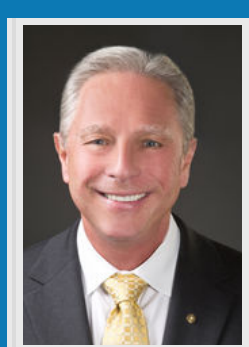


GUMLINE

THE WESTERN SOCIETY OF PERIODONTOLOGY



Thomas J. Kepic, DDS, MSD
WSP Gum Line Editor

MENTORSHIP AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Advancing Together Through Guidance, Support, and Shared Experience

For generations, periodontics has been a discipline built not only on science and skill, but on stewardship—the willingness of clinicians to guide, teach, and uplift the next member who follows in their footsteps. Within the Western Society of Periodontology, this tradition is more than an ideal; it is one of our most enduring strengths. As part of our ongoing series on WSP membership benefits, this installment highlights a value that quietly shapes careers, improves patient outcomes, and strengthens our specialty in meaningful ways:

Mentorship and Career Pathways **A Community That Invests in Each Other**

At every stage—dental school, residency, fellowship, early practice, and beyond—WSP members share a belief that no one advances alone. Whether it's a seasoned periodontist offering clinical guidance to a young colleague, a resident seeking direction for research topics, or a mid-career practitioner exploring new surgical techniques, the Society creates the environment where questions are welcomed and experience is generously shared.

Mentorship does not require a formal program. Often, it begins with a simple conversation:

"How would you approach this case?"

"If you were planning my career, what would you recommend?"

Those moments shape decisions that affect decades of professional life.



Building Pathways to Leadership and Growth

Career development is rarely linear. It evolves through exposure, encouragement, and opportunity. WSP members benefit from:

- **Access to leaders who have walked the path**

Many in WSP have served as department chairs, program directors, researchers, association presidents, examiners, and CE leaders. Each represents a pathway that younger members may one day follow.

- **Visibility through regional and national engagement**

Whether presenting a lecture, contributing to a poster, serving on a committee, or attending the Annual Meeting, WSP provides stepping-stones that raise professional visibility and open doors to further leadership roles.

- **Guidance during career transitions**

From residency to practice, private practice to academia, academia to administrative leadership, or even retirement planning—members benefit from individualized, experience-based insights.



Mentorship Strengthens Our Specialty

When a general dentist learns more from a WSP periodontist, patients benefit.

When a resident receives insight from a seasoned clinician, their confidence grows.

When mid-career practitioners receive guidance on research, publishing, or lecturing, the specialty moves forward.

Mentorship is not an accessory to periodontics. It is a driving force that ensures our specialty continues to advance with excellence, compassion, and clinical integrity.

How WSP Helps You Connect

Our Society offers numerous points where mentorship naturally flourishes:

- Regional meetings and CE sessions where conversations extend beyond the lecture hall
- Resident and new-practitioner engagement events
- Alumni networks that keep our history connected with our future
- Cross-institutional relationships that help broaden exposure and clinical perspective
- Volunteer opportunities that serve as springboards into leadership roles
- When members share their experiences, the entire community benefits.

Looking Ahead

In future issues, we will continue building on the original benefit list introduced in the Winter 2024 Gum Line.

Upcoming topics will include:

- **Recognition and professional visibility**
- **Practice growth opportunities**
- **Leadership development**
- **Interdisciplinary collaboration**
- **Access to expertise**
- **Lifelong professional support**

Each of these represents another dimension of value—and together, they define why the Western Society of Periodontology remains one of the strongest regional periodontal organizations in the country.

As the year comes to a close, may this season bring you time to reconnect, recharge, and celebrate the relationships that strengthen our WSP community.

Happy holidays to you and your families

Thomas J. Kepic, DDS MSD

Editor, *The Gum Line* – Western Society of Periodontology



2026

Western Society of Periodontology
74th Annual Scientific Session

In conjunction with the:

2026 Western Dental Hygiene Symposium

WSP ANNUAL SESSION

June 12-14, 2026
Talking Stick Resort
Scottsdale, AZ



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I welcome you to the **74th Annual Meeting of the Western Society of Periodontology (WSP)**, and the **7th Annual Western Dental Hygiene Symposium (WDHS)**, to be held at the beautiful Talking Stick Resorts in Scottsdale, Arizona on June 12-14, 2026. The theme of this year's meeting is '**Collaboration in Action – Creating Healthy, Beautiful Smiles.**'

In modern dentistry, no clinician can stand alone. Long-term, esthetic, and functional success now depends on how well restorative dentists and periodontists plan and treat together along with insight and support from the entire interdisciplinary team of specialists and hygienists.

