

Subject: 🏆 FITD: Big faculty wins, a Disney dad, upcoming events, and more!

Date: Friday, September 12, 2025 at 7:01:14 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: The Dental College of Georgia

To: Hudson, Stacey

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Baban and Wang secure drug designation from FDA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted Orphan Drug Designation to cannabidiol (CBD) for the treatment of malignant glioma, a category of aggressive brain tumors that includes glioblastoma. The designation went to Medicinal Cannabis of Georgia, a biotech start-up founded by Dr. Babak Baban, associate dean for research at the Dental College of Georgia (DCG), and Dr. Lei Phillip Wang, assistant professor in the DCG Department of Oral Biology.

Both researchers brought scientific vision and rigorous inquiry to the project. They worked closely with Augusta University, Thriftmaster Global Biosciences and the Center for Research and Experimental Animal Modeling. The team built a strong foundation through preclinical studies, and they continue to lead innovative work in cannabinoid science.

“This achievement reflects the strength of our research community,” Baban said. “We see progress when people focus on collaboration, curiosity and patient needs. Our work at the DCG reaches beyond dentistry and supports the broader health of the state of Georgia.”

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Bachand honored by AGC for lifelong learning

[Dr. William Bachand](#), professor in the Department of Restorative Sciences, has been honored with the 2025 Lifelong Learning and Service Recognition (LLSR) from the [Academy of General Dentistry](#) (AGD). This significant distinction highlights Bachand’s continued commitment to clinical excellence, professional development and service.

The AGD awards the LLSR to dentists who exemplify a career-long dedication to both continuing education and service. Eligibility requires AGD Mastership, a minimum of 500 hours of continuing education in at least eight of the AGD’s 17 recognized clinical subject areas.

Candidates must also earn 100 service points through contributions to organized dentistry and community-based initiatives.

Bachand exceeded every requirement. His continued learning spans hundreds of hours of advanced education across a wide clinical spectrum. He also maintains active involvement in national and state dental organizations, provides mentorship to students and colleagues and supports numerous outreach efforts.

“Receiving the Lifelong Learning and Service Recognition is humbling, and I’m grateful to the AGD. In my career, I’ve focused on continuing to learn, giving back where I can and helping students and residents become capable, thoughtful professionals. I’m proud to bring those same values into the residency programs at the DCG.”

[Click here to read more](#)

Martone honored by AGD with 2025 Weclaw Award

Dr. Jane Martone, assistant clinical professor in the DCG Department of Restorative Sciences, recently earned the [2025 Dr. Thaddeus V. Weclaw Award](#). The Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) conveys this award to educators who show outstanding dedication to general dentistry and professional ethics.

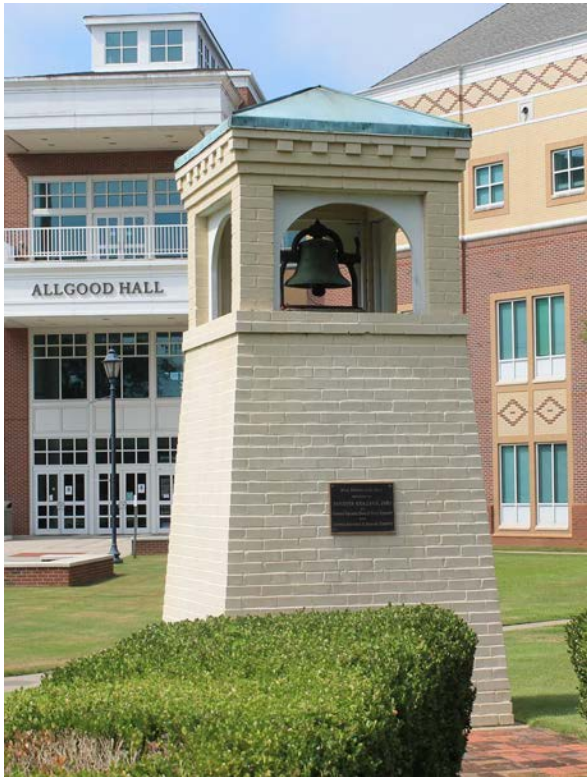
The Weclaw Award honors dental educators who demonstrate exceptional dedication to general dentistry education, ethical leadership and promotion of AGD principles. Martone surpasses these criteria through her extensive service and profound impact on the dental community.



