

PEAK Performance

Through my lecturing and training courses I have been privileged to meet the many incredible people who make up the dental profession. Most of these lecture courses have been at local and state Dental societies and state AGD meetings, as well as a few national Dental meetings. They have all been tremendous experiences! And over the years, as an invited guest speaker, I have become a fan of many state AGD's. However, I have never been more impressed with an organized Dental society than with my recent participation with Dr Rick Knowlton and the members of The Pennsylvania AGD. Over the past several years, The Pennsylvania AGD has invited me to speak to its members on a variety of subjects as part of their PAGD PEAK Programs. The objective of the PAGD PEAK Programs is to provide a comprehensive continuing education track over a four year cycle. This program provides an exciting mix of excellent continuing education, challenging office assignments, professional growth, and the development of new friendships around the state of Pennsylvania.

To achieve Fellowship in the AGD, 500 hours of continuing education is required. This honor requires a significant commitment of time and energy along with a financial investment. In attaining Mastership in the AGD, awardees meet the highest criteria for professional excellence by completing 1,100 hours of continuing dental education in the 16 disciplines of Dentistry, including 400 hours dedicated to practicing "hands on" skills and techniques. In addition, to qualify for mastership, each candidate must meet the requirements of a rigorous didactic formula that ensures they are exposed to current scientific and clinical approaches in all disciplines of dentistry. Nationally, there are approximately 14,000 Fellows and 2220 Masters. To date, Pennsylvania boasts 366 Fellows and 151 Masters. This is a marvelous achievement!

Now, The PEAK Plan is a Mastership track program open to both pre-fellows and Fellows in the Academy. The program is offered in the spring and fall of each year, usually May and October. Each course is four days in length from Thursday through Sunday. Part of the course also involves an in office assignment that is to be completed during the six month period and presentation on the first day. One of the most exciting parts of the Thursday all day program is the more than 30 case presentations of PAGD members which is a vital and integral part of the PEAK Fellowship/Mastership Track Program and can yield up to 52 credit hours. I have never witnessed anything so impressive in my Dental education career! Each presentation is approximately 10-15 minutes in length, must be germane to the lecture topics(s) from the previous session and include a practice management "tidbit" that increases their office efficiency. The reason I was so impressed with this all day session of presentations was the amazing dialogue, exchange of information and ideas and the genuine support of all the PAGD members for their fellow presenting colleagues. Each presenter showed their successes and failures because they were comfortable with knowing they had the respect and support of their colleagues. The camaraderie of this group is something to behold and cherish! I quickly realized what a unique and precious experience I was not only witness to but actively a part of. The entire PAGD encouraged me to participate in every aspect of the session. Every PAGD member treated me like family and let me know that they appreciated all my contributions to the PAGD and that I was always welcome to attend future PEAK meetings. I also learned of the new AGD's Post mastership award, the LLSR or Lifelong Learning

and Service Recognition award which can be obtained by completing 500 additional hours of continuing education Post mastership, 250 hours of which are in participation credits and 100 hours of community service promoting Dentistry. Presently, there are 30 Dentists nationally who have achieved that milestone.

In conclusion, my hope is that many more Dentists become actively involved in their state AGD societies and consider pursuing a Fellowship or Mastership award. Certainly, the Pennsylvania AGD and PEAK programs serve as a model for attaining these prestigious awards and furthering education and collegiality in Dentistry. I believe everyone will come away with the positive experience I encountered.

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