

Bronx County Dental News



A PUBLICATION OF THE BRONX COUNTY DENTAL SOCIETY

BCDS Awarded Healthfirst Foundation Charitable Grant

THE HEALTHFIRST FOUNDATION has donated \$10,000 to support the charitable works of the Bronx County Dental Society. The BCDS will use these funds to support its efforts to promote community oral health and wellness.

We will initially use these funds to support 2 endeavors.

We have chosen to be a support partner of the Morris Heights Health Center. Morris Heights

Health Center (MHHC) is a federally qualified health center that provides comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health services to a largely underserved population. Their patients are primarily low-income, many are uninsured or underinsured, and a significant portion face barriers to accessing consistent dental care. Their dental program focuses on preventive and restorative care while also supporting broader

community health efforts through education and outreach. MHHC's funding comes primarily from federal and state grants, patient revenue on a sliding fee scale, and managed care contracts. While this allows them to operate, there are ongoing needs that are difficult to cover through routine funding streams.



New patient endo referral, Jack Hughes, celebrates his gold medal winning goal for the USA Men's Olympic Hockey Team. Upon his return from Milan, Hughes is reported to have signed as a future spokesman for Athletic Mouthguards Inc.

Save the Date

THURSDAY MARCH 19

BCDS Job Fair

[Learn more](#)

TUESDAY APRIL 21

Dr. Megan Cloidt

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TUESDAY JUNE 9

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and Installation
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We have purchased 15 badly needed high speed drills for the MHC dental program. Our second endeavor was a Give Kids a Smile event at the Walt Disney School on Friday

February 27, organized by Dr. Jacqueline Samuels. The Healthfirst Foundation provided 150 homecare kits and their grant supported the purchase of PPE's for our volunteers and dental care take home items for

the students.

We gratefully thank the Healthfirst Foundation and share in their mission of supporting improved oral care for our Bronx community. ■



Dr. Jacqueline Samuels leads a Give Kids A Smile event at PS 160 in the Bronx.



Dr. Don Safferstein and Healthfirst Grant Representative Rev. Phillips with staff of Morris Heights Health Center

BCDS Job Fair to be Held on Thursday, March 19

WITH THE SUPPORT OF OUR co-sponsor, MLMIC Insurance Company, the BCDS will be holding a Job Fair on Thursday March 19 at Maestro's Caterers from 6:30-9:30pm.

The BCDS is home to over 300 multispecialty dental residents training at our Bronx teaching hospital. Our core members are dentists at all stages of their careers. Many are looking to grow their practices. Some are planning their retirement. Our Job Fair is designed to meet the needs of all our members.

We have many companies looking to hire young dentists,

including-Aspen Dental, Affinity Dental, Dentserv, Eastern Dental, Heartland Dental, Illustradent, Premier Care Dental (Dental 365 and Leading Edge Specialized Dentistry), Prosmile and more.

We will have support services that dentists need at all stages of their career, whether starting out or planning your exit strategy: MLMIC Insurance Company, Bank of America, DDS Match Practice Brokers, Danziger & Markoff Attorneys, Rivkin and Radler Attorneys, Altfest Financial Planning and Treolar & Heisel Insurance and Financial Services.

We will be offering a free resume portrait taken by professional photographer John Maggiotto, food, beverages and a \$250 Amazon Gift Card Raffle. We look forward to seeing you there. ■

Job Fair 2026

Presented by the Bronx County Dental Society

Sponsored by MLMIC Insurance Company

When

Thursday, March 19, 2026 | 6:30pm-9:30pm

Where

Maestro's Caterers

1703 Bronxdale Ave, Bronx, NY 10462

Who's Invited

All dental residents working at our Bronx Hospitals

All Bronx County Dental Society Members, especially those looking for an associate or thinking of transitioning towards retirement

What's On the Menu

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Who Will Be There

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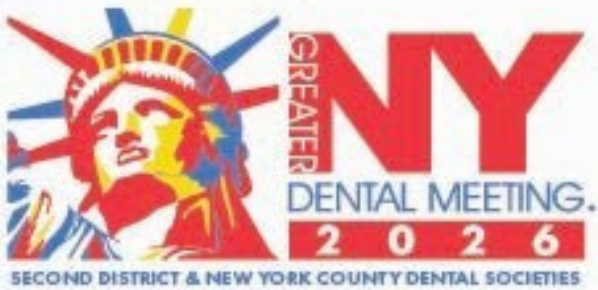


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Where in the World is Berry Stahl?

