Martin Makowski, DDS
Incoming Presidential Speech

Madam Speaker, members of the House, Staff, Friends and Colleagues. Two years ago I stood before you and asked for your support and you rewarded me with your trust and confidence. Today I am honored to stand before you as President of the Michigan Dental Association.

**Challenges** to our profession are numerous. Today, we are faced with a nationwide declining membership market share. **Utilization** for dental service peaked in 2002 and has been declining steadily over the past decade. **Payments** for dental services are shifting from commercial dental insurance to public coverage and personal out of pocket payments. With this we see a decline in income for our profession.

Cost of dental education is increasing along with student debt. We see a change in the way dental care is being delivered, with an increase in dentists working in large group or corporate practices. And of course we all wait to see the true impact of the Affordable Care Act and the Healthy Michigan Medicaid Expansion Plan.

The good news though is **you** are a member of the Michigan Dental Association. You have an incredibly strong association, admired by many nationwide. After all, the MDA exists **because** of its members and **for** our members. Your staff is dedicated to each and every one of you. I asked one very hard working staff member why do you take this work home with...you know the answer I received, “I can't imagine the Michigan Dental Association looking bad to others.” This is the type of person working everyday for you.

Charles Darwin once stated, “It is not the strongest species, in our case Association, that survive but the ones that most are able to adapt.” Your MDA is that species and we have been and will continue to adapt as we feel necessary. Your vote today for changes in Governance will **assure** that rapid requirement of **adaptation** on issues
we face today and future issues. I thank you for your vote.

One fear I do have though is our membership numbers. We must maintain and demonstrate an increase in active members. This past year Norm and I, along with staff and volunteers, have focused on delivering member value to strengthen our organization and increase our relevance to the member dentist. Speakers were brought in to the trustee meeting for us to understand the change in demographics and how different generations think, and when they join the MDA what they expect and how do they want to be involved.

Our mission – HELPING MEMBER DENTISTS SUCCEED – this statement is why we exist. A strong, stable membership is critical to our Association’s financial stability and effectiveness to deliver programs and advance our advocacy.

Our Membership Committee has focused on retention, recruitment, and maintaining student members after graduation. One new focus will be on recruitment of specialists after program graduation. Another program, Leadership Exploration and Development, LEAD for short, will seek to increase active involvement in our Association by member dentists.

Now I ask for YOUR help. We need each one of you to seek out a non member and recruit them to the MDA. Peer-to-Peer contact is vital to bring in new members. We can send out mailings and do surveys, but nothing is more effective than a face-to-face contact. Go up to that non-member ask them out to lunch or coffee. Tell them your MDA or component story; infect them as we all know membership is contagious. I would not be here if Dave Bryk back in 1991 did not ask me to chair the Children’s Dental Health event in Macomb and become involved. I just needed the ‘ASK’.

We will continue our Access to Care initiative. Why you ask. It is the main deterrent that we have to fight against the intrusion into our profession with a low level
The public deserves the best dental health care that can be provided. We are opposed to a two or three tier delivery system that will provide different levels of care determined by your socio-economic status.

Our focus has been the pediatric population. We have improved that aspect with expansion of Healthy Kids Dental to 80 of the 83 counties. We will continue to advocate for expansion into the remaining three counties.

As your newly elected President I am charged with following our Mission, Vision and Strategic Goals. I will also oversee that the MDA Strategic Plan and Board Values are maintained and followed. You, the House has asked for transparency by its board of directors. I assure you the BOD seeks to be as transparent as possible. We hope the new Board Policy passed yesterday, May 2, 2014, shows you our commitment to transparency. Further, Resolution 17 calls for review of the performance requirements and gap analysis which will allow you the house to have input into its progress and allow for further review. Resolution 18 allows you to have a House committee on By-Laws, further allowing your input.

I want to close by saying Thank You. We all know that none of us can enter into a commitment like this without support of our colleagues, friends, and family.

I begin by thanking the staff at the MDA. You are all an incredible force behind the MDA. Dr Palm, your friendship and inclusiveness this past year has been an enormous growth process for me and I will continue this effort with Mark and Larry. This truly allows for governing as a TEAM.

My component, Macomb, thank you for your encouragement, support and guidance. My partners in the office, Curt, Ari, AJ and Elizabeth, thank you for adjusting your schedules to allow me the time to focus on this task.
Finally my family. To my beautiful wife Karen, my best friend and strongest supporter, I do love you more today than I did yesterday; I never thought that old cliché was possible until I married you. My son Michael, I am so proud of him as he seeks a career in the Health Care Arena, professions that truly help mankind. He is finishing his first year in medical school and unable to attend today. I am most proud that whatever specialty he chooses he wants to work with children as a sub-specialty in that field.

House of Delegates again thank you for believing in me and supporting me as your President.