

AMT Member Spotlight

AMT is the national certification agency and membership association of allied health professionals. Our members are the reason our quality certifications are making a difference in healthcare. Read about the characteristics that set AMT members apart.

Renee McNally, RDA(AMT)

As a compliance specialist in charge of infection control and OSHA, Renee McNally, RDA(AMT) educates the staff at Dental Associates, a large practice with 14 offices throughout Wisconsin, about safety in the office. She loves that her job not only helps keep the staff happy and healthy but the patients as well.

Whenever Renee was asked as a child what she wanted to be when she grew up, she always answered “a dentist.” With that focus, she took AP science classes in high school, got her associates degree in general science with a focus on pre-dental, and volunteered at an orthodontist’s office. Then, she attended Michigan State University and graduated with a bachelor’s in human biology. During her time at Michigan State, Renee met her husband.

Enjoying being a newlywed, Renee worked in retail for a few years, and becoming a dentist seemed like a path she was no longer on. One day, a friend asked why she didn’t become a dental assistant. Renee describes her reaction as if a lightbulb went off, and within a year she had completed a dental assistant program and graduated as valedictorian. She was back on the path to serving patients through dental work.

At Dental Associates, she started as a sterilization specialist where her main responsibility was infection control. She found it interesting and started educating herself through continuing education (CE) related to compliance, infection control, sterilization and OSHA. When a position opened for an orthodontics assistant, she applied, having enjoyed orthodontics during her time volunteering in college. She was in that position for four years, and then decided she was ready to do something



Certified: Career Building

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different. Remembering how much she enjoyed learning about compliance, Renee started volunteering to help the safety coordinators with small tasks, such as making sure everyone is wearing a radiology badge. When the compliance specialist position was posted, Renee jumped on it.

Her decision to pursue compliance and safety evolved through her one-to-one experience with patients, "I loved what I did chairside, but I knew I could do more. When people visit a dental office, they don't know what to expect in terms of safety measures. I love that I can share the knowledge I have in a way that makes sense because I have worked with patients and understand how they are feeling and the questions they have. I can give them that information and make a difference."

According to Renee, the most important trait for an RDA to have is compassion. "Dental assistants have to want to make their patients' life better, want to make them smile." One of the most rewarding aspects of being a dental assistant was regular exposure to returning patients. In the orthodontics field, patients visit the office about once a month. "You get to know them, and their personalities really come out."

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One memorable patient was a teenage boy who was starring in the school musical and hoping to get his braces off before opening night. He visited the orthodontist more often than other patients to try to accomplish this, and although he didn't get his braces off for that performance, he did have a dazzling smile for the next one! Renee attended both performances to show her support, and she could tell that getting his braces off and having straight teeth provided him with more confidence. As the patient

went on to attend a college that specialized in theater, Renee felt a sense of accomplishment being a part of his journey. "There is nothing like a smile and a thank you from someone who feels like a brand new person as a result of dental work."

Feeling settled in her current role with compliance and safety, Renee has found a job that capitalizes on her talent, training and experience as well as her personality. She has a "by-the-book" approach and what better field than compliance to utilize that? "I shine in this role because it's everything I find interesting" Renee says.

On Being AMT Certified

Renee credits her success in passing the RDA exam on the fact that she took the test right after graduation, while everything was fresh in her mind. She studied using the Exam Content Outline provided by AMT and reviewing the topics in her textbook.

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Renee says that the best thing about doing CE is how easy it is for her to keep track of her points in AMTrax. She can login to "My Homepage" at any time to see how much CE she still needs for that cycle.



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