

# SAID History

**SAID** was begun by Dr. Gerald Bensberg in 1966, who was the Director of the Attendant Training Project, a five year program supported by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, and sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board – a non-profit organization based in Atlanta.

Dr. Bensberg invited dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants and other interested professionals who served in facilities throughout fifteen (15) southern states to participate in a seminar to consider ways of delivering better dental care to dental patients with special needs. The seminar proved extremely beneficial to the attendees and the group decided to meet yearly, calling themselves The Southern Association of Institutional Dentists (SAID).

Since 1966, **SAID** has grown in scope and membership, and today boasts an active membership of over 300 persons representing twenty-nine (29) states, including California, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Canada.

**SAID** is the only organization in the United States that deals primarily with the dental needs of the institutional client. The scope of **SAID** has changed to include not only people with developmental disabilities, but also those with mental health challenges. While **SAID** maintains its southern heritage, its spirit has been enriched by members from all regions of the country, as well as Canada. In 2010, the **SAID** name was officially changed to “Special Care Advocates in Dentistry” because the original “Southern Association of Institutional Dentists” no longer reflected the diverse makeup and the broadened focus of the organization. What has not changed is the original vision of improving the oral health of people with special needs.

