

STUDENT PROFILE:
JEREMY BUDD (D '22, GD'22)



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Providing Dental Care Through a Public Health Lens

As part of his Bridging the Gaps Community Health Internship following his first year at Penn Dental Medicine, Jeremy Budd (D '22, GD'22) conducted medical histories, did drug screening, and distributed oral health supplies at Prevention Point, a North Philadelphia medical clinic working with individuals with opioid abuse disorder.

During his time there, a young woman at the clinic learned he was a dental student and asked for help getting her smile back. “She had rampant caries, multiple fractured teeth and retained root tips,” Budd says. “I knew her oral health could have turned out differently had she had access to dental care from a young age.”

While at Prevention Point, Budd provided oral health information, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss to patients. “People said they hadn’t been to the dentist in so long, and some said they didn’t have running water to brush their teeth,” Budd recalls. “I was trying to bring dentistry to where it hadn’t been before.”

That experience deepened his resolve to help broaden access to dental care for vulnerable communities, and reinforced his decision to pursue a DMD/Master of Public Health dual-degree offered in partnership with Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine, which requires 125 hours of public health fieldwork (see related story, p. 32).

“Penn does a really good job of getting dental students out in the community,” Budd says. For the Community Oral Health Honors program in his second year, he worked with a team of dental students to do weekly oral screenings of children living at three shelters in West Philadelphia, while also counseling parents on their children’s dental care and nutritional needs.

As a recipient of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Fellowship at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Budd has been able to advance his experience working with young, often vulnerable patients. “My work with LEND has given me an increased ability to communicate with my patients with Down Syndrome and their caregivers, helping them make informed decisions about their dental and medical care.”

In recognition of his accomplishments, Budd was awarded a 2022 American Dental Education Association/GlaxoSmithKline

Consumer Healthcare Preventive Dentistry Scholarship. The \$2,500 scholarship recognizes students who have demonstrated academic excellence in preventive dentistry. Recipients were recognized at the ADEA annual meeting in March.

Budd has long had an interest in working with vulnerable communities. After graduating from Columbia University with a B.A. in history and American studies, Budd spent two years as an AmeriCorps National Teaching Fellow in Boston, working with students with autism.

While the work was rewarding, he realized he wanted to continue helping others through a more clinically focused career. After completing the Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program at Bryn Mawr College, he started at Penn Dental Medicine in 2018. During his first year, he applied for the dual-degree DMD/MPH program.

“I think the Master of Public Health has been a really great lens to synthesize what I’m learning in dental school,” Budd says. “Public health trains you to see the bigger picture and gives you the tools to address it: what steps are needed to resolve an issue, what would be the best interventions for a community, what do people need to get care--a bus pass, longer clinic hours? All the pieces matter for health.”

After graduating this spring, Budd will return to New York to start a two-year pediatric residency at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia. In the short term, he wants to focus on developing excellent clinical skills and working with special needs patients, but is open to the possibility of an academic career.

“The overarching goal for me is to make dentistry more inclusive,” says Budd. “My goal is to not only provide high quality dental care, but to reach those who are not seeking dental care as much as other communities. With proper accommodations, dental care can be accessible for everyone.”