

## Things Will Be Different Then?

In recovery, I learned not to fall into the *if only* trap. Things had been what they were, my history and choices had been made and their consequences had been dealt with. Self-defeating memories, either based on the good old days where I miss that “freedom” of drinking and using, or based on self-shaming, like “if I had never started” or “if I could have stopped then”, proved to be subjects for 12-step meetings and discussions with my sponsor. Not much else good came from those thoughts, unless I coupled the negative thoughts with the gratitude that I don’t have to live like that anymore.



Another type of thinking I have is the **when-then** trap. When I get out of debt, I will be happy. When I finally retire, I’ll get to do everything I can’t do now. When my wife finally forgives me, then I’ll forgive myself.

I entered the NCCDP with a willingness to remain clean and sober to save my life, my practice, my marriage and my sanity. Stealing drugs and being arrested was my bottom. I was addicted and I knew it. I was actually grateful that I was caught. I was ready to stop; I just didn’t know how. The NCCDP requirements for advocacy included abstinence from alcohol, and I thought that was overkill. “I never had a problem with drinking!”, I remember saying at the outset. I was willing to go to any length, so I agreed to the NCCDP contract. I stopped drinking, too.

At the end of my contract, I was released from daily calling for drug screening. I referred to it as my New Freedom and my New Happiness. My mentor in the program asked me the best question: ***If what you have done so far has worked so well, why change what you’re doing?*** His thrust was to keep on doing what you are doing now. Stay true to your program. Enjoy the freedom, but continue. Good advice! I did that.

As I now approach the end of my career in dentistry, things will change, too. I will have more time to do as I wish. If I choose to drink, all I have done, all my true friendships, and all the grace I have received will be dashed upon the rocks. So, I gladly choose to keep doing what I am doing now. Just go to more meetings, have more healthy hobbies, do more service work, more volunteer work, and the sort.

My if onlys have become the road untraveled. I do not regret the paths I have taken because of where I am now. My when-thens have become expectations that are usually unobtainable or irrelevant. My then-I-will-be-happys have become, but I *am* happy now!

I now realize that at every time when my life was in crisis, whether I knew it at the time or not,

**My HP was with me. Right beside me. Every time.**

Yet even now, when I worry about the *if onlys*, the *when-thens*, and the changes I am to go through, I feel as if it’s still *Me against the World*. If I could simply remember how far I’ve come with His grace, I’d have nothing to fear. He will be with me. Right beside me. Every time.

*A grateful recovering dentist*



Representatives of the NCCDP are always available to share the history and mission of the NCCDP with various groups, including hygiene schools, dental schools and any other professional dental organization.

Please call us to schedule a presentation: 1-800-230-3934

VISIT THE UPDATED NCCDP WEBSITE  
[www.nccaringdental.com](http://www.nccaringdental.com)

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## When You Need Someone to Care



North Carolina  
Caring Dental Professionals

Published three times yearly in Southern Pines, North Carolina by the North Carolina Caring Dental Professionals, a nonprofit organization. Our goals are to disseminate information about the Caring Dental Professionals, and to provide helpful and informative materials about chemical dependence and mental health issues.

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# CARING Connections

JUST REACH OUT

Volume 19 , Issue 1

NORTH CAROLINA CARING DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

## Thank You Volunteers

By Nancy Davis, Executive Director

### April is National Volunteer Month

**National Volunteer Month** in the United States takes place in the month of **April**. This edition of Caring Connections and the month of April are dedicated to honoring all of the volunteers who assist us with the operation of the NC Caring

Dental Professionals. Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes. They pick a cause and make a difference in someone’s life. Sometimes the difference is a drop in the bucket. Other times it creates a tidal wave of change.

The CDP is fortunate enough to have a group of dental professionals that will step up to the plate to carry the message of recovery and to assist new participants in returning to their dental profession. We refer to this fabulous group of men and women as Peer Support Volunteers (PSV). When a new dental professional signs a Participation Agreement with the NCCDP they are assigned a PSV as a way to connect with another recovering dental professional as they begin the journey of recovery.

A PSV is a Volunteer who acts in an advocacy role providing support, structure and monitoring for a CDP Dental Professional. These volunteers provide weekly contact by phone and in person one time a month. They offer support to participants returning to practice and introduce participants to other recovering dental professionals. They make the commitment to meet face to face each month with the participant to review required monthly paperwork and offer emotional support for identified concerns.

The NCCDP is also proud of the Significant Other Volunteers we have in place. This group is available to others when the dental professional is in treatment addressing recovery or when they may be returning home.

