

MEMORANDUM

TO: NYSDF Board of Trustees

FROM: Laura Clark Stedman, Executive Director

RE: Mid-Summer Updates

DATE: 24 July 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned out to be more than just a health crisis – it has had a ripple effect, impacting all of us and our work. This goes well beyond the format by which we hold our meetings. At a very real level, it has affected how and where we work and, to some extent, what we do. I can't tell you how often I've heard the expression "in these uncertain times," but I prefer to call what we're living the "new abnormal."

During this "new abnormal," we have been extremely sensitive to the financial realities currently faced by the profession and other communities with whom we have traditionally partnered. But this does not mean that our work stops because of the coronavirus; we cannot stop fostering our relationships with our partners and donors. They are hungry for some good news, so we're going to give it to them, by way of enhanced ways to communicate.

As you know, every year we conduct a "thank-a-thon," during which our trustees call a handful of donors, chosen randomly, who have contributed any amount to the Foundation in the past year. Philanthropy requires relationship; we need to feed those relationships. The purpose of the thank-a-thon is NOT to solicit gifts but simply to acknowledge donors' generosity, to thank them for their support and to give them an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have about our mission. This year, our Development Committee, chaired by Maria Maranga, will provide our trustees with peer-to-peer talking points to help inform our donors about how, even in the new abnormal, the Foundation continues to provide essential services to our stakeholders.

Our Charitable Awards Committee, chaired by Deb Weisfuse, continues to fine-tune our programs so that categories such as children, veterans, and people with special needs, are all under an overall umbrella of the New York State Dental Foundation's Access to Care Awards. New language and revised guidelines for all our donations programming will soon be unveiled both internally and externally. We have been interviewing past and current recipients of funding, awards, equipment and product in order to post "faces of the Foundation" testimonies aimed at personalizing our story by showing our mission in action.

Sadly, we were unable to hold our annual Foundations of Excellence Awards luncheon this year. We had themed this event 40@40, in order to commemorate 40 individuals and organizations whose commitment to improving oral health has been recognized by the Foundation during its 40 year history. Rather than let that idea fall by the wayside, we are refocusing on ways to celebrate our past, present and future, beginning with a resumption next week of our regular staff brainstorming sessions with NYSDA's Department of Marketing & Communications. One "good" thing about the COVID-19 pandemic is that we can learn from other non-profits who were forced to transform their annual fundraisers or galas to other platforms. Once staff has had the opportunity to draft valid options, our Annual Event Task Force,

chaired by Prabha Krishnan, will begin meeting to make a game plan that, again, celebrates our past, present and future, while generating enthusiasm and support.

We hope to schedule a conference call of our CE/CERP Advisory Task Force, chaired by Bob Peskin, by the end of summer. As you can well imagine, we have been inundated during the pandemic with CE submissions, many of which resulted from the discounted online courses we have been offering. The updates we were making to the opioid course were delayed a bit as our content administrator, InReach, went into quarantine at the same time as our office; the same held true for our new oral cancer course, which was developed in partnership with the University at Buffalo. Finishing touches are being put on an HPV CE module, which we've worked on with Erie County Medical Center and the NYS Chapter of the American Cancer Society, as part of our involvement in efforts to educate the dental profession and the public about the disease symptoms and prevention. Carl Tegtmeier and I have been in touch regarding CE relating to helping dentists and auxiliaries better prepare to treat the growing number of patients who present with Alzheimer's and dementia.

Coming up:

- Staff and our Treasurer, Bob Doherty, will map out a preliminary 2021 budget.
- Continued work with Betsy Bray, RDH, NYSDA Oral Health Workforce Director, on ways that NYSDF and NYSDA can partner on upcoming dental demonstration efforts.
- By end of summer retired life members and those "under 40" will receive tailored e-communications about planned giving (more information on this topic at www.nysdentalfoundation.org). As was discussed at our 2019 annual meeting, a solid planned giving program is a key and necessary part of a comprehensive development initiative. It, along with annual contributions and major giving, helps sustain and grow an organization's mission. However, it requires a long-term outlook, as it is very likely that the benefit of a planned gift commitment may not be realized for several years. Having a reliance on "dollars in the door today" game plan can make it easy to overlook the important role a strong and consistent planned giving program can serve for our Foundation, even if the tangible benefits of such a plan aren't immediately visible.
- Next week the Nominations Committee, chaired by Don Fager, will receive materials for review from potential nominees to the Board. Included among these are NYSDA President Dr. Craig Ratner's two nominees for one-year (2021) terms of office, Dr. Jim Jacobs and Dr. Steve Snyder. I am happy to see the interest we have received from people who are willing and enthusiastic about helping us further our mission of improving the oral health of all New Yorkers.
- Finally, and as always, please contact me if you have any questions or recommendations as we move forward into what, I hope, is "a regular normal." Thank you for your ongoing support!