



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Dr. Zakiya Scott

District Dental Director BALT/MDDC

Finding Her Calling

As a District Dental Director for Benevis in the Baltimore area, it is hard to imagine Dr. Zakiya Scott doing anything other than caring for patients in the area. It's her true calling, but she had never considered dentistry as a career until dental professors visited the Health Science Club while she was an undergraduate at Howard University.

"Friends and family used to say, 'You're smart, you're going to go into the medical field', but honestly, I couldn't see myself doing it. I didn't know what I was going to do and may have gone into a career that would not have served my purpose," Scott said. "But when the professors talked with the club about a career in dentistry, it was a lightbulb moment for me where I realized that's something I can do." After graduating from Howard, Scott went to dental school at the University of Maryland followed by residency at Temple University.

Growing up in a family of five, she remembers family visits to the dentist. "In high school, I needed a root canal, but the dentist asked my mother if we wanted to just take the tooth out. I thought to myself, is it that bad? But, my mother said, no we are going to save the tooth. She advocated for me, but that's not an option for everyone," Scott said.

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Giving the Care That's Needed

Now as a dental professional, Scott sees that not everyone has access to the care they need. Being able to expand connections to essential oral healthcare is one of the reasons she came to Benevis 16 years ago. She joined a new team starting a practice in Baltimore, which has now expanded to a handful of practices as part of Porter Dental & Braces.

Scott sees the fruit of her and her team's service to the community, growing the practice. "It's nice when I can go back now as a leader, and I see my name in a chart from 10 years ago. Some of the patients were teenagers, and now they are bringing their kids. It comes full circle for me."

Supporting the Whole Person

Beyond caring for their oral health, Scott supports the whole person. She has been known to give her patients clothes from her car if she notices theirs are worn out. "It doesn't always have to be this grand procedure that you did to change someone's life. You could tell someone they look nice today – those little things and trying to have a clean and safe environment for my patients, mean the world to me."

To read more about Benevis, go to [Benevis.com](https://benevis.com) or scan the QR code



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For Scott, she finds the most joy when she is in the chair, serving patients and their families. “I tell new dentists as we train that when I started back in 2008, I did not think I would still be here in 2024. But the patients keep me here and we’re changing lives every day,” Scott said. “It’s my purpose to see patients. I think that’s what has kept me connected to what we do, even as I have grown in leadership.”

While patient care is her top priority, Scott also hopes to inspire the next generation of dentists. “I tell the kids to consider dentistry when they think about what they want to do for their career. It wasn’t something someone talked to me about, so hopefully I plant a seed,” Scott said. “There aren’t a lot of dentists that look like me. You will be challenged but know that you can do it.”

Her biggest advice for aspiring dentists? Be a lifelong learner and have patience. “A lot of people are fearful of the dentist and getting through the first five minutes of the appointment is the toughest part of the appointment for me. Be patient, be flexible, and learn to compromise to earn patients’ trust.”

Despite the demands of patient care and now her leadership role, with the support of her team and Benevis, Scott can still find time for all of the things that bring her joy. “I always say working in a chair is what brings me joy, and then I had to balance work with my personal life, and I’ve been able to have my family, get married, and travel. I’ve been able to do everything that I still want to do within my career here.”

Some of her favorite things include her family, her church – where she is in the choir and serves as an usher – her dogs, and seeing the world. “I’m a big fan of travel. The world is so huge, and time is limited. Anywhere where the ocean is my favorite location.”



About Porter Dental

Porter Dental & Braces is one of Maryland’s leaders in Medicaid and affordable dental care for children and their families. Supported by Benevis, Porter Dental’s six locations serve over 45,000 children on Medicaid annually. Porter Dental and its doctors are committed to improving lives by providing high-quality dental care in a fun, compassionate environment. To learn more about Porter Dental, visit www.PorterDental.com.



About Benevis

Since 2002, Benevis has provided dental practice management services to over 150+ supported offices across 15 states. With a network of 45 different brands, we provide care to more than 620,000 patients each year. Eighty-five percent of those patients are enrolled in state Medicaid programs. Benevis is dedicated to improving lives and communities by providing high-quality dental care in a fun, compassionate environment.

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