The impact of these volunteers giving their time to others in recovery is immeasurable. THANK YOU doesn’t say enough. The necessity for and appreciation of your volunteerism has not gone unnoticed. Here’s to all of the CDP volunteers who are dedicated people that believe in our purpose and help us carry a message.

*“There is no “I” in team, but we sure are glad there is “U” in volunteers!”*

A heartfelt THANK YOU from the North Carolina Caring Dental Professionals team.

**WE CARE!**  
**1 – 800-230-3934**  
Visit our website [www.nccaringdental.com](http://www.nccaringdental.com)



North Carolina Caring  
Dental Professionals



# North Carolina Caring Dental Professionals

## Online Meetings Save the Day!

My family and I recently traveled to an island known for it’s non-precocious ambience and world class diving. A total dive trip! Seven days of casual slow pace, island life, and scuba diving the exceptional waters of the Caribbean. The only thing stressful about the entire trip was the encounters with six foot Moray Eels! This was so exhilarating.

Once this destination was approved, I began researching AA meetings in our vacation destination. I found an outdated website that mentioned two locations of meetings and stated that the local newspaper listed meeting times and locations. I then found the current local newspaper online but did not see AA meetings listed. The CDP suggested I be prepared to engage in online AA meetings if I was not able to locate a physical meeting. I spent a considerable amount of time exploring online options. A friend of Bill’s helped me negotiate the options.

I decided to request to join the Google Groups “12and12” and was greeted and welcomed with the online rules and schedule. “12and12” is a 24/7 AA group with three topics sent from topic leaders each week on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday. Posts are “On Topic” in the subject heading. The rest of the time anyone can send in a post marked “off topic” in the subject heading. So, I introduced myself to the group, gave my sobriety date, and explained my situation with regard to not knowing if I would have access to face to face meetings while on island. The response was warm and welcoming. I had a back up plan.

In the dive resort lobby I found the local paper but no AA meeting schedule. I asked a few locals and a few people who had lived on the island for several years if they knew anything about AA meetings. These folks were kind but not aware of any such meetings. I walked around three local churches checking doors and signs for evidence of Alcoholics Anonymous organization and information. I had no luck.

I was able to immerse myself in AA support online with the “12and12.” Members of AA from all over the world shared their stories and support for each other. People from different backgrounds, cultures, sobriety dates, helping one another one day at a time. The shares were emotional, funny, insightful, frightening, sad, enlightening and inspiring. We were in various parts of the world during the Christmas Holiday together. Trusting one another with our daily struggles. Caring for each other in a genuine way. Supporting each other in the Fellowship of AA.

This was an adventure of a lifetime. The quality time with family, the slowed down life’s pace, trying something new, pushing ourselves beyond, facing fears of unknown, self reliance, exploring Gods wonder, reconnecting with family on an entirely different level, supporting each other in a totally new environment, and reflecting on our many Blessings!

Eat, dive, rest, sleep, REPEAT! With the love, understanding, and support of the Fellowship right there with me!

*A grateful dental professional*

## PLEASE CONSIDER

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the NC Caring Dental Professional’s Jake Thorpe assistance fund. This money is used to provide interest free loans to assist impaired dental professionals on their path to recovery. The NCCDP was created for the dental team and their families with the intention of promoting a healthy recovery and lifestyle. You can be a part of this health and wellness effort by making a tax-deductible donation TODAY!

Dr. Henry Duncan, DDS – Chairman, Fundraising Committee



## The Perfect Storm

*Dr. Bill Claytor, DDS, MAGD*

The perfect storm is brewing in NC and our nation. No, it’s not an impending hurricane, tornado or record snowfall in the mountains, but an event that is seizing the very hearts and souls of Americans. This time it comes in the form of Cannabis, otherwise known as Marijuana. The plant has been around for millennia but not until today are we seeing the detrimental and societal changes that stand before us as part of the next “Addiction Epidemic”. A recent poll established that 66% of Americans want to see marijuana legalized across the country. No regard was given to whether they were talking about THC (the psychoactive part of the plant) or CBD (the non-psychoactive part of the plant). This poll is disturbing because today’s “weed” is engineered to not only get you high, but extremely high! Depending on the form one consumes, the psychoactive/addictive form of the plant, THC (delta-9-tetrahydro-cannabinol), has concentrations ranging from 20% up to 98% THC, unlike the 1970’s weed which contained 0.5-5% THC. The marijuana of the 2000’s is not only psychologically addictive (as in the 1970’s) but is physically addictive (unlike in the 1970’s). Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD) is real and prevalent and affects 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 6 adolescents in the U.S. Marijuana is now considered by many to be truly a “gateway “ drug due to its addictive nature, leading to lowered inhibitions while increasing Hepatitis C, HIV, STD risks and other undesirable behaviors.