WE ARE INTRODUCING A NEW FEATURE, Where in the World is Berry Stahl? Our own Dr. Stahl is a world renown lecturer on Dental Anesthesiology. We recently tracked him to Mangalore India where he was a Keynote Speaker at the Indian Dental Conference. His lecture was "Sedation: Dentistry's Best Friends" Stay tuned to see where Berry is traveling next. ■



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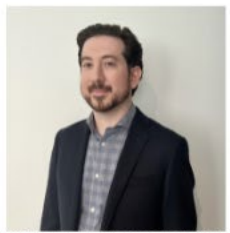
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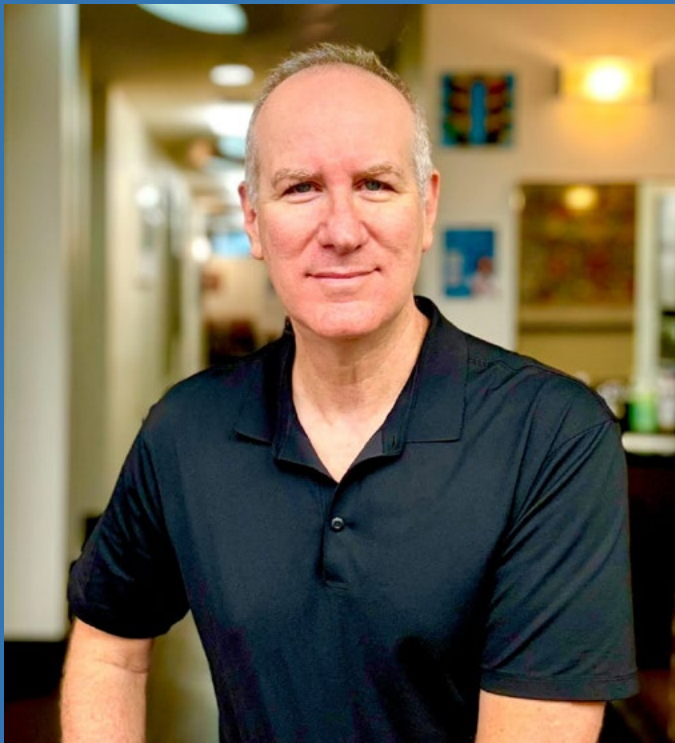
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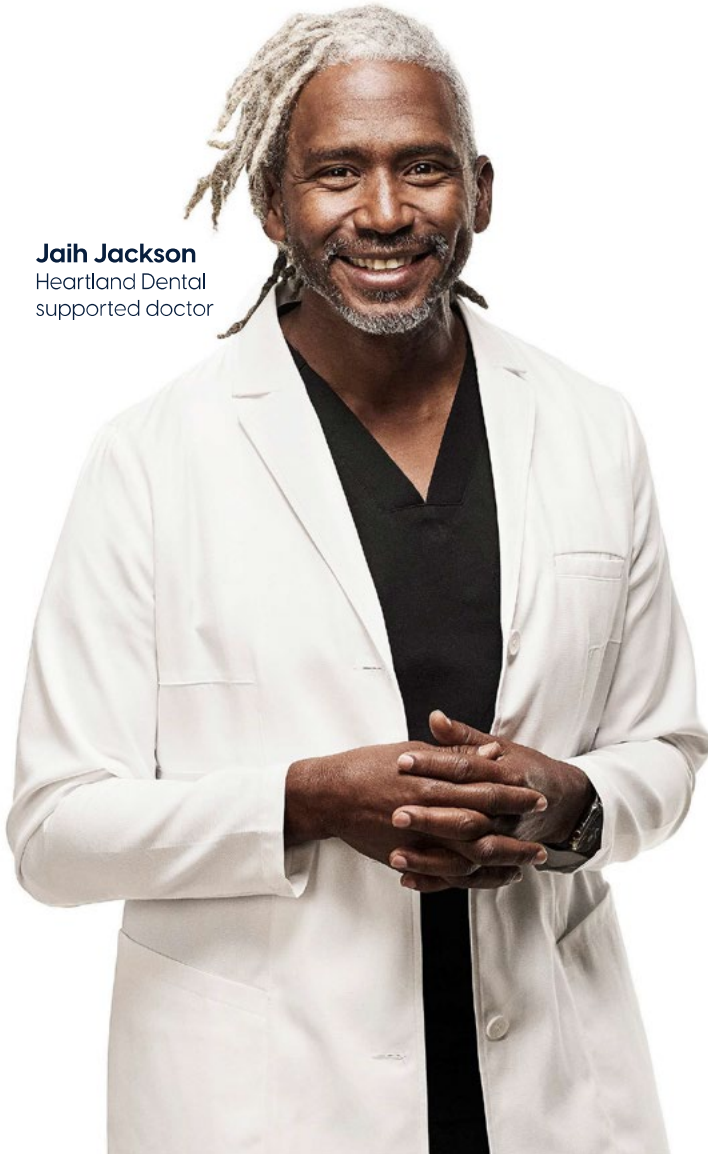
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The Vital Role of the Dentist in the Vaping and Marijuana Crisis

