

## Henry Schein, National Dental Association, and Schattner Foundation Advance Dental Careers in Underrepresented Communities

August 29, 2024

### *Second Year of Innovative S.M.I.L.E. Healthcare Pathway Program Empowers Young Minds to Change the Face of Diversity in Dentistry*

MELVILLE, N.Y.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 29, 2024-- Henry Schein, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSIC), the National Dental Association (NDA), and the Schattner Foundation just completed the second year of an innovative program designed to inspire students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to enter the dental profession.

The S.M.I.L.E. (Student Mentoring with Immersive Learning and Enrichment) Healthcare Pathway Program aims to advance oral health equity by pairing students from diverse backgrounds with dental professionals as part of a three-year pilot program.

The 2024 program was held July 7-12 at Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry in Nashville, Tennessee. This year, 35 ninth and tenth-grade students from Alaska, Arizona, Alabama, Nebraska, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington, D.C. attended the program, which provided an enriching experience that introduced the students to the diverse career opportunities available within dentistry.

The partners expanded the 2024 program to include students from Hispanic, Alaska Native, American Indian and Indigenous backgrounds, partnering closely with the Hispanic Dental Association, the Society of American Indian Dentists, Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry, A.T. Still University's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health, and A.T. Still University's Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health.

"Current statistics indicate that Black or African American dentists make up only 3.8% of the total dentist workforce in the United States but represent 14% of the general population. This disparity persists across minority communities, hindering access to care and career opportunities," said David Kochman, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Henry Schein. "The S.M.I.L.E. Program is just one initiative from Henry Schein and our partners that is aimed at increasing diversity within the oral health industry. We are excited to spark interest among these students and cultivate the next generation of oral health professionals."

Through this one-week residency program, students benefited from:

- **Mentorship** from experienced dental professionals and dental students;
- **Hands-on learning** of real-world procedures and practical skills development;
- **Career pathway exposure** to discover a multitude of dental career options; and
- **A Capstone project** culminating in a presentation focused on translating their learnings into tangible action.

"Having the opportunity to host this event was more than educating students about dental care, it was about bringing communities together, promoting health care equity, and fostering an environment that can create a healthier future for all," said Dr. Cherae Farmer-Dixon, Dean of the Meharry School of Dentistry. "Partnering with Henry Schein, the NDA, and the Schattner Foundation helped signify our commitment to inspiring a new generation of dental professionals from all walks of life. While we cannot bridge this divide immediately, we must deliberately focus on building partnerships, identifying obstacles to full participation, and removing them."

While practical sessions covering topics such as, "*How Teeth are Removed*," "*Dental Model Pouring*," and "*Impression Making*" were included, the program extended beyond technical instruction to explore the broader societal implication of oral health disparities. Participating students gained knowledge on ways to address these inequities that impact their communities.

"The S.M.I.L.E. Healthcare Pathway Program is yet another step in advancing the National Dental Association's mission to not only increase access to care, but also increase the number of African American oral health professionals—a group that remains underrepresented in our field," said Dr. Nicole Cheek, NDA's 100<sup>th</sup> President. "Moreover, these future Oral Health Ambassadors are gaining a profound understanding of the vital connection between oral health and overall health, recognizing that the mouth cannot be separated from the body. By empowering these young minds, we are not just promoting oral health equity—we are catalyzing real, lasting change in the health outcomes of our communities. This program is not merely about opening doors—it's about dismantling barriers and ensuring that the future faces of dentistry truly reflect the diverse populations we serve."

For more information about the S.M.I.L.E. Program and to gain insights from participant experiences, please watch this video <https://henryschein.wistia.com/medias/s2e9mitq09> or visit the official S.M.I.L.E. Program website: <https://ndaonline.org/smile-program>.

### **About Henry Schein, Inc.**

Henry Schein, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSIC) is a solutions company for health care professionals powered by a network of people and technology. With more than 25,000 [Team Schein Members](#) worldwide, the Company's network of trusted advisors provides more than 1 million customers globally with more than 300 valued solutions that help improve operational success and clinical outcomes. Our Business, Clinical, Technology, and Supply Chain solutions help office-based [dental](#) and [medical](#) practitioners work more efficiently so they can provide quality care more effectively. These solutions also support [dental laboratories](#), [government and institutional health care clinics](#), as well as other alternate care sites.

Henry Schein operates through a centralized and automated distribution network, with a selection of more than 300,000 branded products and Henry Schein corporate brand products in our distribution centers.

A FORTUNE 500 Company and a member of the S&P 500® index, Henry Schein is headquartered in Melville, N.Y., and has operations or affiliates in 33 countries and territories. The Company's sales reached \$12.3 billion in 2023, and have grown at a compound annual rate of approximately 11.5 percent since Henry Schein became a public company in 1995.

For more information, visit Henry Schein at [www.henryschein.com](http://www.henryschein.com), [Facebook.com/HenrySchein](https://www.facebook.com/HenrySchein), [Instagram.com/HenrySchein](https://www.instagram.com/HenrySchein), [LinkedIn.com/Company/HenrySchein](https://www.linkedin.com/company/HenrySchein), and [@HenrySchein on X](https://twitter.com/HenrySchein).



View source version on [businesswire.com](https://www.businesswire.com): <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240828775063/en/>

Ann Marie Gothard  
Vice President, Global Corporate Media Relations  
[annmarie.gothard@henryschein.com](mailto:annmarie.gothard@henryschein.com)  
(631) 390-8169

Source: Henry Schein, Inc.