### The Ethics of Marijuana in the Dental Practice

Dentistry is starting to see the ethical dilemmas surrounding the effects of marijuana in our dental offices. Issues include:

- Patients who are using marijuana can effect how we obtain informed consent if they traveled to our offices under the influence of THC
- Increased paranoia, psychosis, anxiety and depression may present chair side
- Increased agitation (especially at low doses of THC)
- Increased suicide rates amongst users.
- Respecting Patient Autonomy
- Patient Rights vs. Dentist Responsibilities
- “Zero tolerance” for health professionals which presents enormous issues since THC can stay in our fat cells for up to and beyond a month. It is important to realize that THC in blood indicates use only, not the degree of intoxication, abuse, addiction or impairment.
- Patients or staff that have a legal Medical Marijuana Card and can obtain marijuana
- Impairment of patients, staff and doctor requiring an evaluation/neuropsychological testing
- Challenges with obtaining a complete and thorough Cannabis use history chair side.

As a friend of mine reminds me, “We already have seen the detrimental effects on society of the “legal” drugs **nicotine, alcohol and sugar.** Do we really need another “legal” drug such as marijuana/THC?” I may add that we created the Opioid Epidemic by partially over-treating pain with these highly addictive poisons and now are creating potentially the next big epidemic by glorifying misinformation and disinformation surrounding marijuana. A great example is the current advertising schemes for the supposedly legal, safe and non-addictive nature of CBD oil. Studies are showing we are only getting part of the story. Analysis by toxicologists are showing that what we think is 100% CBD oil is many times not. Due to unregulated production and impurities, reports are showing that CBD oil, creams and ointments can be absorbed and convert in the body or stomach into levels of THC.

We as Americans need to get off this “pill-for-every-ill-merry-go-round” and start re-evaluating our personal lives and the direction our country is headed. Solutions are available for those wanting to change directions in their lives. If you, a patient, staff, family member or someone you love is having issues with their marijuana use, you may want to consider calling the NC Caring Dental Professionals at 800-230-3934 for assistance and guidance. We can be a life-saving resource for solutions and help.

*For current information on today’s marijuana, I have found the book, “Weed, Inc., The Truth About the Pot Lobby, THC, and the Commercial Marijuana Industry” by Ben Cort (on Amazon) and his TED Talk on marijuana on youtube.com to be very informative in understanding and explaining the issues surrounding the state of Colorado and this national “Marijuana Experiment”.*

## Being a Peer Support Volunteer Enhances My Recovery

Volunteering for the NCCDP has enhanced my recovery in many ways. God loved me enough to intervene in my life. His intervention by way of a series of events landed me in the NC Caring Dental Professionals Program. I was given the name of the person who would become my “peer support volunteer” aka PSV. At that time, I thought I was being treated unjustly. My PSV shared much insight and also her story which enabled me to identify with her at that time. I found some comfort in talking with someone in the same profession as me with a few years of experience in this program.

Two years into my contract I was asked to be of service in the same manner. I was still calling and meeting with my own PSV but now I started working with a newcomer and fellow traveler in this monitoring program. What a difference that made in my recovery. I was now giving back within the same program that was proving to be valuable to me in my own journey. I had accountability and working with others allowed me to get out of myself. This gave me the treasure of watching growth in another person which in turn strengthened my own sobriety.



In year three of my participation in the CDP I had the opportunity to work with an additional newcomer. Again I saw their growth and it reminded me of my own journey and how I had changed. Before completing the program I was asked again to be a PSV for more new participants. I have enjoyed a continued friendship with everyone I have worked with and still keep in touch with my own PSV.

Today I give my time, energy and experience as a volunteer. At times I might feel overwhelmed a bit but it keeps me working the steps and getting out of myself. Since early in recovery I have been told that my program gains strength each time I share some of it. I was taught that my purpose is to be of maximum service to other people. My best response is to love through service and by example. There is no better remedy for what might ail me than to give a little love away.

I love being involved with others. I have learned to be a better listener and to have more patience and understanding. I continue to learn so much from others. Not only was I very fortunate but we all are very fortunate to have the NC Caring Dental Professionals Program as a safety net to ensure that should we need help the support is available. If we follow their guidance we will still be able to practice in the profession that we love.

*A grateful dental professional in recovery*

Created to promote a healthy recovery & lifestyle for the dental team and their families