



# the Sentinel

A Newsletter of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia

## Window on Complaints

Each year, the College receives about 140 complaints. After investigation by the College, approximately 80 per cent of these are closed and no further action is taken. But what about the other 20 per cent?

You will recall from the article in the last *Sentinel* that when a complaint is received by the College, it is sent to the registrant who is then invited to provide a response to the complaint. When the College's deputy registrars review a complaint and any response from the registrant, they have a few options, as outlined in Article 16.03 of the Rules made under the *Dentists Act*. All complaints are referred to the peer review/screening committees,

the Practice Standards Committee or the Professional Conduct Committee, unless a decision is made to take no action or an informal resolution or mediated settlement is reached.

Resolving the complaint informally entails using alternative dispute resolution processes and skills. The deputy registrar will start by meeting with the registrant to discuss the information that has been received and the College's concerns with the treatment or conduct that is the subject of the complaint. There will be discussions about how the complaint might be resolved and a review of specific actions the registrant could take to deal with concerns.

Just as every complaint is different, so is the resolution. Possible actions have included the assessment of clinical

*continued on page 3*



*This is part two of our series about the College's complaint process. Part one "The College is Calling" appeared in our Winter issue and can be found on the College's website at [www.cdsbc.org](http://www.cdsbc.org) under College Publications, Sentinel, Sentinel-Winter 2005.*

### this issue

- 2 Our Place on the Great Mandala
- 3 Dental Records Management Course Offers Ounce of Prevention
- 4 Dedicated Staff and Volunteers are Cornerstone of College's Success
- 5 Council forms CDA Advisory Committee  
Employee Profile: Paula Bohan
- 6 Council Highlights
- 7 Excellence in Action
- 8 College Honours Contributions

# Our Place on the Great Mandala



President's Report

Dr. Dan Stoneman

**We share a continuing responsibility to preserve and enhance dentistry's service to the public.**

It has been a privilege and honour to serve as your President this past year. I thank all of Council and College staff for their advice, patience and cooperation. Particular highlights from this year include:

#### Health Professions Act (HPA)

No doubt, due to provincial elections, the urgency of government to include our profession under this legislation has diminished. Taking advantage of this hiatus, we seek to include the principles and structure of our current *Dentists Act* and Rules into new HPA bylaws and to avoid the pitfall of including time dated material in an ever-evolving profession.

#### Quality Assurance

Government's concern with self regulation is summed up in two words "quality assurance." Presently,

we are defining goals and the potential framework for quality assurance programs beyond our present continuing education requirements.

#### Audit Committee

An Audit Committee, independent of the Elected Officers and the Registrar, has been appointed to annually monitor the College's financial operations. This year, we continued to enjoy a balanced budget, a double payment on our building loan and a surplus.

#### Council Participation

In the past, the College relied on a smaller Executive Committee of Council to direct College affairs. This year, all 21 members of Council received all information on Council matters. Greater participation and adherence to our governance model have facilitated debate and have better focused our Council meetings in making policy decisions.

#### Certified Dental Assistants (CDAs)

The College recognizes the right of certified dental assistants to seek self regulation, however until such time as government decides otherwise, the College continues to regulate CDAs.

Presently, CDA working groups are reviewing alternatives on a democratic process that will provide Council with a certified dental assistant member. They will also bring forth recommendations for HPA bylaws affecting CDAs in the event that certified dental assistants continue to be regulated by the College.

#### Transparent Review Process

While specific complaints remain private and confidential, the peer review process does not. As recommended by the Regulatory Review Task Force, the Practice Standards Committee and Professional Conduct Committee are now in place. All members of these committees have received training in legal process.

I recently had the opportunity to review the minutes of the first professional dental meeting in British Columbia. The meeting was held in the office of Dr. T. Jones of Victoria in 1876. The minutes are written in quill ink. Quill ink—129 years—incredible!

