**A Letter from the New ADAA President:**

**Strength in Numbers and Our Mutual Collaborations**

**BY CAROLYN BREEN, CDA, RDA, RDH, ED.D, ADAA PRESIDENT 2012-2013**

It is a privilege to have been installed as the President of the American Dental Assistants Association. ADAA is our voice, the voice of dental assistants to the public and to all professional communities of interest. I pledge to serve to the best of my ability and will build upon the highly notable accomplishments of my predecessors.

We will continue to move our association forward in meeting the current and changing needs of the dental community, while safeguarding the mission of our association. Our ability to be flexible and open-minded in adapting to the evolving health care environment is critical to our future, our members and the patients we serve.

Two major recurring themes are evident based upon your feedback: more standardized credentialing and education of dental assistants, to assure competency and safeguard the welfare of the public; and the need for enhanced recognition of the critical role we play in the provision of quality care as vital members of the dental health team. Therefore, in response to your voice, our focus for the coming year includes promoting strategies for change to move ADAA forward with these and other initiatives. To this end, we will work to develop sound strategies to achieve our goals, while respecting individual state’s rights and focusing on the welfare of the public.

The importance of relationship building cannot be overemphasized and is key to the future of our organization. We will continue to cultivate and align ourselves with other professional organizations to build strong coalitions to jointly address access to care and related issues. Through collaboration, we can accomplish not only our goals but also achieve positive outcomes for projects pursued with our colleagues.

For example, I recently had the pleasure of being invited by President Vicky Fedor, AAS, RDH, of the New Jersey Dental Hygienists Association (NJDHA), to provide greetings from ADAA at their Garden State Conference. This is NJDHA’s annual state meeting, during which I spoke of the need for continued collaboration to assure the provision of quality care, patient protection and to address access to care issues. Due to the hard work and dedication of many over an extended period of time, we have been successful in building a strong liaison to support our respective organizations. We are most grateful for NJDHA’s and NJDA’s collegiality and support.

Another inspiring example of cooperation with other professional organizations took place at this year’s Annual Session. During the First House of Delegates, we were pleased to welcome to the podium several leaders from organizations with missions paralleling that of ADAA, including: ADA President Dr. William Calnon; Colonel Robert Temple, Commander, U.S. Army DENCOM; Major General Gerard A. Caron, Director, Commander, 79th Medical Wing and Assistant Surgeon General for Dental Services, U.S. Air Force; Lori Gagliardi, Ed.D, CDA, RDA, RDH, who is serving as the CODA Dental Assisting Commissioner; Tami Grzesikowski of ADEA; Kevin Henry and Craig Dickson of PennWell Publishing; and Dr. Frank Maggio, Chairman of DANB.

It is due to continued collaboration with organizations that share our dedication to the profession of dental assisting, in developing sound strategies for addressing issues of mutual concern, that we will achieve our identified goals and assure public protection and provision of quality care. As Second District Trustee Sue Bentley-Camizzi, CDA, put it during the Membership Forum, “This is how we go about building bridges.”

I look forward to working with all of you and representing your interests during the coming year. I extend my personal invitation to you to share your ideas and participate in association initiatives. I ask for your commitment, open dialogue, and support in continuing our association’s revitalization. I also ask that you assume the challenge to recruit new members to increase our visibility and enhance our voice as there is truly strength in numbers.

We learn from our past, address the present and carefully plan to shape our future as the future provides our opportunities!