

# A Day in the Life of Dr. Beatriz Terry

Dr. Beatriz Terry  
FDA MEMBER DENTIST



## 5 A.M.

Up and at 'em. This is my time of day to exercise (spinning), think and plan for the day ahead. Seems like it's best to

exercise while I am semi-conscious and the kids are still asleep. That *Today's FDA (TFDA)* article on life balance really woke me up (no pun intended!). I need to take care of myself to be able to take care of my patients and kids.

## 7 A.M.

Everybody is awake and in motion (except for my 14-year-old who is staring into space instead of putting on his socks and shoes). My husband and I discuss

the car pool arrangements and the kids' practice schedule. Since my daughter left for college this fall, we only have the two boys to worry about now. Tonight he will take off his "general dentist" hat and be on parent duty. I have an FDA Dentist webinar (FREE!) to attend. I know, I know — I could just lock myself in the bedroom closet at home with my iPad, but I am a little claustrophobic and they would still find me. The FDA really helps me get up-to-date information on practice management. Although I think I understand what's going on the Internet and know I need to use it to build my practice — how to do that is still a mystery to me.

## 8 A.M.

Out the door. Besides my spinning class in the morning, this is my only time alone during the day. Put that road rage aside, turn off the blast of car commercials and get ready to lead my staff and care for patients with the focus and compassion they deserve. Running really

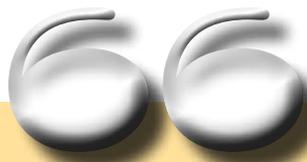
helps, too — clears my head *and* gets me ready for next St. Jude Rock & Roll Marathon.

## 8:30 A.M.

I'm early! It gives me time to just cruise the office and see if everything is in order. I like to look around and take it all in; my dream was always to have my own cozy practice bustling with people. Getting the money together to do it was easier than I thought it would be. The FDA's corporate affiliate for practice financing smoothed the way and even helped me replace some of the more antiquated equipment that my partner hadn't gotten around to updating.

## 9 A.M.

Time for our weekly staff meeting. All those practice/staff management courses at the Florida National Dental Convention (FNDC) have paid off! We are a great team, but when the air starts to crackle with dissent, I don't let it catch



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fire. These meetings (and the great training we received at FNDC) keep us running smoothly and morale is great — which means patients are better cared for, even the most contentious.

### 9:20 A.M.

Usually we are all getting ready for our first patients, but we need a few extra minutes to make plans for our Project: Dentists Care (PDC) event next week. Many local dentists and their staff will swarm the local PDC affiliate for a Give Kids a Smile screening day. We are pretty lucky here, but I want to make sure those smiles are happening all over my city. The legislature acts like caries magically seal themselves with no staff or overhead if your patient is needy. That thorny access-to-care problem is something the FDA continually keeps in front of the legislature. We were finally

able to get an increase in dental Medicaid reimbursements for children pushed through a few years ago.

### 9:30 A.M.

Open for business! My assistant has the first patient ready; I wash up and I pull on my gloves. We’ve switched to nitrile gloves, and believe it or not, there was big “discussion” at our weekly meeting about what color glove to order. We finally settled on lavender ... and now that we have an FDA corporate affiliate for dental supplies, I can buy them for 22 percent off. Or, get them during one of the monthly specials for even less.

### 10 A.M.

Moving right along! New patient exams, treatment planning, periodontal surgery, implant surgery, post-operative visits and hygiene checks.

### 11:30 A.M.

Biopsy! This patient has taken such good care of his teeth and gums — he usually only needs a checkup, but this lesion looks suspicious. Lymphoma or squamous cell carcinoma, or something more exotic? That online “Diagnostic Discussion” CE I did this summer will be helpful in handling the biopsy and diagnosis — another FREEBIE from the FDA! Can you believe I’ll earn 30 credits for free this year in my pajamas?

### 1 P.M.

Food! But also a phone call from a colleague — our county commission is toying with the idea of cutting out fluoridation. How unreasonable can they be? Our component dental association is getting ready to mobilize — scheduling dentists to speak at the next commission meeting; gathering supporting materi-

als; assigning dentists to speak with the media. The FDA is sending copies of their fluoridation kit. It's good to have backup for the issues you care about. I can't imagine putting together a counter-campaign like this on my own. Or, for that matter, traveling to Tallahassee every time the Legislature, or the Governor or the Board of Dentistry starts trying to fix something that isn't broken or make it more expensive to practice. I feel lucky to have FDA lobbyists who can be there to keep an eye on things.

### 1:30 P.M.

Time to put on my lawyer hat! Sometimes I think you need a law degree to practice dentistry. But fortunately, there is an easier way to figure out what this MSO contract really means. I just received my results from the ADA's Contract Analysis Service. Another free benefit, and it's written in plain English! All I had to do is send an "unsigned" copy to the FDA and they took care of the rest.

### 2 P.M.

Back to work! Thankfully this afternoon is pretty routine: such as a 17-year-old with dental floss stuck between his teeth. It's taken me two years to convince him to use it. I hope this little episode doesn't deter his future use.

### 3 P.M.

Just heard from my husband. The risk assessment rep from The Doctors Company (TDC) just finished a free site survey at his office. They are in great shape! He

already gets a 5 percent FDA member discount from TDC, but this resource will help the practice improve patient care and avoid malpractice suits, too.

### 3:30 P.M.

A quick phone call to Yolanda at the South Florida District Dental Association. As president this year, I need to talk with her almost every day. We are planning a great new mentor program for Nova dental students.

### 4 P.M.

Political errand: Our lobbyists can't be everywhere at once, so I'm an FDA Legislative Contact Dentist. Today, I am delivering a campaign check to our state senator. He has been a good listener when it comes to dental issues. He still talks about all the postcards he received when we began our battle against insurance companies and their strange notion that they should be able to set rates for treatment they won't even pay for. He ended up being one of the sponsors of the Senate version of the bill and a patient!

### 6 P.M.

New Dentist Webinar – this series is a life-saver. No one taught me how to run a business or deal with employees in dental school, let alone how the Internet will keep changing the issue. We might need a little help from the FDA corporate affiliate for website design and hosting to implement a new plan, but at least I will have a clue about what they are recommending.

### 7:30 P.M.

Home sweet home — the kids are bent over their homework at the kitchen table. My dinner is waiting on the stove. I am so glad my husband is a good cook — no mac and cheese from a box for us! And speaking of food, I'm really looking forward to our Miami Dade Dental Society meeting at Grazzianos this week — great food, friends and CE, and casual just the way I like it.

One more thing to do for my professional life and then it's all family time before bedtime. I'm sitting down right now and writing that annual dues check to the FDA. It's like money in the bank!

*Dr. Beatriz Terry has been a periodontist for 20 years. She and her husband, general dentist Dr. Edy Guerra, have three teen-aged children and live in Miami Springs. She is a past president of the South Florida District Dental Association and serves as a delegate and alternate trustee for the FDA and an alternate delegate to the American Dental Association. She can be reached at [ubetdds@aol.com](mailto:ubetdds@aol.com). If you are interested in any of the benefits Dr. Beatriz Terry has so subtly mentioned, contact us! 800.877.9922 or [membership@florida-dental.org](mailto:membership@florida-dental.org).*