From the time of Dr. Jones, the College has shared a continuing responsibility to preserve and enhance dentistry's service to the public. Each of us takes our place on the great mandala of our profession as it evolves through our brief moment of time.

It strikes me that 129 years from now no one will even know your name. Oh yes, perhaps a grandchild will tell their teenager about you and, no doubt, the teenager will promptly forget your name. But if we continue the integrity of the profession as those before us have—as Dr. Jones did—I know one day that teenager will most certainly ask, "Mum, tell me about my ancestor, you know—the dentist."

That alone makes it all worthwhile. Thank you Dr. Jones.

*continued from front cover*

skills for the purpose of identifying approved CE courses or study clubs, or customizing an educational program that would allow the registrant to upgrade knowledge and skills. Resolution may also include an appropriate period of follow-up by the College to ensure specific terms are being met. Once an agreement has been reached, it is recorded in writing, usually in the form of a Mutual Acknowledgement and Undertaking, or MAU, which is signed by the registrant and the College.

If no mediated or informal resolution is reached, the matter is referred to one of two peer review/screening committees. Where the response to a complaint might reasonably include a recommendation to take remedial or corrective action, it is referred to the Practice Standards Committee (PSC). If it is not considered appropriate to send the complaint to the PSC, it is referred to the Professional Conduct Committee.

The committees include dentists, certified dental assistants (CDAs) and public representatives. Subcommittees of three to four persons, including a public representative, are appointed to review a case. If the registrant is a specialist, one member of the subcommittee will be a member of the same specialty, and if the registrant is a certified dental assistant, one member will be a CDA.

All of the information obtained in the investigation is included in a report and sent to the registrant for their review and an opportunity to provide written comments. After 30 days, or when comments have been received, the report and the registrant's comments are forwarded to the appropriate committee.

When a matter is referred to the PSC, it will meet and consider the matter. Among the actions available to the PSC are:

- direct the deputy registrar to do further investigation or review,

- decide to take no further action,
- meet with the registrant under review and any other persons to discuss the practice, conduct or condition of the registrant,
- resolve the complaint informally,
- refer it to mediation,
- recommend the registrant take corrective or remedial action which the PSC considers appropriate, or
- refer the matter to the Professional Conduct Committee.

The Professional Conduct Committee has the same options and additional powers that enable it to appoint and direct inspectors, and to authorize an application to the Supreme Court of B.C. for a search and seizure order. Both committees may refer complaints to one another, and both can request a written agreement to a specific condition and to monitor compliance with specific terms, conditions or agreements. Only the Professional Conduct Committee can decide that a registrant can appear before an Inquiry Panel.

Regardless of how a complaint proceeds, the College's commitment is to treat every registrant respectfully and fairly and to ensure they are involved in every step of the process.

The College serves and protects the public by ensuring that registrants are practising to the "current generally accepted professional and ethical standards." Every effort is made to remediate, rather than merely discipline, a registrant who falls below the requirements. Only the Professional Conduct Committee can recommend that a registrant appear before an Inquiry Panel. Our next issue of *The Sentinel* will discuss Inquiry Committee proceedings in more detail.

## Dental Records Management Course Offers Ounce of Prevention

*In the event of a patient complaint or malpractice suit, dental records are the dentist's most important evidence of proper diagnosis and patient care. This article outlines what happened with a records management-related complaint received by the College.*

A patient sends a written complaint to the College regarding post operative pain encountered after the removal of a wisdom tooth. The College informs the treating dentist of the complaint, provides a copy of it, and asks the dentist to respond by providing details about the extraction procedure.

The dentist informs the College that he was unaware of any difficulties experienced by the patient and provides a three-page report detailing the appointment. Information pertaining to consent, anaesthetic, raising of a flap, instruments used, suture material, prescribed antibiotics and post-operative instructions were outlined.

The College thanks the dentist for his report and asks for a copy of the patient's clinical record. The dentist sends in the patient's clinical chart. The extraction procedure chart entry is noted with the date and "#18 Exo."

