

# OSA Incubator Low Level Light Therapy: the Path Forward

20-22 August

OSA Headquarters • 2010 Massachusetts Ave. NW • Washington, DC, USA

HOSTED BY:

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## INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL & ETHICAL ISSUES SESSION

### 11:50 Panel: The Contrasting Impacts of Professional Ethics and Market-Based Thinking on the Commitments of Professional Health Organizations

Moderator: Don Patthoff, *DDS, USA*

Speaker: David Ozar, *Loyola University Chicago, USA*

Panel members: Gail Siminovsky, *Academy of Laser Dentistry, USA*

Scott Benjamin, *Advanced Integration & Mentoring, USA*

OSA Incubator

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Gail S. Siminovsky, CAE

Our goal today is to share the Academy of Laser Dentistry's journey to shed some light (pun intended) on the challenges of professional ethics and how the ethics framework that Dr. Ozar just explained has helped and also challenges us as an association in professional organized Dentistry.

Let me start with a very BRIEF HISTORY

- ALD was formed by academicians, researchers, scientists and clinicians in 1993, (ALD is a very young organization by organizational life cycles)
- Shortly later a Merger of 3 Corporate Users groups, each group focused around one specific laser wavelength - The International Academy of Laser Dent, The North American Academy of Laser Dent and the American Academy of Laser Dent came together to form the ALD as it is today.
- ALD adopted of the Curriculum Guidelines and Standards

- for Dental Laser Education as a guiding educational standard for the programs we conduct.
- In 2001 we held an early ethics consortium comprised of clinicians, patients, media, legal, academicians, researchers and industry to determine ALD's Mission, Vision and Goals.
  - Our membership of approx. 800 includes mainly clinical practicing dentists in the US, approx. 17% are international dentists, we have academicians, scientists, dental hygienists and manufacturers who are our members.
  - ALD conducts an annual meeting, we publish a journal and we offer continuing educational programs recognized by regulatory bodies.....
  - Our mission includes educating the profession on the safe and effective uses of lasers for patient care.

## 2. THE CHALLENGES we face in Introducing Lasers and Laser Use to Dentistry

- Follow all of what Dr. Ozar has explained.
- ALD does, though, have a strong foundation in organizational design and organizational PROFESSIONALISM.

## 3. Our group does have similar frustrations to what this group is assessing, today.

So what are some of our challenges?

- ALD is challenged by the lack of uptake of surgical laser devices within dentistry.
- We are challenged by the lack of laser education in dental schools.
- ALD is challenged by determining the educational needs of the dentist, the patient, the manufacturer, the researcher.

- The international community presents challenges.
- We are challenged by the MISinformation that surrounds the marketplace, certainly here in the US.
- We are challenged by the lack of funding for our educational purposes and lack of statistical market research - We really don't have factual data and footprints about the market and the profession.
- We estimate that only 18-20% (and we don't really know that number) of dentists are using lasers today.

#### 4. So how did we begin to FACE THESE CHALLENGES?

- Recently, we had been struggling with the educational products we offer in meeting the needs of the dentist.
  - We knew that what was happening in the marketplace was affecting the educational needs of the dentist professional.
  - We knew we are dealing with that very complicated 'amalgam' that Dr. Ozar mentioned: Combining the values and concerns of the marketplace with professional values and commitments.
  - We reviewed our organizational mission
  - And, because our commitment to organizational design and professional ethics IS SO STRONG, in June, our leadership met to begin to address our challenges by asking questions...
- What Kinds of Professional Education Ought ALD Be Aiming At, and For Which Audiences?
  - Who Are the Potential Audiences that Ought to be Considered as Possibilities?
  - What Would Be *Appropriate Educational Outcomes* For Each of These Audiences?
  - How Can the Outcomes Be Concretely Assessed so certificates are granted only to learners who have

- demonstrated (via the assessment activities) that they have achieved the intended outcomes?
- How and who will fund these programs?
  - How do we keep up with social media and the many different ways people are learning today?
  - How do we meet the needs ALD's International constituency?
  - How do we become the Knowledge Brokers and the source for credible information?
  - And to complicate issues further, we too are in a business, albeit, the business of being a professional organization.

We don't have all the answers, but we are on our way, we are on the right path.

We are adding and re-defining our educational programs and formats.

We are Collaborating with other PROFESSIONAL Organizations like the ADA, ADEA..... and others.

We are Collaborating with Publishing companies for statistical surveys of the dentists in the US.....

- We are Maintaining our organizational independence from corporate sponsors, yet are challenges by lack of funding.

But mainly we understand that the questions and decisions we make are grounded in an understanding that our own products and principles must be guided by values of "organizational ethics".

It's not easy, but I can tell you that This Foundation is Critically Important. I look forward to sharing our successes

in the years to come as we continue to question and determine answers to best meet the needs of professional organized dentistry as the Academy of Laser Dentistry.

I hope these remarks about our experiences will be helpful, today and tomorrow, as we discuss the issues that are affecting this group.

Thank you.