

REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC SESSION COMMITTEE

2024

Members

Anne Kent, Chair; Norman Coates; Teresa Fong; Kimberly Harms; Christine Hammer Woojin Kwon; Marisa Murphy; Meghan Schooley; Mary Shipp; Brandon Ulstad, BOT Liaison; Whitney Bey, MDA; Vicki Capistrant, MDA; Carmelo Cinqueonce, Ex-officio.

Duties

Pursuant to the Committee Missions and Duties as determined by the Board of Trustees, it is the duty of this Committee to:

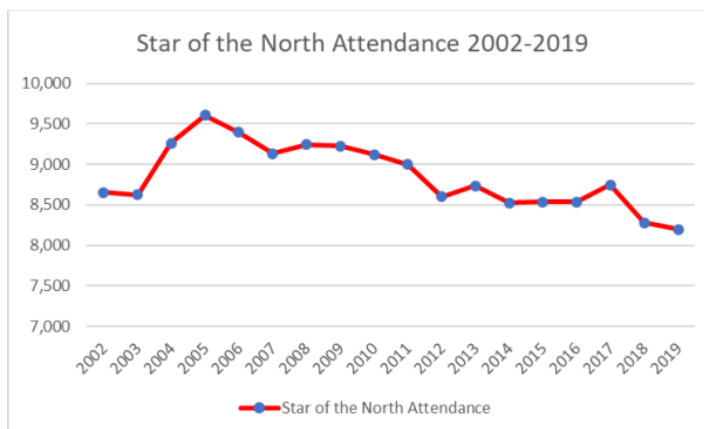
- Make all arrangements, not otherwise provided for, for holding each annual scientific session; prepare a suitable program for each session; and attend to such other business as the Board of Trustees or House of Delegates may direct.
- Provide for admission to the scientific sessions.
- Maintain a manual of the techniques of operation of the committee.
- Provide for the publicity for the annual scientific session.

The Scientific Session Committee's mission is to provide excellent continuing education programs; an annual tradeshow demonstrating new dental technology, products, and services; and a professional setting that encourages maximum participation and camaraderie; thereby improving dentists' and related dental professionals' ability to provide quality care for their patients.

Activities

The 2024 Star of the North Meeting was held in person at the St. Paul RiverCentre April 25-27. There were a lot of new learning opportunities and experiences provided at this year's meeting. From cadaver workshops and the "Great Debate," to morning yoga, meditation, and therapy dogs, there was something for everyone this year.

At the beginning of planning for 2024, the committee looked at the historical attendance data for the Star of the North as well as the breakdown of different dental professionals who attend the Star of the North. The data shows that meeting attendance peaked in 2005 and has been declining ever since. The COVID-19 pandemic had a huge effect in recent years; however, attendance was on the decline before 2020.



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3 We also found about a quarter of all dental professionals in the state of Minnesota attended the
4 2023 Star of the North. Broken down into each professional group, 30% of all MN hygienists, 29%
5 of all MN dentists, 21% of all MN assistants, and 55% of all Minnesota dental therapists attended
6 our meeting in 2023.

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8 With this information in mind, the committee brainstormed ways to attract new attendees while
9 retaining current attendees. We leaned more into experiences and higher quality workshops,
10 revamped our BIG Party, offered courses on subjects not often covered at the meeting, and made
11 sure there were courses for all dental professionals throughout the entire meeting. We used
12 targeted marketing for dental groups that don't always come to the Star of the North. We held onto
13 the things that make our meeting shine by keeping it a welcoming environment for attendees and
14 speakers alike.

