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ADSO Names Dr. AJ Acierno Executive Director

Dentist, DSO founder and CEO brings clinical and business perspective to the role

WASHINGTON, DC (November 4, 2026) – The Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO) today announced that Dr. AJ Acierno will serve as the organization's next executive director. A dentist with more than 25 years of experience, Dr. Acierno has worked in nearly every role in the dental industry: associate dentist, private practice owner, DSO founder and CEO, and national operations executive.

"I've seen dentistry from almost every seat, as an associate, a practice owner and the leader of a growing DSO, and I know what it takes to deliver great patient care and to build and run the organizations that make that care possible," said **Dr. Acierno.** "Every dentist should have the right to choose the practice model that best supports them in caring for their patients. For some, that's owning a practice. For others, it's working as an associate or partnering with a DSO. A DSO is simply another option, and one that makes investments in technology and training possible and helps practices meet workforce challenges. My job is to make sure policymakers understand that value and to be an advocate for every dentist, whatever path they choose. Our industry is changing quickly, and we will meet those challenges by working together."

Dr. Acierno takes the helm as a new wave of policymakers prepares to take office. This year's elections will bring significant turnover in statehouses, governors' offices, attorneys general offices and Congress, creating an opportunity to introduce a new generation of leaders to the role DSOs play in dental care. As the national voice of the DSO industry, ADSO plays an essential role in that work, advocating at the state and federal levels to protect a model of care that gives dentists more choice in how they practice and helps more patients get the care they need.

Dr. Acierno began his career in 2001 as an associate dentist at Heartland Dental before owning his own practice in Schaumburg, Illinois, in 2003. In 2012, he co-founded DecisionOne Dental Partners with his brother, Dr. Michael Acierno, growing it to more than 35 practices and leading its 2019 merger with Smile Brands. At Smile Brands, he served as Chief Operating Officer of the Midwest Region, where he oversaw 191 practices in 12 states, and later as President of Clinical Operations and Chief Dental Officer, overseeing clinical operations for nearly 700 practices and 7,500 team members in 33 states. In those roles, he led efforts to bring clinical standards, new technology and more efficient ways of working to practices at scale.

"AJ has built a DSO from the ground up, led it through a major merger, and helped run one of the largest dental support organizations in the country, all with the perspective of a practicing dentist," said **ADSO President Scotte Hudsmith**. "He knows the business realities DSO leaders face, and having practiced in nearly every setting, he can help policymakers and regulators on both sides of the aisle understand that DSOs are one more choice dentists can make about how to practice. We are confident he is the right

leader to guide ADSO's advocacy and growth in this next chapter, as a new generation of state and federal policymakers takes office."

Dr. Acierno earned his DDS from Creighton University in 2001 and serves on the Creighton University Board of Trustees. He succeeds Andrew Smith, who has led ADSO since 2021 and announced his departure in August.

About the ADSO

The Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO) is a non-profit international trade association whose members support more than 15,000 dentists. ADSO supports its members through research, education and advocacy; enabling them to foster innovation, collaboration and a vibrant market where DSO-supported dentists can provide quality oral health care. Visit www.theadso.org to learn more, and follow ADSO on LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter.

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