



the Sentinel

A Newsletter of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia

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Emergency Dental Treatment What we know now

When we published an article in last winter's issue of *the Sentinel* about dentists' obligations under the *Dentists Act* to provide emergency dental treatment, we were surprised by the significant response it generated. The feedback we received ranged from strong support for all dentists to accept the responsibility to provide emergency treatment, to numerous challenges and frustrations expressed by dentists in trying to provide treatment after hours.

In response, Council directed the College to explore the issue in more detail, including potential implications or opportunities associated with our transition to the *Health Professions Act* in the near future.

As a result, the College initiated a research study that included:

- a review of all registrant and patient correspondence received about emergency dental treatment,
- interviews with educators, government, component and specialist societies, other dentistry regulators and dentists; and

- distribution of a survey to the 1,030 dentists with a current, working fax number registered with the College and analysis of the 400 responses we received.

What we learned is that this is not a simple issue and that more than a simple "one size fits all" approach will be required to support dentists in addressing the challenges associated with providing emergency dental treatment.



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How Are Your Communication Skills?



President's Report

Dr. Peter Lobb

Simply providing information does not ensure successful communication.

At a recent Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities meeting in Toronto, I had an opportunity to discuss a number of issues with the Deans of Dentistry from two large universities. One of them stated that 80 per cent of dentists have introverted personalities and this probably explains two of dentists' greatest weaknesses – communication and interpersonal skills.

I was already aware that a significant percentage of complaints sent to the College involve poor dental recordkeeping. In reality, this is a form of poor communication that we seldom identify as such. Another significant group of complaints is related to poor communication – dentist with patient and dentist with dentist.

Webster's dictionary defines communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals." A more significant definition may be for the word communicate – "to transmit information, thought or feeling, so that it is satisfactorily received or understood."

In today's world, the amount of information available to us is overwhelming. Yet, simply providing information does not ensure successful communication. How it is received and interpreted is a major factor that can be affected by such things as gender, ethnicity, age, health and emotions.

Do you remember a game played as kids formed in a line where a short message is passed along from one person to another? I am always amazed by the change in the message when it gets to the end of the line – an obvious breakdown in our ability to communicate.

In dentistry, communication affects so many aspects of our lives – our relationship with patients, staff and confreres; the message we use to promote our practices; the issue of "informed consent"; and dental records, to name a few.

At dental school today, communication, running a successful business and interprofessional relationships are courses of study. At the College, we are developing courses on records and risk management and supporting communication programs.

Registrants have a terrific opportunity to improve and understand communication skills by attending a College sponsored course, "Critical Skills for Patient Management," to be held the morning of Thursday, March 9, at the Pacific Dental Conference. The College invites you for breakfast and to participate in this meaningful presentation.

Communication is a lifetime work in progress. Challenge yourself to be more effective. Work on your writing skills. Remember that effective communication is about making sure the listener "gets it"! Not only does your professional success depend on effective communication, so do achieving happiness and fulfilment in your personal life.

Don't procrastinate. Start today to work at being a better communicator, for as Frank Deford of *Sports Illustrated* said ...

*For all our goodness and all our shame,
Most of the somewhat of our lives is
Constructed of what we failed to do,
What we avoided and what might have been.*

CDA News Update

CDA Advisory Committee: An Important Voice

It has been a year since the College established its CDA Advisory Committee to ensure direct involvement by certified dental assistants in the regulation of dentistry in B.C.

“We remain committed to making sure our voice is heard on the regulatory issues that directly affect us and to providing input on other related topics. Our committee works hard to ensure our recommendations reflect the broad views of certified dental assistants,” says Chair Kathy Boyd, CDA and CDSBC Council Member.

The CDA Advisory Committee continues to be one the College’s busiest, particularly with three working groups formed to provide recommendations on specific topics, including:

- CDA Bylaws – drafting proposals for transition from the current Rules to bylaws under the *Health Professions Act*,
- CDA Council Member Selection – in May 2006, providing Council with a recommendation of an appointed CDA Council member, and
- CDA Prosthodontic Module – reviewing and recommending updates to the current Module.

“Our committee works hard to ensure our recommendations reflect the broad views of certified dental assistants,” says Kathy Boyd.