After reviewing the complaint, the patient's clinical record and dentist's report, the Deputy Registrar meets with the dentist to discuss the situation. The treating dentist acknowledges the absence of information in his records to support the contents of his report.

Although the dentist's report addressed concerns regarding quality of care, the dentist acknowledges that an

*continued on page 7*

## Dedicated Staff and Volunteers are Cornerstone of College's Success



Registrar's Report

Heather Laing

**"Ideas without action are worthless."**

**- Harvey Mackay**

I am consistently impressed by the commitment of our volunteers and staff who contribute to the operations and the ultimate success of our College. It is inspiring to know what the College is able to accomplish with a staff of 21 and just over 100 volunteers.

It is our dedicated staff who respond to the hundreds of calls we receive each month from the public, CDAs and dentists about topics that range from registration and licensure to complaints, advertising, incorporation, and continuing education.

Among other duties, staff support every College committee and Council. In particular, they:

- help manage our bi-annual certified dental assistant (CDA) examinations,
- liaise with local, national and international organizations and professional bodies,
- manage the College Place Dental Clinic,
- volunteer to staff our booth at the PDC, and

- manage our finances, information technology and day-to-day operations.

Consultants and contractors also work with the College to operate our remediation programs, produce our publications, conduct CDA examinations, and inspect dental offices to accredit sedation facilities. During the first quarter of 2005, College staff processed 8,295 annual licence renewals. In January and February alone, they answered 1,185 licence and registration related phone calls from dentists and CDAs. Our staff in the complaints area handled 546 phone calls, received 23 complaints, closed 23 complaints and responded to 37 other written inquiries.

Volunteers are also integral to the College's ability to assure British Columbians of professional standards of oral health care, ethics and competence. Volunteers serve on Council and participate as members of our 13 standing committees and various working or advisory groups that are established to provide Council with advice and recommendations on specific topics or issues.

While I am grateful for all that volunteers do for the College, I also appreciate, as did recipients at CDSBC's annual awards night, that volunteers say they often feel they gain more than they give. I encourage this participation in organized dentistry and hope that collectively we can foster a climate that motivates other dentists and certified dental assistants to become involved. If you are, or have been a College volunteer, I urge you to encourage other colleagues to follow in your footsteps.

It is our staff and volunteers who make it possible to transform ideas into action, and turn action into reality. Please join me in recognizing and thanking them for their significant contributions.

## Council forms CDA Advisory Committee

Council's decision at its February meeting to formally establish a CDA Advisory Committee provides an important mechanism for direct involvement by CDAs in the regulation of dentistry in B.C.

"This committee provides a valuable new forum for consultation with CDAs on regulatory issues that directly affect them," says Committee Chair, Kathy Boyd. "It is an important mechanism by which CDAs can raise their concerns and issues and know that they have a voice in the decision-making and policy-setting process of Council."

College President, Dan Stoneman, says, "This committee represents the climate of change that we are striving for in terms of improved access for CDAs in bringing advice to Council. The viewpoints of both dentists and CDAs are represented on this committee, as is the case with nearly all other College committees as well."

### The Committee's terms of reference are to:

- address CDA regulatory issues
- receive information, monitor and provide updates to Council on matters relating to CDAs
- liaise with the Certified Dental Assistants of BC (CDABC) through the Committee Chair.

Kathy explains that two working groups have also been established to guide the Advisory Committee on pending issues. The CDA Bylaws Working Group, which includes three CDAs and two dentists, is charged with drafting proposals for transition from the current Rules to bylaws under the *Health Professions Act*. This will include suggested changes and updates to Article 10 of the Rules under the *Dentists Act*, which presently governs allied dental personnel.

The CDA Council Member Election Working Group, comprised of three CDAs and one public representative, will review alternatives and make recommendations on a democratic process that will provide Council with a certified dental assistant member.

More information about these committees will be provided in future issues of *The Sentinel*, as they move forward in carrying out their mandates. Specific questions or requests for more information can be directed to the Committee by email at [postmaster@cdsbc.org](mailto:postmaster@cdsbc.org).

