

MDA Adds Lobbying Firm to Legislative Arsenal

The Michigan Dental Association has contracted with Wiener Associates, a Lansing governmental affairs firm, to provide contract lobbying services for the association, MDA President Michael Jennings, D.D.S., announced on Feb. 12.

Wiener Associates, founded in 1989, specializes in health care lobbying and advocacy. Its three main lobbyists are attorneys who have more than seven decades of experiences in government, politics, and legal advocacy. Wiener Associates represents more than 20 health care clients including major health care institutions, health care coalitions, and professional associations.

Jennings said, "Our members consistently tell us that legislative advocacy is their number-one concern. At the same time, term limits have brought unprecedented change to the way the Legislature operates in Lansing. The MDA leadership believed that the time was right to augment its existing lobbying staff with the resources of a full-service lobbying firm. We believe this sends a strong message to our members about MDA's commitment to be a major player in the Lansing legislative arena."

Wiener's three main lobbyists are Raj Wiener, Elizabeth Wiehl, and Richard Wiener. Raj Wiener is the former director

of the Michigan Department of Public Health (now Michigan Department of Community Health). Before that, she served as chief of the Bureau of Health Facilities, which has responsibility for issuance of Certificates of Need and health facilities licensure, and as a deputy director of the former Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation, with responsibility for licensed health care professionals. From 1975 to 1983, she was a legislative assistant to former Michigan Congressman Bob Traxler. She is a graduate of Saginaw Valley State University and the Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Wiehl joined Wiener Associates after serving for eight years as the assistant director of the Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health. She has served as chair of the Medical Care Advisory Council, Michigan Department of Community Health, and on the Michigan Disabilities Prevention Committee, Michigan Department of Community Health. She



Wiener



Wiehl



Wiener

is a graduate of Michigan State University and the Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

Richard Wiener served for almost two decades as a senior advisor to a number of top Michigan officials, and as a staff member in both the Michigan House of Representatives and Senate. He is a graduate of Wayne State University and the Detroit College of Law, at which he also serves as an adjunct professor of law, teaching legislation, legislative drafting, and election law.

Kris Nicholoff, MDA director of legislation, will coordinate MDA lobbying activities and serve as a liaison between the MDA Committee on Legislation and Wiener Associates. Ongoing legislative department activities, such as administration of the MDA Contract Dentist Network and legislative outreach programs, will continue to be conducted by the MDA.

"Wiener Associates gives the MDA great resources, as well as the opportunity to work together with other associations to advance our legislative agenda," Nicholoff said.

This month's *Journal* is largely devoted to legislative issues. Articles begin on page 36.

Come to Annual Session for CDE Credits, More

If you haven't made plans to attend the MDA's 1999 Annual Session in

Now Online: The MDA Web Page!

The new, improved MDA Web page is now online. Just point your browser to "www.michigandental.org" on the World Wide Web.

The new MDA Web page is growing bigger and better every day. Check it out—you'll find the latest dental news, continuing dental education information, and classified ads from the MDA Journal on the Web page. Plus, look for our new member bulletin board and advanced search functions, coming soon!

Visit MDA On-the-Web today!