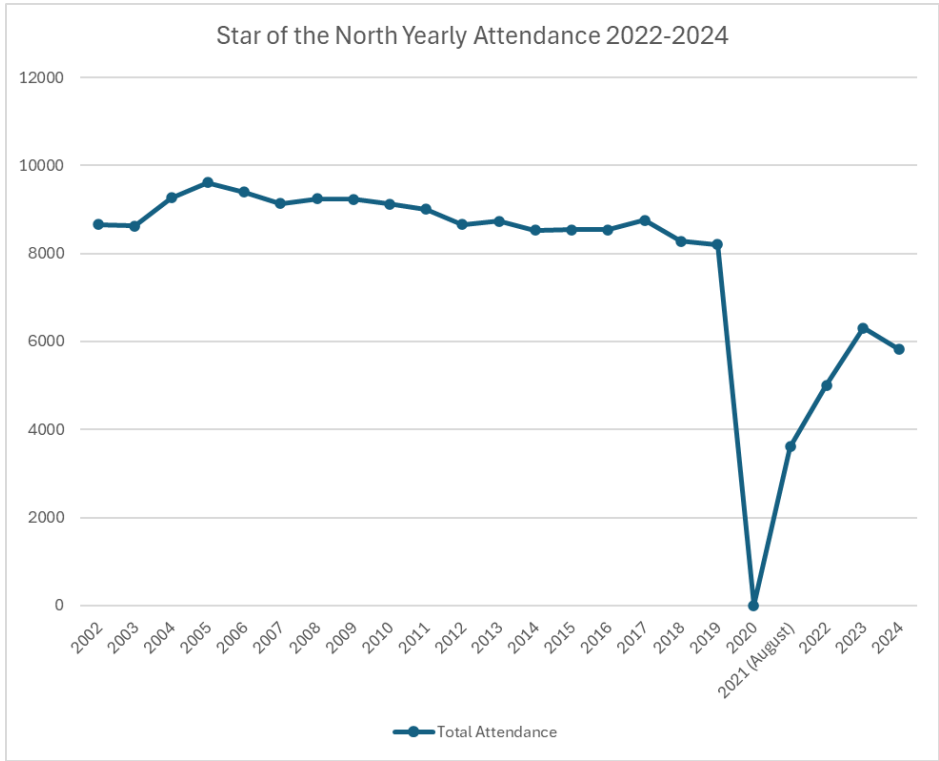
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16 The exhibit floor was buzzing all day Thursday and Friday. Vicki does a great job every year making
17 sure our exhibit floor is full of companies our attendees want to visit. Talking in person with a
18 potential vendor and seeing products up close is very valuable and nowhere else in Minnesota can
19 a dental professional see so many dental products and services under one roof. Once again, we had
20 happy hours both Thursday and Friday, which is always a hit. We had 227 booth spaces sold this
21 year, an increase from 211 booth spaces sold in 2023.

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23 New to 2024 were the following: three days of Cadaver Workshops; a two-day 3D printing denture
24 workshop; morning yoga; the Great Debate on Thursday in the exhibit hall; mindfulness and
25 mediation courses; therapy dogs; dental-themed mandala doodling tables on the exhibit floor;
26 networking luncheons for rural dentists and underrepresented minority dental professionals;
27 badge flair at the MDA booth; CE credit for the keynote; a virtual course on "The Science of Learning
28 and Memory;" scrunching Saturday lectures into the morning with the opportunity to earn four
29 hours of CE before lunch; one-on-one life coaching opportunities on the exhibit floor; a BIG Party
30 with many fun activities; and over 30 new speakers. Making all of these new things a success
31 required lots of hard work and long hours by the committee, Whitney Bey, and Vicki Capistrant.

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33 I need to highlight just how much work went into bringing the cadaver courses to the meeting.
34 Without Whitney Bey working through a logistical nightmare, it would have never happened. This
35 was quite the task for her to accomplish and she had to start working on it right when she started
36 working for the MDA two years ago. Quite the baptism by fire for our new meeting planner.

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38 That hard work paid off as many of our workshops sold out and had long wait lists. Several courses
39 were at, or close to, capacity. Many of our new speakers received rave reviews with requests to