WSP's mission of bringing together periodontists, specialists, restorative dentists, and hygienists for genuine collaboration will be showcased once again in our annual session. With this vision in mind, we invite you to an immersive interdisciplinary conference featuring distinguished speakers of periodontists, prosthodontists, restorative dentists, orthodontists, endodontist, orofacial pain specialist, and hygienists.

Over the course of the meeting, you will see **Collaboration in Action** with shared clinical protocols, refined techniques, and practical communication strategies aimed at creating healthy, beautiful smiles. Our program is built around real-world clinical challenges and the team-based solutions that address them. We have focused this year's meeting on concise lectures around key clinical thematic topics as well as cross-cutting interdisciplinary topics and have invited world-class speakers. This conference will feature surgical and regenerative sessions focused on building stable foundations for restorative surgical and regenerative sessions focused on building stable

foundations for restorative excellence, covering periodontal and guided bone regeneration, biomaterials and biologics, soft tissue augmentation, microscopic periodontal plastic surgery, and the AAP-AO Perio Implantitis consensus. Implant and prosthetically driven workflows will be highlighted through All-on-X digital planning to final prosthesis, implant surface considerations, and complications from an interdisciplinary perspective. We will also explore key interdisciplinary intersections such as Perio-Endo synergy for preserving natural teeth, airway issues and craniofacial development, and TMD beyond clicking and clenching, while addressing the systemic and inflammatory context of care, including metabolic dysfunction and periodontal disease and inflammation control.

We will also host the Western Dental Hygiene Symposium offering dental hygienists three days of unparalleled dental education. This year's presenters include some of the best hygiene has to offer. The WSP Hands-On workshop sessions we have scheduled will give those interested a chance to further refine their skills in full-arch rehabilitation and bone augmentation. We will invite residents from postgraduate programs in periodontology to showcase their education and skills through case presentations.

Together, the speakers will share practical, real-world strategies to help you plan and deliver comprehensive care with greater confidence and collaboration. Throughout the conference, you can expect clinically grounded lectures, case-based discussions, and honest conversations about complications and decision-making.

You will leave with:

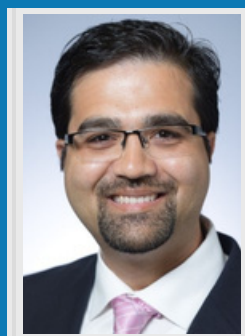
- **Clearer frameworks for treatment planning**
- **Updated, evidence-based perspectives**
- **Practical protocols your whole team, including hygienists, can implement on Monday**
- **Stronger pathways for communication between referring and treating clinicians**

This is more than a meeting. It is an opportunity to rethink how we work together so our patients benefit from the best each discipline has to offer.

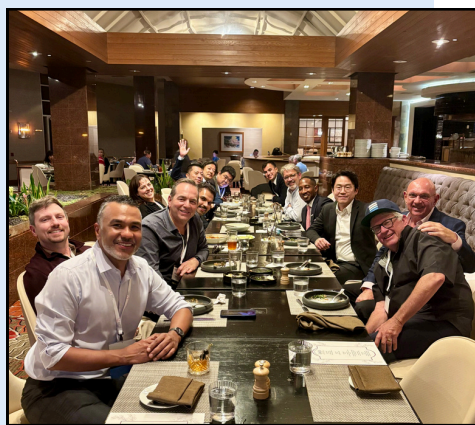
We hope you will join us for 'Collaboration in Action – Creating Healthy, Beautiful Smiles' and help shape the future of integrated, team-based care.

We look forward to welcoming you to the beautiful Scottsdale. Scottsdale offers a sunny blend of luxury and desert adventure- think world-class golf, spas, art galleries, and award-winning restaurants framed by stunning Sonoran Desert scenery. Stroll Old Town's shops and nightlife, then catch a blazing sunset over Camelback or the McDowell Mountains to end the day in true Arizona style!

Satish Kumar, DMD, MDSc, MS
WSP Annual Session Chair



Satish Kumar, DMD, MDSc, MS
WSP Annual Session Chair





Giles B. Horrocks, DDS, MS
WSP President

WHAT ADVICE I CAN GIVE TO NEW PERIODONTISTS

Embarking on a career in periodontics is both an exciting and demanding journey. As new periodontists step into this specialized field, it is essential to embrace principles that will not only enhance their clinical skills, but also deepen their connection with patients. Here, I offer advice that I believe is crucial for any new periodontist striving for excellence and fulfillment in their practice.