For more than 20 years, she has volunteered one week each month at the DCG, mentoring residents in the Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) and General Practice Residency (GPR) programs. Martone balances this volunteer work with her full-time dental practice in Westfield, Massachusetts. She travels to Augusta at her own expense to mentor residents and contribute her skills in sedation dentistry, restorative dentistry and implant dentistry.

“Dr. Martone’s extraordinary dedication to dental education and patient care truly sets her apart,” said Dr. William Bachand, program director for the AEGD residency and interim director of the GPR residency. “She consistently goes above and beyond, generously sharing her expertise with our residents month after month for over two decades.”

[Click here to read more](#)



AU named a top Georgia employer for 7th year

For the seventh straight year, Augusta University (AU) has been recognized as one of Georgia's top 100 employers in Forbes' "America's Best-In-State Employers" list.

AU ranked 33rd in the state and was the highest-ranked institution from the University System of Georgia. Other notable organizations on the list include Delta, Coca-Cola, Home Depot, Emory University and Aflac.

[Click here to read more](#)

Grand Rounds offers faculty crucial skill updates

The DCG Vice Dean's Office successfully hosted another installment of its ongoing Faculty Grand Rounds series, highlighting the latest advancements in personalized patient care.

This month's featured presenter was Dr. Alice D. Hale, owner of [Hale Dentistry & Oral Wellness](#), who led an engaging and educational session titled "Seeing Beyond the Surface: Modern Tools for Predictive and Personalized Periodontal Care."

The session provided attendees with one hour of Continuing Education (CE) credit, while also contributing toward annual evaluations and promotion documentation. Hale presented innovative methods for enhancing periodontal treatment planning through chairside microscopy and salivary diagnostics. These tools allow clinicians to transcend



traditional assessment techniques to deliver more accurate, patient-specific care.

The Faculty Grand Rounds series is part of the Vice Dean’s broader commitment to supporting faculty growth through ongoing professional development. By offering targeted continuing education, the Office of Faculty Affairs aims to enhance clinical skills, promote faculty retention and strengthen learning outcomes across the college.

“Faculty development is not just about staying current. It’s about leading innovation in dental education and patient care,” said [Dr. Kevin Frazier](#), DCG vice dean. “Investing in our faculty is investing in the future of our institution.”

Upcoming DCG Faculty Grand Rounds:

- **Sept. 25:** Visions of Special Care Dentistry with Dr. Bruce Riggs, DMD, MPH
- **Oct. 30:** Why is Teaching Dental Students How to Treat Older Patients Important? with Dr. David Clary, DDS, MS, FACP
- **Nov. 20:** Burnout with Soumya Padala, BOS, MOS

All sessions are held from Noon to 1 p.m. in GC-5002, provide CE credit and are aligned with professional development goals for faculty evaluation and advancement. Questions? Contact [DCG Office of Faculty Affairs](#).



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Jeffries honored as Disney’s 'Veteran of the Day'

We're proud to celebrate Todd Jeffries, DCG Dental Associates Manager, who received a heartfelt and memorable recognition during a recent family trip to Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom. Jeffries was selected as the park's "Veteran of the Day," an honor reserved for one visiting veteran or active-duty service member each day as part of the Flag Retreat Ceremony in Town Square.

At 5 p.m. every day, Disney cast members and visitors gather with the Main Street Philharmonic, the Dapper Dans vocal quartet and the Security Honor Guard to lower and fold the American flag in a moving tribute.

On this special day, Jeffries stood beside the flag as music filled the square and guests paused to honor his service. Cast members greeted him with handshakes and sincere words of thanks, creating a moment of quiet dignity and heartfelt appreciation.

Todd's service began in 2014 when he joined the U.S. Army as a 68Papa Radiology Technologist. His leadership quickly earned him promotions, first as Office Manager for the Hospital Commander and later as Hospital Operations Manager (after earning his Master of Health Administration degree). After years of service, Todd was medically retired in 2022.

This recognition was especially meaningful as it marked the family's first Disney visit. Alongside his wife, Tasha, and their children, Todd III and Torri, Jeffries experienced a heartfelt tribute as cast members and guests paused to honor his service during the daily Flag Retreat Ceremony in Town Square.

Since 1971, Magic Kingdom has paused daily to honor those who served. On this day, the spotlight shone on Jeffries, and we couldn't be prouder.