### CDA Advisory Committee Members

Ms. Kathy Boyd, Chair  
 Ms. Margaret Dennett, CDA member  
 Ms. Maureen Leech, public member  
 Dr. Peter Lobb, dentist member  
 Ms. Barbara Steer, CDA member  
 Dr. Dan Stoneman, dentist member  
 Ms. Janice van Veen, CDA member



### College employee profile

Paula Bohan

A native of British Columbia, Paula Bohan lived in Ontario for 12 years where she attended university, acquired a bachelor's degree in law, and later worked as a legal assistant in the area of rent control law. This experience provided her with a working knowledge of administrative law that would serve her well in later employment at the College.

Paula has worked as a Complaint Officer at the College for seven years. She deals with files that are forwarded to the Practice Standards and Professional Conduct Committees, serves as liaison on these two committees, and provides support to the College's legal counsel when files go to Inquiry or to Court. When registrants have consented to informal agreements to take remedial courses, attend a study club or to have charts reviewed or inspections done of their practice, Paula is the staff person who monitors these.

Paula's colleagues find her easy to work with and always ready to help a co-worker.

Skiing, biking, hiking and power-walking all contribute to Paula's very active lifestyle. She also enjoys cross-stitching, quilting and going to movies. College staff can attest to her formidable baking talents, as they have been the recipients of many delicious samples over the years. She and her husband, James, enjoy living in Vancouver's West End with Trudy, their Rubenesque black cat.



### CDA Advisory Committee – L to R:

Dr. Dan Stoneman, Ms. Kathy Boyd, Ms. Margaret Dennett, Ms. Barbara Steer, Ms. Betty Larsen (CDSBC Director of Operations and CDA Affairs), Dr. Peter Lobb

**Missing:** Ms. Maureen Leech, Ms. Janice van Veen

## Council Highlights > February 4, 2005

### Finances

Council Treasurer, Dr. Lobb, reported that for the second year in a row the College has not been required to use its line of credit due to effective management and cost containment.

The College continues to forecast a surplus for the year ending February 28, 2005. As decided at the last Council meeting, any surplus will be applied to pay down the loan for College Place.

### Council Structure & Election 2005

As previously reported, the provincial government has decided that the regulation of dentistry should be brought under the *Health Professions Act*. While this was expected to occur by the fall of 2005, it is now anticipated, due to various recent changes within the government, that the work needed to make this happen will occur during the next two years.

After one year of having only two elected officers, Council has decided that, for the 2005 election, there should be three officers: President, Vice President and Treasurer.

To increase the number of officers without increasing the size of the existing 21-member Council, the Thompson/Okanagan and Kootenay Districts have been amalgamated and will be called the Southern Interior Electoral District.

Council has decided that, for the 2005 election year, members from electoral districts will be elected for a two-year term, with the following exception:

- Because at least one-third of the members of Council must be elected annually (*Dentists Act*), the President, Vice President, Treasurer and one Council member from one electoral district will be elected for a one-year term in the 2005 election. Council accepted the offer of the current member from Prince George, that for the 2005 election, the Council member for Prince George will serve a one-year term.

Council approved the revised Election Procedural Policies.

### Policy Statement on Prescribing and Dispensing Drugs

Council approved revisions to the Policy Statement, which now requires members to provide their College registration numbers on all prescriptions. The revised Policy Statement is posted on the College website, [www.cdsbc.org](http://www.cdsbc.org).

### Crisis Communications Plan

The Manager of Communications provided Council with a Crisis Communications Plan. The plan is a blueprint for how the College will respond to any crisis that might have a major impact on the reputation of the College and/or its registrants, in keeping with the College's regulatory mandate.