THIS ARTICLE IS PROVIDED AS an important scientific health update on vaping, marijuana use and opioid misuse in our patient base and local communities.

Although electronic cigarettes (vapes) rose as a supposed non-toxic alternative to tobacco smoking, in actuality vapes and e-cigs morphed into complex rigs with diverse ingredients and flavors delivering a strong nicotine exposure.

American Lung Association President Harold Wimmer stated, lack of action by the FDA and the federal government about e-cigarettes resulted in skyrocketing vaping rates among youth; with teen vaping use increasing 80% from 2018 - 2019. This lapse has set up youth to become the next generation to get addicted to tobacco; with statistics demonstrating that 1 in 4 high school students vape.

To fully comprehend the risks, let's inform ourselves of e-cigarette components.

First are the two media which carry the flavorings. The first - propylene glycol - breaks down into acetic acid, lactic acid, and propionaldehyde which are toxic to enamel and soft tissues; and binds to water molecules in saliva causing xerostomia. The second media - vegetable glycerin increases microbial plaque adhesion to enamel by 4 X - causing a 27% decrease in enamel hardness; and periodontal edema, recession,

inflammation.

The next components are the flavorings;

Diacetyl "sweet flavor" causes "popcorn lung" constrictive bronchiolitis obliterans, an irreversible respiratory disease causing the small airways in the lungs to become scarred and constricted, impairing breathing.

Ethyl Maltol "artificial sweetener/cotton candy" aids transport of heavy metals into cells and cell death.

Pulegone "artificial peppermint and spearmint" are carcinogenic

According to Dr. Ana María Rule, Ph.D. of Johns Hopkins University the vape heating element contains toxic heavy metals -arsenic, chromium, nickel and lead.

The last component nicotine harms the developing adolescent brain, which forms until approximately age 25: affecting the control of attention, learning, mood, and impulse control. Nicotine binding to brain pleasure receptors release dopamine causing a temporary euphoria. As the brain adapts to nicotine, it produces less dopamine and hence the user becomes addicted and craves nicotine just to feel normal. This is especially important as the CDC found that 99% of the e-cigarettes contain nicotine and that vape product labels falsely do not disclose nicotine and

those marketed as 0% nicotine, contained nicotine.

To summarize, vaping causes increased caries, delayed wound healing and higher bleeding tendencies. The de-oxygenated environment promotes gingivitis and periodontitis, exacerbated by the growth of red complex bacteria; such as *treponema denticola*, *porphyromonas gingivalis*, and *tannerella forsythia*. The heat vapor increases gum recession and exposes root cementum increasing thermal sensitivity.

E-cigarette aerosol leaves chemical lung residues impairing airway immune function, causing apnea, ear/eye/throat irritation and lung damage. The nicotine affects the cardiovascular systems; causing tachycardia and vasoconstriction; reduces oxygenation and nutrient absorption; and causes acid reflux and insulin resistance.

The New England Journal of Medicine 2017 found that vaping in youth increases binge drinking to 43 % from 6% / Marijuana use to 50% from 7.6% / Sexual relations to 45% versus 14% for no vaping.