Perio Club organizes hands-on training event

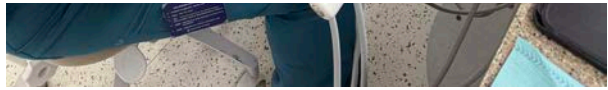
The DCG Perio Club recently hosted a dental scaling event in the Sim Lab for DCG students interested in periodontics.

Scaling is a deep cleaning process that removes plaque and tartar from teeth and from below the gum line. It is typically advised for individual patients who have gum disease or who have not recently had a professional cleaning.

Members of the Perio Club practiced techniques to help patients achieve cleaner, smoother teeth, helping restore the patient's smile and improve their oral health.

Hands-on experiences are essential for students to develop skills and understand patient care. Thank you to the DCG Perio Club for organizing this event.





Above (L-R): Elyse Jones, So Young Jung and Kaleigh Livsey (BSDH, Class of 2026)

COP continues collaboration with Project Refresh

DCG Community Outreach Programs (COP) recently supported [Project Refresh](#) during their monthly outreach event at May Park. This event connected community members with local health resources and services, including those provided by the Dental College of Georgia.

Together with volunteers, COP prepared and distributed 300 customized oral health kits for adults and children. Families also had the opportunity to learn about oral health and hygiene from our enthusiastic dental hygiene students, who were eager to share their knowledge and support the community.

A special thank you goes to the COP leadership team – Ketarya Hunt Bass, Director, and Steve Huston, Oral Health Outreach Coordinator – for their continued dedication to service and oral health promotion.



Alum travels Georgia for sedation dentistry practice

DCM Alum **Dr. Vlad Cobzaru** (DMD, 2021) now helps people through his dental practice. The former AU basketball player travels across Georgia, providing sedation and surgical procedures.

Read about how he went from the court to a career in dentistry. [Click here.](#)



Criminal expert urges good practices to avoid theft

The DCG Dentist Entrepreneur Alliance recently welcomed guest speaker [David Harris](#), founder and CEO of Prosperident, a firm specializing in dental embezzlement investigations. A full classroom of students, faculty and staff gathered to hear his insights on safeguarding dental practices from financial theft.

Prosperident's team investigates hundreds of cases annually, with specialists dedicated to areas like orthodontics and litigation support. Harris shared that nearly half of all dentists have already experienced embezzlement, and around 70% will likely become victims during their careers. In most cases, losses exceed \$100,000 before discovery.

[Click here to read more](#)

Welcome, DCG New Hires!

• **Alexander Gonzalez** joined DCG Patient Services as a



Dental Assistant on Sept. 2.

- **Ashlee Moore** will join the DCG as a Dispensary Assistant on Sept. 29.

- **Shannon South** will join DCG Business & Finance on Oct. 1 as the Senior Administrator.

- **Derek Wilsey** will join the DCG as a Biomedical Equipment Service Technician on Sept. 29.



AU employee open benefits enrollment begins Oct. 27

It's time to start thinking about your 2026 benefits! Open Enrollment will run Oct. 27 to Nov. 7. This is your annual opportunity to review or update your benefits.

All AU employees must complete their 2026 enrollment elections and any required certifications through [OneUSG Connect Benefits](#) by Nov. 7. Information will be mailed to your home before Open Enrollment begins.

Please learn about your options before making your selections:

- **Review Plan Details:** 2026 information is available on the [USG Benefits website](#).
- **Attend a Benefits Fair:** AU will host a benefits fair on Oct. 27 and Oct. 28. Stop by to learn about the 2026 plan changes and benefits directly from the providers.
- **Get Virtual Support:** Schedule a virtual appointment through [OneUSG Connect Benefits](#). Limited slots are only available during the Open Enrollment period.

Plan ahead to ensure you make the best decisions for 2026.

Upcoming Events



**GCC Paceline
PRE-RIDE FESTIVAL**

Come out and join the party!

Don't miss out on this! We'll have great music, fun yard games, a raffle with cool prizes, and a delicious bake sale!

Oh, and don't forget the dunk booth, where you can dunk Rhonda Banks, Drs. Jorge Cortes, Avirup Guha, Teresa Waters and Alan Furness, and more for a small donation!