### Appointments Committee

Council approved the recommendations of the Appointments Committee to fill the following committee vacancies:

- Ethics:  
Galina Pischanitskaya, CDA
- Inquiry:  
Jan Godsmark, CDA, Alison Hall, CDA
- Registration:  
Dr. Sandra Maduke, Specialist

Following approval of the recommendations of Ms. Kathy Boyd's CDA Working Group Report at the last Council meeting, Council further approved recommendations to form the following committees and working groups:

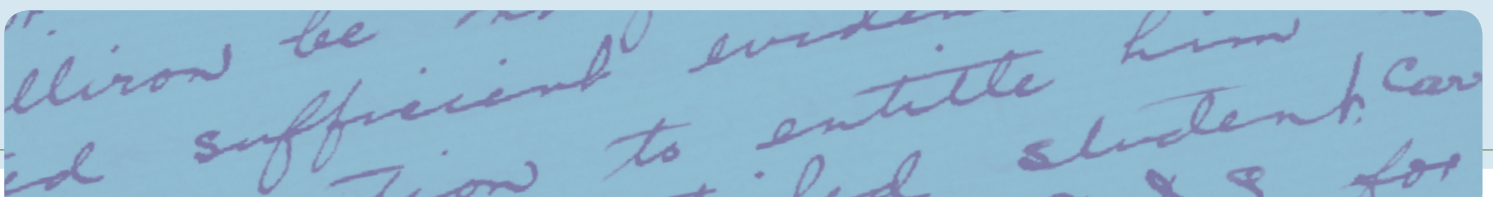
#### CDA Advisory Committee

This new permanent Council committee will comprise three to four CDAs, two dentists, one public representative and the Director of Operations and CDA Affairs. The committee will be chaired by a CDA.

The CDA Advisory Committee will:

- address CDA regulatory issues,
- receive information, monitor and provide updates to Council on matters relating to CDAs, and
- liaise with the CDABC through the chair.

Current committee members are Ms. Kathy Boyd, Chair, Ms. Margaret Dennett, Ms. Betty Larsen, Ms. Maureen Leech, Dr. Peter Lobb, Ms. Barbara Steer, Dr. Dan Stoneman and Ms. Janice van Veen.



### CDA Bylaws Working Group

This working group of the CDA Advisory Committee will comprise three CDAs (with at least one educator and one clinical CDA), two dentists and the Director of Operations and CDA Affairs.

The CDA Bylaws Working Group will draft proposals to transition from the current Rules to bylaws under the HPA. Proposed and/or desired changes to the Rules will include:

- Article 10: exhaustive versus non-exhaustive descriptions of duties
- Long-term care facilities, including the pilot project and possibly a long-term care module
- Changes to accommodate the CDA Mutual Recognition Agreement signed by the CDSBC on May 14, 2001. This will necessitate creating a temporary licence or permit to accommodate an individual who has the nine CORE CDA skills, but who does not have the additional skill qualifications required for registration and licensure in B.C.
- A retired CDA category

The current working group is Ms. Kathy Boyd, Ms. Betty Larsen, Dr. Peter Lobb, Ms. Barbara Steer, Dr. Dan Stoneman, and Ms. Patricia Taylor.

### CDA Council Member Election Working Group

This working group of the CDA Advisory Committee will comprise three CDAs (at least one of whom is a clinical CDA), one public representative and the Director of Operations and CDA Affairs.

The CDA Council Member Election Working Group will review alternatives and make recommendations on a democratic process that will provide Council with a certified dental assistant member.

The current working group is Ms. Judy Laird, Ms. Betty Larsen, Ms. Lane Shupe, Ms. Marlane Paquin and Mr. Clayton Shultz.

### Backdating of Licence Status

The Registrar informed Council that the College will no longer backdate licences.

### "It's Your College – Be Part of the Evolution!"

The President, Dr. Stoneman, encouraged all Council members to attend the all registrants meeting at the upcoming Pacific Dental Conference on Friday, March 11, 2005, at 1:30 p.m.