Youth who engage in e-cigarette use are more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future, have a tendency to life-long addiction and a negative reproductive organ effect; all affecting our future generation. According to the CDC there are no safe

tobacco products, including e-cigarettes; and e-cigarettes should not be used by youth, young adults, or women who are pregnant.

As dental professionals we have an opportunity and more importantly, a duty to educate on the scientific truth about these harmful drugs. The ADA in 2022 stated that as personal and medical marijuana use increases nationwide, we should recommend that patients refrain from using marijuana before dental visits. Surveys have found

more than half of dentists (52%) reporting patients arriving for appointments high on marijuana or another drug!

The ADA recommends dentists discuss marijuana use while reviewing health history during dental visits. This is bolstered by surveys showing 67% of patients are comfortable talking to their dentist about vaping or marijuana. Vape marketing and advertising, the availability of appealing flavors, social influences, and the effects of nicotine play a role in why people

start and/or continue to vape. As dentists we need to educate patients that vaping is not just harmless vapor, that it increases the risk of future health problems and leads to marijuana use which in turn as per JAMA leads to opioid use disorder.

Dr. Bernard Fialkoff DDS

NYSDA Health and Wellness Committee

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Commencing a Dental Malpractice Lawsuit

AS A DENTIST, YOU HAVE SPENT TIME AND energy to perfect your expertise and develop your skills. But, despite how proficient and attentive you might be, there is no guarantee that you will stay immune to dental malpractice allegations and/or a dental malpractice lawsuit. Being served with a "Summons and Complaint" naming you as a defendant in a dental malpractice case can be alarming, to say the least. However, if you are prepared to respond appropriately, you will have taken an important step toward successfully defending yourself.

It is very important that dentists, like other healthcare professionals, understand the ins and outs of a malpractice lawsuit. This article will provide important information regarding the fundamentals of a dental malpractice lawsuit.

How Should You Prepare for a Dental Malpractice Case?

Many tend to believe that a dental malpractice case begins when a Summons and Complaint are served or filed in court. It is important to consider that the potential for a dental malpractice case begins with your treatment of the plaintiff, as the allegations that form the basis of the lawsuit arguably stem from the treatment you provided. While the lawsuit might not be filed until years after the treatment of the plaintiff, your proactive management of any dental charts or records pertaining to your patients, ensuring they are accurate and complete, will better support your defense.

Dental providers have a professional obligation to keep complete and accurate dental records in their original format.¹ The failure to maintain complete and accurate records may constitute professional misconduct.² By generating and maintaining complete records, you are complying with the applicable rules and also ensuring you will be prepared if you happen to face a lawsuit. By the time you receive notification of the lawsuit,

you may not have any independent recollection of treating the patient in question. At that point, your defense will be based on the patient's dental records you created. The attorney responsible for defending you will also base your defense on the information contained in the dental records. Thus, a complete record is an essential component of your defense.

Often, before a malpractice lawsuit is filed, the patient will request their records for purposes of retaining an attorney or determining whether they will file a lawsuit. The plaintiff's attorney will review the records to determine if there was any malpractice committed by the dentist in question. If the plaintiff's attorney determines that there is merit to the case, the attorney will likely agree to represent the patient on a contingency fee basis, meaning the attorney will get paid if and only if the plaintiff receives compensation. It is, therefore, imperative that your record demonstrates the good care you provided. If it is a strong record, the attorney may conclude that there was no malpractice and not take the case.

How Does a Dental Malpractice Lawsuit Begin?

Officially, a lawsuit begins when the plaintiff files the Summons and Complaint in the court where they intend to sue the defendant. The documents will identify the parties named in the lawsuit, the court in which the case is being filed, and a general statement of the allegations of dental malpractice.

When a Summons and Complaint are served, it is important that you do not go back to the records to alter or edit them. Altering or falsifying records may constitute professional misconduct under Education Law 6509.³ In fact, altering or editing records after commencement of a lawsuit can result in punitive damages being awarded or allegations of professional misconduct being filed.⁴ If there is something missing from the dental records, you should discuss the specifics with your attorney, who can help you safely address the issue, if necessary.