SEPTEMBER 12TH **11 AM - 1PM** **M. BERT STOREY RESEARCH BUILDING**

[PACELINE Pre-Ride Festival](#) on Sept. 12 from Noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Storey Research Building. Enjoy Chick-fil-A sandwiches, Paceline T-shirts, sweets and treats, music, games, a dunk tank, and more, for a donation. [Dr. Alan Furness](#), associate dean for patient services, will be in the dunk tank, so come out and support him!

[IGIVE Health Sciences Campus Kickoff](#) on Sept. 16 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Health Sciences Quad.

[AU Brew-N-Que](#) on Oct 17 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the D. Douglas Barnard, Jr. Amphitheater on the Summerville Campus. [Tickets available now](#) for \$25. Children ages 5 and under are free and kid-friendly snacks will be available.

[DCG Impressions Day](#) is set for Saturday, Feb. 7. Organized by the DCG chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA), this event offers prospective dental students a hands-on look at a career in dentistry.

Get ready to reconnect, reminisce and make new memories! AU's annual **[Alumni Weekend](#)** is set for April 24-26. It's the perfect chance to catch up with old classmates and see how much the campus has grown.

More upcoming events:

- Sept. 24: [DCG Student Career Summit](#)
- Sept. 27: Dentistry Family Day
- Oct. 1: Coffee with a Cop
- Oct. 15: Grand Rounds
- Oct. 29: DCG employee Fall Frolic
- Dec. 2: Giving Tuesday
- Dec. 5: Georgia Board of Dentistry meeting
- Dec. 10: DCG employee Grits & Gratitude
- Dec. 17: DCG employee Forum Day

We're all stardust here



Carlos Con

Local Guide • 5 reviews • 0 photos

★★★★★ 4 days ago

Every five-star review is a direct result of the care, professionalism, and warmth you bring to our patients each day. Whether at the front desk or in the operator, your efforts create the exceptional experience our patients rave about.

Thank you for all you do to keep our standard of care truly five-star!

Enjoy recent DCG and AU media coverage

Augusta Today: [Augusta University's Dental Hygiene Program Joins Dental College of Georgia](#)

BVM Sports: [From Basketball Court to Dental Practice: Vlad Cobzaru's Journey](#)

Newsbreak: [Augusta University's Dental Hygiene Program Joins Dental College of Georgia](#)



From the Dean

Georgia faces a quiet but serious crisis in oral health. Many families lack access to routine dental care. Children who qualify for public dental benefits often travel farther to reach providers than those with private insurance. More than 1.5 million children qualify for Medicaid or PeachCare, yet thousands miss preventive care because no provider serves their area.

As the state's only dental school, we accept the responsibility to train future dentists and lead efforts to improve oral health across all regions.

With this purpose, we are expanding across Georgia. Our new campus in Savannah will bring dental education to the coast and strengthen ties with local health providers and community groups.

In Macon, we plan a clinic dedicated to individuals with special needs, one of the most underserved populations. Other sites remain in early planning, and this strategic growth will continue for years.

This expansion strengthens the entire college community. We seek to inspire those from rural and underserved areas who understand their communities' needs. With proper

training and support, alumni will return as trusted local providers and business owners. All students will gain broader clinical experience, while residents find richer training with increased patient variety. Faculty and staff gain new opportunities to teach, conduct research, lead new sites and grow professionally.

We grow also to serve more Georgians without access to care. Many communities lie beyond safety-net dental programs. Even existing clinics face staff shortages. By increasing our presence, we bring care closer to those who need it most.

We do not work alone. Partnerships with the Georgia Department of Public Health, the Georgia Oral Health Program and the Health Resources and Services Administration support our mission. Collaborations with the Georgia Dental Association, private and public clinics, alumni and friends deepen our impact across the state.

We commit to addressing workforce gaps. Retirements shrink the dentist pool, and some regions attract few new providers. Our expansion raises the number of graduates equipped with clinical skills and community focus. They build practices that create jobs, stabilize care and support local economies. Satellite campuses also create new paths to higher education for those who cannot relocate. They strengthen ties to local industries and meet regional workforce needs.

Our expansion represents a commitment, not an endpoint. We listen, collaborate, and keep students and patients at the center of every decision.

Thank you to everyone supporting this work. Together, we raise the standard of oral health in Georgia, train more providers, expand access and build a future where every community receives the care it deserves.

This email was sent to the Dental College of Georgia faculty, staff and students.
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