees get a ticket to enter that for every \$100 they spend in the hall. We've also tried a passport program where attendees can actually earn an hour of CE credit for spending time with multiple exhibitors.

**Henry:** Have you seen a change in the exhibitors' mentality in recent years?

**Ward:** With consolidation, the list of potential exhibitors is dwindling. There are a lot of meetings going on and that creates a certain amount of competition between those meetings for exhibitors. That makes it hard on everyone. For those exhibitors who make it to our meeting, we want to do whatever we can to make it a good experience for them.

#### **Dental Trade Alliance**

*Editor's Note: I recently had the chance to speak with Fred Freedman, vice president of marketing and member relations for the Dental Trade Alliance, about the recently released list of ADA Annual Session locations and dates.*

**Henry:** What was the DTA's reaction when the list of ADA Annual Session sites was announced?

**Freedman:** The position of the Dental Trade Alliance and many exhibitors is one of disappointment that we weren't brought into the discussion regarding future ADA Annual Sessions. We feel that there needs to be a partnership between the ADA and exhibitors to make the Annual Sessions the best dental meetings possible for all parties involved. The meeting has to work for exhibitors and attendees. The ADA must satisfy the educational and social components for its members, but the trade show component and sponsorships help pay the cost of hosting such a large national meeting. Business conducted at the ADA Annual Session and at other meetings is so critical to many dental company's overall sales strategies. The DTA supports the Annual Session, recognizes it as the only American national dental meeting, and wants to make it stronger, but we have to develop a stronger partnership in order to make that happen.

**Henry:** In a perfect world, what would the DTA like to see at an ADA Annual Session?

**Freedman:** If you take San Francisco out of the mix, the ADA is averaging just under 8,000 dentists and 30,000 attendees over the last 12 years. While that makes it one of the largest dental meetings in the United States, there is general industry agreement that everyone involved in promoting the ADA Annual Session should be aiming for a minimum of 10,000 dentists planning to attend the Annual Session. Is that possible? Honestly, we're not sure given the recent economic climate and increased travel costs. If the ADA were to combine meetings with the Hinman when it's in Atlanta or several of the Texas meetings when in San Antonio, it could happen. That is one scenario. In the ADA's defense, there are not an abundance of other city destinations beyond San Francisco that are an instant draw for many more thousands of dentists and exhibitors. Recent survey data indicates dentists prefer to attend large regional meetings in their closest geographical section of the U.S.

**Henry:** What are some of your overall thoughts on some of the locations?

**Freedman:** Historically, Washington, D.C., has not drawn significant numbers of dentists for the ADA Annual Session. It's been a combination of the expense of the city, traffic, and the perceived safety factor. San Antonio attracted slightly better than expected numbers the last time we were there, and the city has added more close by hotel rooms and amenities. San Antonio could surprise the dental community if an agreement could be reached to fold in several of the other Texas dental exhibitions and share revenue. Denver is a wild card. It's an attractive metropolitan area with a strong airport hub, but will people come?

Average  
rating:

[0 Reviews](#)

[Write your review](#)

#### **RELATED ARTICLES**

Tip reduces need for paper points

Thursday Troubleshooter: The pediatric dentist ignores cavities!

The myth about creating "dental value"

0 Comments

[RSS](#) | [Subscribe](#)



Post a new comment

Login

- Or -

Guest

Text input field for comment

Post

### MOST RECENT

Speak for Yourself in Your Dental Practice: Without doing intricate lifts on a pair of ice skates

Tip reduces need for paper points

Thursday Troubleshooter: The pediatric dentist ignores cavities!

The myth about creating "dental value"

How dentists can maximize their potential through online reviews

Dentist leadership in managed group practices

App gives suggestions for the "gifts" from the Tooth Fairy

Why what you do (and what you did years ago) online matters to your career

Preciso Digital Dentistry Solution hits the open road

Money talks ... but you don't

### DENTISTRYIQ TOPICS

Products  
Clinical  
Practice Management  
Dental Hygiene

Front office  
Continuing Education  
RDH Products  
Marketplace

Community  
Events

### DIQ ARTICLE ARCHIVES

[2009](#) - [2010](#) - [2011](#) - [2012](#)



1421 S. Sheridan Road  
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74112  
(800) 331-4463  
Copyright © 2013: PennWell

#### General

Home  
About Us  
Advertise  
Contact Us  
Events  
RSS  
Privacy Policy

#### Topic Centers

Products  
Practice Mgmt.  
Front Office  
RDH Products  
Clinical  
Dental Hygiene  
Continuing Ed.  
Marketplace

#### PennWell

Pennwell  
View All Pennwell Websites  
View All Pennwell Events  
Sitemap