In New York, along with the Summons and

Complaint, the plaintiff's attorney also must file a Certificate of Merit.⁵ In the Certificate of Merit, it is affirmed that a dental expert has reviewed the patient's records and concluded that there is a reasonable basis for the lawsuit.⁶ Practically, what this means is that the plaintiff's attorney must consult with a dental expert who will review the plaintiff's dental records to determine if there is a meritorious claim. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that frivolous lawsuits don't enter the legal system.⁷

It is essential to keep in mind that you are required by the terms of your insurance policy to immediately notify MLMIC when you are served with a Summons and Complaint. An Answer must be prepared and served to the plaintiff in a timely manner in order to avoid a default judgment. MLMIC will start investigating the claim and, under the insurance policy's terms, will appoint an attorney to defend you. If you do not inform your insurance company as soon as reasonably possible, the insurance company could deny coverage as per the terms of the insurance policy.

Always Answer!

DO NOT IGNORE A SUMMONS AND COMPLAINT!

Depending on how the Summons and Complaint are served, there are only 20 or 30 days to interpose an Answer.⁸ Even if you think a case is not meritorious, you are still required to interpose an Answer to the Complaint.

The Answer is where you will get a chance to respond to the allegations set forth in the Summons and Complaint. There might be certain allegations that you will admit, others that you may deny, or even some that you might deny having any knowledge of to answer. Your attorney will be the one who will draft the Answer, where responses to the allegations will be stated. The Answer will also interpose affirmative defenses on your behalf. Failure to respond to the Complaint can result in a default judgment against you, which would mean that you essentially lose the liability case without having the opportunity to defend your care on its merits.

Small Claims: A Different Animal Altogether

Often, plaintiffs do not have a case that would warrant a plaintiff's attorney taking it. This could be because the case is not meritorious or its value is so low that it would not financially make sense for a plaintiff's attorney to handle it. In such a situation, plaintiffs might choose to go to Small Claims Court, where they can file the lawsuit themselves. The most they can recover is \$3,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000, depending on the county where the Small Claims Court is located. Small Claims Court is informal, and many plaintiffs appear pro-se (without an attorney).

Unlike in Supreme Court, a case in Small Claims Court is commenced by filing a statement of claim that explains the reason for the lawsuit as well as the amount of the claim. In Small Claims Court, judges usually give a limited amount of time to both sides to argue their cases, and there is no jury, with the judge being the final arbiter. In Supreme Court, however, the process is significantly more formal, and both sides have adequate time to plead their case. The jury is the final arbiter if the parties cannot settle the lawsuit.

One relative advantage that litigants have in Small Claims Court is that cases are typically resolved faster than Supreme Court cases, which can drag on for years. It is also important to remember that in dental malpractice cases, whether in Small Claims or Supreme Court, the plaintiff will be required to produce an expert witness. Notably, even if you are facing a lawsuit in Small Claims Court and it involves a small damages claim, you are entitled to an attorney under the terms of your MLMIC insurance policy. An attorney will best protect your interests and help guide you through the litigation process.

Statute of Limitations

The statute of limitations is basically the deadline for filing a lawsuit. In New York State, the statute of limitations for filing a dental malpractice lawsuit is 2 years and 6 months from the date of the alleged malpractice.⁹ What this essentially means is that

if the plaintiff does not file the lawsuit within the specified time period, then the case is subject to dismissal on motion as untimely.

However, there are some notable exceptions to the 2.5-year deadline to file a lawsuit. These include:

- **Foreign body exception:** If the malpractice allegation stems from a foreign object being left inside the patient, then the suit must be filed within 2.5 years of the alleged malpractice or within one year of discovery, whichever is later.¹⁰
- **Infancy:** A minor has a total of 10 years from the date of the malpractice to file the lawsuit.¹¹
- **Mental disability:** If a patient is suffering from a mental disability at the time of the alleged malpractice, they have 10 years to file a lawsuit.¹²
- **Lavern's Law:** This exception only applies to malpractice lawsuits that involve failure to diagnose cancer/tumor allegations. Under Lavern's Law, the 2.5-year statute of limitations starts from the date the patient discovers, or should have reasonably discovered, the cancer misdiagnosis.

Conclusion

Malpractice litigation is sometimes daunting, time-consuming, and often a frustrating process. However, having some foundational knowledge of the lawsuit process in New York hopefully gives you

at least a bit of confidence in how to respond and what to expect if you are facing, or are ever faced with, a lawsuit.

