

Carlos S. Smith, DDS, MDiv, FACD

Session Time: 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM

Presentation: *“Orthodontics and Achieving Health Equity: is there an Ethical Obligation to Fulfill?”*

Synopsis: The unrelenting effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic, whose effects we continue to endure - have peeled away what was already a thinly veiled veneer of combating health inequities locally and abroad. Does orthodontics consider itself a partner in advancing health equity? If so, how? An often overlooked aspect of health equity is provider wellbeing itself. Healthcare providers must balance altruistic practice with their own self-care. Cultivating equity, inclusion, and wellbeing practices is a multivariate process requiring intentionality at the individual and organizational levels. Participants will apply principles of ethics to explore diversity, equity, inclusion, and wellbeing and how they relate to improving health equity for all.



Objectives:

- Define the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion and wellbeing as they relate to ethical professional practice
- Explain health equity and the role orthodontists can play in achieving it
- Discuss and explain the individual and organizational roles of mitigating ethical issues of equity, inclusion and wellbeing

Biography:

Dr. Smith is the inaugural Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence, Ethics, and Community Engagement and an Associate Professor in the Department of Dental Public Health and Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry. He is a member of the VCU Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry, and Innovation. He joined VCU SOD in 2015 as an Assistant Professor in the Department of General Practice and has served in a variety of roles, including Group Practice Leader, Course Director and faculty in both clinical and preclinical courses. He is one of 12 faculty nationwide to be appointed to the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Collaborative on Dental Education Climate Assessment, which led the first ever dental education-wide climate study. He is a member of the board of directors of the Virginia Dental Association Foundation and the Academy for Professionalism in Health Care, an organization devoted to enhancing professionalism through ethics and humanities education. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of the American College of Dentists and an active Fellow in the American College of Dentists, where he serves on their strategic planning taskforce. He serves on the Virginia Health Catalyst Future of Public Oral Health Taskforce and co-chairs the Workforce Implementation Team. He is a past chair of the ADEA Special Interest Group on Professional Ethical and Legal Issues in Dentistry and is President-Elect of the American Society for Dental Ethics.

Dr. Smith is a national voice on inclusive excellence in dental education and dental ethics and is often called upon as a DEI content expert with the American Dental Association. He has provided keynote and seminar presentations for the NDA, ADA, ACD, ADEA, Virginia Health Catalyst, Virginia Dental Association, dental schools, hospital systems, and oral health advocacy groups. His research interests include dental student and faculty wellbeing, diversity and inclusive excellence, professional identity formation, and dental ethics. Recent scholarship includes ethical considerations in geriatric dentistry, exploring racial battle fatigue in dental education, a multi-institutional study of burnout, loneliness, and resilience in dental faculty, and a book chapter on learning and clinical environments in health professions education. He maintains a private practice in general dentistry with the Dental Faculty Practice, is co-advisor to the VCU chapter of SNDA and supports the Aligned and Allied student group. He is a key thought leader across both the VCU Monroe Park and Health Sciences campuses, as well as the health system, for his commitment to inclusive excellence and health equity.

An ordained clergy, he completed clinical pastoral education at Duke Medical Center, providing care and crisis management to families of cardiac pediatric patients. He served in pastoral ministry, with varied roles such as associate pastor, young adults pastor, and college pastor, with a key emphasis on holistic young adult development. Recent honors include 2023 inaugural ADEA Dr. Jeanne C. Sinkford Faculty Leadership Award, 2021 Old Dominion Dental Society Dentist of the Year, 2021 ADEA Olav Alvares Award, 2020 School of Dentistry Dean's Faculty Excellence Award for Humanism, 2020 Richmond Magazine Top Dentists - Best Instructional Dentist Category, 2018 National Minority Quality Forum's 40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health by the Congressional Black Caucus, and a 2019 Hampton University Forty Under 40 Alumni Recognition Society Inductee. He is a graduate of the ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership and the AAL Institute for Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Smith earned his DDS from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School, Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion from Cornell University, Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion Leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University, and BS in Biology from Hampton University.

As a dental student, Dr. Smith served as class president for 3 years, and during his D4 year, he served as the national president of the Student National Dental Association. Cultivating the holistic success of dental students is one of his key life missions.