The Importance of Human Touch

In an era dominated by technology and digital diagnostics, never underestimate the power of the human touch. Periodontal treatment is not solely about mechanical procedures; it is about healing tissues and restoring confidence. The gentle, empathetic touch of a clinician reassures patients, builds trust, and fosters a therapeutic relationship. This connection can alleviate patients' anxiety and significantly improve their overall experience and outcomes. Always remember that behind every case is a person seeking care and compassion.



You Are the Expert—Be the Expert

As a periodontist, you have undergone rigorous training and education, positioning you as an expert in your field. However, expertise is not a destination, but a continuous journey. Commit yourself to lifelong learning by staying updated with the latest research, innovations, and comprehensive aspects of dentistry beyond periodontics. Expanding your knowledge in related disciplines such as prosthodontics, orthodontics, and oral surgery will enrich your perspective and enhance your treatment planning. Being an expert means embracing curiosity and humility, acknowledging there is always more to learn. The WSP is an ideal society to find a mentor for encouragement and guidance.



Surround Yourself with Clinicians Better Than You

One of the most effective ways to grow professionally is by surrounding yourself with colleagues who challenge and inspire you. Working alongside clinicians who possess greater skills or different expertise allows you to identify gaps in your own knowledge and refine your techniques. Engage in collaborative case discussions, attend workshops, and participate in professional networks where excellence is the standard. This environment cultivates continuous improvement and ensures you are not practicing in isolation.



Respect Your Patients at All Costs

Respect is the foundation of ethical and effective dental care. Treat every patient with dignity, regardless of their background or circumstances. Listen attentively to their concerns and involve them in decision-making processes. Respect also means honoring their time, privacy, and comfort. Building a practice culture grounded in respect fosters loyalty and creates a positive atmosphere that benefits both patient and clinician.

It Is Your Privilege to Treat

Finally, never lose sight of the privilege inherent in your role. Being entrusted to care for someone's oral health is a profound responsibility. Each patient interaction is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact on their well-being and quality of life. Approach your work with gratitude and a sense of purpose, knowing that your skills and compassion can transform lives.

Giles B. Horrocks, DMD, MS
WSP President





Todd Goldman
Executive Director

WSP JUST KEEPS ON IMPROVING

Dear Members,

After 10 years of managing the WSP, getting through the covid debacles, competition from other societies, massive changes in dentistry, the WSP just keeps on improving. While it is evident in our annual session, you can see it in our team sessions all over the west coast and in our journal. The feedback from the 2025 Annual Session was outstanding, so much so a few of the speakers were requested to return.

For a lot of dental professionals, the question is always “Why join a specific dental association?” And today that question is being bandied around even more than 10 or 15 years ago. Dental associations offer a foray into organized dentistry, but oftentimes these are groups that support your general interests as dentists or specific interests of your specialty.

Back in the 1960s there was a belief that clubs, fraternities, associations were seeing a decline in memberships, largely due to this desire for being “independent.” Lots of people felt that if you were in a club, that made you part of the “establishment.” The 60’s were a time of rebellion for many people. Today things are a bit different, due to the amount of dental events, cost of membership, the internet and all it has to offer, DSOs, etc, associations may not be seen as necessary to the practice of dentistry. For those who feel that associations are not as necessary, I would tell you that you need them more than previously. Let me explain.

There are drastic changes coming to dentistry, from AI to Dental Service Orgs, to technology. Dentistry can be seen as a lonely profession, since most dentists are in solo practitioner offices. I would say that societies and organizations are possibly more important than ever before since there is so much false information in the field from AI and the internet, competition is getting only tougher and the amount of debt that is held by dentists is deeply problematic. Dentistry is subject to the same issues as much of the world, when it comes to digital information. Just like influencers in any field, dentistry has them too, and how do you really know which one is some cowboy with bogus information with no studies to a widely respected expert on the topic. A veteran dentist may be better at sifting through the nonsense, but a 30-year-old dentist, good luck. This is where finding the right mentors, colleagues or meetings are pivotal in the development of your skills and expertise. And



that is where WSP comes in. Our seasoned members are always happy to communicate with other practitioners, which is truly a lost art in the world.

Of many of the groups in dentistry, WSP is one of those groups who supports you in your professional development with tried-and-true scientific information. Our Annual Session is second to none in dentistry today. It is seen as a great event for Periodontists and Restorative doctors, as well. And it fosters the concept of collaboration with your colleagues and referrals.

I hope you will consider joining the WSP or making sure to renew your membership as your renewals hit your computer. All of us at the WSP offices wish you a happy holiday season and bountiful new year.

Best Regards,

Todd Goldman,
WSP Executive Director

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Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a healthy, prosperous New Year! Thank you for being a part of the Western Society of Periodontology community - we look forward to all that lies in the year ahead!