As a MLMIC policyholder, you can feel confident knowing that you have a MLMIC-appointed defense counsel by your side. Our legal team at MLMIC is well-versed and experienced in all aspects of dental malpractice litigation, and our attorneys will work with you whether you are facing a case in Small Claims Court or Supreme Court. No matter the stage of a claim or suit, MLMIC attorneys are here to advise you.

Rafi Cheema is an Attorney with MLMIC Insurance Company's Legal Department.
rcheema@mimic.com

1 N.Y. Comp. Codes §. & Regs. tit. 8 §29.2

2 *Id.*

3 N.Y. Educ. Law § 6530 (McKinney)

4 Gomez v. Cabatic, 159 A.D.3d 62, 70 N.Y.S.3d 19, 20 (2018)

5 N.Y. C.P.L.R. 3012-1 (McKinney)

6 *Id.*

7 *Id.*

8 <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/COURTS/nyc/civil/answeringcase.shtml#:~:text=If%20you%20have%20received%20a,bring%20the%20summons%20with%20you>

9 NY CPLR § 214-A (2024)

10 *Id.*

11 *Id.*

12 N.Y. C.P.L.R. 208 (McKinney)

13 *Id.*

14 N.Y. C.P.L.R. 214-a (McKinney) ■



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Dr. Megan Cloidt

Safe, Effective, Essential: Evidence-Based Dental Care in Pregnancy

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 | 6:00pm

Maestro's Caterers 1703 Bronxdale Avenue, Bronx, New York 10462

Buffet Dinner at 6pm

Lecture at 7pm

\$35 for BCDS members | \$75 for non-members | Free for residents of Bronx Hospital programs

Oral health during pregnancy plays a critical role in both maternal well-being and the oral health of the next generation. Despite strong evidence that dental treatment is safe across all trimesters, misconceptions persist among patients and

providers, often leading to unnecessary delays in essential care. This presentation will review the latest guidelines on safety and prevention, and clinical best practices for treating pregnant patients.

Dr. Megan Cloidt

Dr. Megan Cloidt is a dentist, public health researcher and Assistant Director of Community Dentistry at NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi and North Central Bronx. She is board-certified in Dental Public Health and holds advanced training in epidemiology and clinical research. Her work focuses on improving maternal and intergenerational oral health, engaging dental providers in cancer prevention and advancing health equity in safety-net settings.



TO REGISTER FOR THIS DINNER LECTURE, EMAIL JOY PATANE AT BRONXDENTAL@OPTONLINE.NET

3CE Credits.

Dinner Lecture and Installation of Officers

Lecture: Dr. Lawrence Holtzman - All On X -
Teeth in a Day - The Complete Digital Workflow

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 | 6:00pm

Maestro's Caterers 1703 Bronxdale Avenue, Bronx, New York 10462

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More info to come

Dr. Louisa Milo

Treating the Osteoporotic Patient – What You and Your Patient Need to Know that You Weren't Taught in Dental School

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 | 6:00pm

Maestro's Caterers 1703 Bronxdale Avenue, Bronx, New York 10462

Buffet Dinner at 6pm

Lecture at 7pm

\$35 for BCDS members | \$75 for non-members | Free for residents of Bronx Hospital programs

This lecture will provide updated information and valuable resources for you to employ immediately in your interactions with osteoporotic patients.

1. Identifying at-risk patients and the proposition for earlier screening/detection.
2. Review of current medication protocols and the rising interest in alternative options through lifestyle/functional medicine.
3. Pre-operative patient optimization and risk assessment.
4. Medicolegal considerations of treating osteoporotic and osteopenic patients with urgent/emergent needs.
5. Bone health and osteoporosis resources, preventive strategies, and ongoing clinical trials.

Dr. Louisa Milo

Dr. Louisa Milo is a licensed retired dentist, certified fitness trainer, and national speaker committed to reducing frailty through skeletal muscle and bone health advocacy, education and one-to-one training. Dr. Milo guest lectures at U Penn and is a preceptor for Touro's Interprofessional Ethics Conference each spring. A former owner and operations director of a multi-location OMS practice, she survived breast cancer in her early thirties and reversed her osteoporosis diagnosis in eight months through evidence-based strength training and lifestyle intervention.



TO REGISTER FOR THIS DINNER LECTURE, EMAIL JOY PATANE AT BRONXDENTAL@OPTONLINE.NET

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