*continued from page 3*

incomplete clinical record does not properly support his diagnosis and patient care. The dentist and College mutually agree that he will take a two-day Dental Records Management Course offered by the College. The course features a comprehensive overview of records collection, diagnosis and treatment planning, leading directly to a special emphasis on risk management and patient navigation.

Successful resolution of complaints often depends on dental records management. In fact, the College's *Dental Records Management – Collecting the Information & Knowing What to do with It* course has been so popular that it is now available annually to all registrants as a preventive, rather than remedial, measure.

"The course is relevant to all members of the dental team," says College Education Coordinator, Debbie Preissl. "It helps in the day-to-day navigation of today's dental patient and in avoiding some unpleasant pitfalls."

Dr. Ernie Schmidt and Debbie are continually updating the course with best practices and lessons learned from registrants. The next course will be offered in Vancouver in November 2005. For more information, call the College.

## Excellence in Action

With the authors' permission, we are pleased to publish the following letter of commendation.

*To whom it may concern,  
We wish to draw your attention to the exemplary service provided by Dr. Janet Webb and her team. For many years, we have received excellent care.*

*We would like to know if the College of Dental Surgeons recognizes/acknowledges the outstanding*

*services of a dental surgeon and staff. If so, then may we submit that Dr. Janet Webb and her staff deserve recognition of the highest order?*

*Yours sincerely,  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bujan*

### Dr. Webb's staff:

Kathy Grisenthwaite, certified dental assistant; Sherry Tully, dental hygienist; Georgia Benger, receptionist



## College Honours Contributions

On March 10, the College held its annual awards ceremony at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver, where individuals were recognized for their contributions to dentistry and the College.

### Honoured Member Award

The highest award of the College is presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the art and science of dentistry or to the dental profession over a sustained period of time. Their service may be provincial, national or international in nature. The award is also available to non-members of the College.

Recipients:

Dr. Neil Basaraba  
Dr. Ted Ramage

### Distinguished Service Award

Given to individuals to recognize an outstanding contribution to the College over a number of years. It also recognizes exceptional contributions to the dental profession, nationally or internationally.

Recipients:

Dr. John G. Fraser  
Dr. Alan G. Hannam  
Ms. Suzette C. Jestin  
Dr. Gordon Jinks

### Certificate of Merit

Awarded to recognize any special service at any level of dentistry within B.C. It is reserved for individuals who have made a significant contribution to the dental profession.

Recipients:

Ms. Margaret J. Dennett, Ms. Rosie Friesen,  
Dr. John S. Garforth, Dr. Rick Hallett,  
Dr. Peter Kearney, Dr. Eric Kjekstad,  
Dr. Ronald W. Komm, Dr. John N. Nasedkin,  
Dr. Ken A. Neuman, Dr. Edward J. Penner,  
Dr. Bud Sipko

### Certificate of Appreciation

Awarded to recognize valuable contribution to the College.

Recipients:

Mr. Neal R. Russell,  
Protec Dental Laboratories  
Ms. Patti Schom-Moffatt,  
Karyo Communications

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Readers' questions, comments  
and content suggestions for  
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may be forwarded to the Editor,  
c/o the College.

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*The Sentinel* and other  
communications circulated by  
the College are the primary  
sources of information about  
regulation for dentists and  
certified dental assistants in B.C.  
Registrants are responsible for  
reading these publications to  
ensure they are aware of current  
standards, policies and guidelines.



**Top Row, L to R:** Dr. Bud Sipko, Mr. Neal Russell, Dr. Gordon Jinks, Dr. Edward Penner, Dr. Ken Neuman, Dr. John Nasedkin, Dr. John Garforth, Dr. Peter Kearney

**Sitting, L to R:** Dr. Dan Stoneman (President), Dr. Ted Ramage, Dr. Neil Basaraba, Dr. Ronald Komm, Ms. Heather Laing (Registrar), Ms. Margaret Dennett, Ms. Patti Schom-Moffatt, Ms. Suzette Jestin, Dr. Alan Hannam, Dr. John Fraser