



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Dr. Renee Shirer

Pippin Dental & Braces, Indianapolis, IN

A Natural Fit

For Dr. Renee Shirer, a career in healthcare seemed like a natural fit from an early age. “My parents were both in healthcare. My dad’s a physical therapist and my mom was a director of nursing education. I think healthcare was kind of in my blood,” she says.

Though she initially thought of pursuing medical school, after she shadowed a friend in dentistry for the day and it changed her career path. “He did a full mouth extraction and immediate dentures on a patient. The transformation and the happiness that she had that day made me realize, this is what I’m going to do.”

After graduating from Indiana University School of Dentistry while balancing life as a wife and mother, Shirer’s passion for providing affordable, quality dental care was quickly ignited during her first job at a community health clinic in Lafayette, IN, where she served as the dental director.

Commitment to Serve

Her commitment to underserved communities continued when she moved to Indianapolis, working at a free clinic for the homeless population and other individuals without insurance before joining Benevis.

At Pippin Dental & Braces, a practice supported by Benevis, many of Shirer’s pediatric patients have significant dental needs. More than 80% of Benevis patients are covered by Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). “It is not uncommon for a child with their 20 baby teeth to need fillings and/or extractions on half of those teeth,” she said. She uses the opportunity to encourage them to take better care of their emerging adult teeth. “I love to tell them; your

big boy or big girl teeth are coming in now. With modern technology and medicine, you’re probably going to live to be 100. You want to have your teeth so you can eat and smile until you’re 100 years old.”

Involved in Leadership

Outside of Benevis, Shirer is involved in leadership and advocacy work. She enrolled in the Indiana Dental Association’s Indiana AIR (Acceptance, Inclusion, Respect), which is a

leadership development program for the state’s dentists. Participants completed a project for the program and, with her oldest son in the military, Shirer was inspired to help that population. “My project was called, ‘Operation Soldier Smiles,’ and I recruited around 30 dentists in my area to help take care of the of the veterans.” They had a screening day and saw 46 veterans, who were provided with the care they needed ranging

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from cleanings to crowns and even full mouth extractions and dentures.

Shirer has also volunteered her services with the Mission of Mercy free clinics and TeamSmile events with the Indianapolis Pacers and Colts, providing dental care for underserved children in a fun, welcoming environment. “Over a day, kids would be brought from their school on buses. There would be fun activities when they weren’t with the dentist. Some of them just needed cleanings and fluoride, while some needed more extensive help such as fillings, crowns, and extractions.”

Outside of providing care through her work and volunteer roles, Shirer also shows her commitment to the profession and community through leadership roles, including serving as president of the Indiana University Dental School Alumni Board and the Indianapolis District Dental Society (IDDS) Board. In February, Shirer was recognized for her efforts and achievements, being honored with the 2024 IDDS Leaders and Mentors Award at the society’s Women in Dentistry event.

Her advocacy efforts also helped raise Indiana’s Medicaid reimbursement rates for dentists for the first time since 1998. “When I was the president of the Indianapolis District, we had about 1,100-1,200 dentists in our district. I sent out lots of emails for our local dentists to write to their legislators to encourage them to raise our rates. They raised it 10%, which went into effect this January; and they must review the rates every two years. I think that was a really big accomplishment for our state.”

Looking ahead, Shirer will represent Indiana as a delegate at the American Dental Association’s annual meeting this fall. For her, improving access to quality oral healthcare is a calling and a privilege.



About Pippin

Pippin Dental & Braces is one of Indiana’s leaders in Medicaid and affordable dental care for children and their families. Supported by Benevis, Pippin Dental’s eight locations serves over 31,000 children on Medicaid annually. Pippin Dental and its doctors are committed to improving lives by providing high-quality dental care in a fun, compassionate environment. To learn more about Pippin Dental, visit www.PippinDental.com.



About Benevis

Benevis is a leading dental healthcare delivery organization for practices focused on delivering life-changing oral care and orthodontics to underserved communities. Through comprehensive care and operational services that expand access to dentistry, Benevis has a 20-year history of providing the highest quality care to approximately 5 million children and adults. Its network reaches more than 100 locally branded dental offices across the U.S. that deliver treatment through 1.2 million visits each year. Benevis also advocates for programs and legislation that ensure all families have access to the oral healthcare they need and deserve..

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