1 bring them back. The Keynote was a fellow dentist, Dr. Dawn Grimes, who talked about “Life,
 2 Dentistry and the Pursuit of Happiness.” She also gave small group meditation courses and a few of
 3 our STAR Series lectures. The Great Debate was well-attended and generated traffic on the exhibit
 4 floor as well. Many attendees posted pictures of themselves with the therapy dogs or at the BIG
 5 Party making a bouquet or a candle. Our attendance for 2024 was 5,815 which was slightly less
 6 than 2023’s attendance of 6,308. While this is not the result we had hoped for, all the new things
 7 this year brought a buzz to the Star of the North that will hopefully attract more people in the future.
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 11 I was honored to be selected and humbled to serve on the Scientific Session Committee. I work in a
 12 public health setting and at times feel like Minnesota dentists who work like I do are not always
 13 represented by the MDA. I’m grateful I was given a chance to bring my perspective to the Scientific
 14 Session Committee for six years. I hope my time on the committee brought more collaboration and
 15 strengthened the SSC. Thank you to the MDA for allowing me to be part of this wonderful
 16 committee. It is full of hard working, committed, thoughtful, caring professionals who volunteer
 17 countless hours to the MDA and go above and beyond to put on a great meeting. The MDA staff I
 18 have been blessed to work with and get to know over the years are also impressive in their
 19 dedication and work ethic.

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 21 **Goals and Objectives**
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23 The Scientific Session Committee will:

- 24
 25 1. Identify and develop meeting uniqueness
 26 2. Provide quality continuing education for MDA members and all related dental health
 27 professionals
 28 3. Generate a positive cash flow to support all aspects of the meeting
 29 4. Provide space for a wide range of exhibitors and dentists to come together to evaluate
 30 equipment and supplies

- 1 5. Promote unity and harmony within the Committee with outline of duties clearly defined
- 2 6. Develop effective marketing strategies
- 3 7. Be responsive to member needs
- 4 8. Provide a professional atmosphere for members, speakers, exhibitors, and guests
- 5 9. Focus on ways to increase the percentage of MDA members who attend the meeting
- 6 10. Encourage increase of out-of-state dentist attendance
- 7 11. Coordinate efforts by and with parallel organizations that hold conventions in conjunction
- 8 with the Star of the North Meeting

9 GOAL #1: CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

10 OBJECTIVE: Increase the overall attendance numbers of Star of the North by 6.5% every year
11 over the next 5 years, in order to increase our attendance to 8,645 attendees in 2028.

12 STRATEGY: Increase the percentage of MDA members attending Star of the North, by providing
13 new and diverse speakers and programming, as well as targeted marketing to
14 underrepresented districts and new dentists.

15 STRATEGY: Increase the number of dental team professionals in attendance, by collaborating
16 with affiliated organizations, including the Minnesota Dental Assistants Association, the
17 Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association, and the Minnesota Dental Therapy Association, to
18 market our conference, and ensure we have the best course topics selected to attract the dental
19 team.

20 GOAL #2: FINANCIAL STABILITY OF THE MDA

21 OBJECTIVE: Increase non-dues revenue generated by the Star of the North to \$1,615,000 by
22 2028, through increasing the number of exhibitor booths, sponsorship and advertising revenue,
23 attendance numbers and course registrations.

24 STRATEGY: By 2028 we will increase booth reservations by 6.5% a year to reach a maximum
25 capacity of 315 10x10 square foot booths. Booth reservations will be increased with increased
26 sales efforts, marketing and scouting other dental industry meetings.

27 STRATEGY: Star of the North will expand our advertising and sponsorship program by creating
28 new opportunities for exhibitor promotions, as well as increasing sales through increased
29 outreach and scouting. By 2028, sales will surpass \$170,000.

30 **Recommendations**

31 I would ask that the HOD, MDA members, and MDA staff continue to support the members of the
32 Scientific Session Committee. They are charged with creating a member experience and value for
33 all members of our Association and beyond. The promotion of organized dentistry is a priority for
34 all of them. We all know it is a challenge to compete for resources and membership interest. They
35 deserve the support of the MDA to continue to provide educational programs and networking
36 opportunities, and to enhance this member experience to help our Association grow and prosper.

37 **Opportunities**

38 The Scientific Session Committee also offers an open invitation to all members of the MDA to
39 consider helping at the meeting by volunteering to be a speaker host or room host. Our volunteers
40 contribute to the success of the Star of the North Meeting and reinforce our reputation as a highly
41 respected and well-run dental meeting. In addition, the committee recruits one new member each
42 year (applications are available from November through January). You can view the committee
43 guidelines on our website, <https://star.mndental.org/conference/volunteers/>.

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2 Submitted by:

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4 Anne Kent, D.D.S.

5 General Chair, 2024