The Committee deals with a variety of issues that are brought forth by Betty Larsen, Director, CDA Regulation. She identifies internal administrative issues, receives issues from registrants and also from her contacts on a national level – the Dental Assisting Regulatory Authorities, the NDAEB and the CDAA. Many of the issues the Committee has recently dealt with have been long-standing issues that had been put aside as the College did not have the CDA Advisory Committee forum.

“Upon its inception, our committee was aware of the necessity of developing a process by which it would deal with issues to ensure they were handled in a fair and reasonable manner. We carefully consider the decision making process of an issue before us and we consult with CDAs and other organizations where we believe we need to obtain a broader perspective. Once we are satisfied that we have followed the process, I present a recommendation on behalf of the Committee along with supporting documentation to Council, who ultimately makes the final decision on all issues,” adds Kathy.

The Committee has consulted with dentists, member service organizations, CDAs and various other dental organizations on topics such as proposed changes to Article 10.19, the Orthodontic Module, of the Rules under the *Dentists Act*, and on the use, care and maintenance of coronal whitening by bleaching trays.



College employee profile

Myra Golab

Myra Golab arrived in Vancouver in 1996 from Thunder Bay, Ontario, where she had been working as a certified dental assistant. Myra was employed as a dental receptionist in a Port Coquitlam practice during her first four years in B.C. The College was fortunate to hire her in 2000 as a Complaint Assistant. One year later, the opportunity to work as the Licensing Coordinator for Certified Dental Assistants arose and, with her prior certified dental assisting and dental reception experience, Myra fit into this role with ease. Her calm, cheerful manner and understanding of certified dental assistant issues has served the College and its certified dental assistant registrants well. Myra is a very efficient and resourceful member of the Licensing Team.

In addition to her daily responsibilities at the College, Myra’s “can-do” attitude makes her one of the first to volunteer when an organizer is required for internal special events or staff functions. Her organizing talents and artistic abilities always add special touches to any event.

Myra is now up for a new challenge, as she became a Licensing Coordinator for Dentists this January. The College is certain her enthusiasm and positive outlook will fit well with this position, and will be welcomed by College staff and registrants alike.

Myra is happily married and her two-year-old daughter, Kaia, is the apple of her eye. Most of Myra’s time is spent chasing after Kaia and spending quality time with her whenever possible. Myra is very crafty and in her spare time enjoys scrapbooking and making jewelry.

Your Licence – More Than Just a Piece of Paper



Registrar's Report

Heather Laing

Your licence to practise as a certified dental assistant or dentist represents a bond of trust.

With licence renewal time just around the corner, I want to give you an overview of what transpires “behind the scenes” to manage the licensure process for more than 8,500 registrants.

To us, your licence is much more than just a piece of paper. Your licence to practise as a certified dental assistant or dentist represents a bond of trust, given to you by government as members of a self-regulating profession. Each of you has been charged with the responsibility and privilege of upholding levels of standards, ethics and competence in order to maintain the public's trust.

Your licence expires on the last day of February and before the College can renew it, we must ensure you meet certain requirements. Our licensing team of four staff members starts meeting in September to begin planning the logistics that ensure payments are processed and licences do not lapse. They review all forms,

identify supply requirements, establish printing and distribution deadlines and estimate staff resource requirements.

In December, things really heat up. The continuing education (CE) cycle ends that month for many registrants. Our staff receive and manually enter literally thousands of CE submissions, making sure all credits are reflected on your records in time for renewal. We are also busy finalizing all renewal forms and materials to get them ready for printing and distribution in January.

Starting the first week of February, our licensing team doesn't really come up for air again until the middle of March. In addition to our team of four core staff, the College Receptionist, Accountant, Clinic Coordinator and the Director of CDA Regulation handle hundreds of phone calls and walk-in renewals in addition to the thousands we receive by mail and the hundreds of questions we answer each week from CDAs and dentists.

Throughout the year, our licensing and registration staff is kept busy with a number of functions. To name just a few, they answer an average of 565 phone inquiries from CDAs and dentists each month; they process CE reporting forms; conduct examinations and assessments; work closely with College committees including Registration, CDA Advisory and Quality Assurance; and create and distribute copies of the *BC Dental Manual* and *CDA Manual*.

I am sure you join with me as I express my sincere appreciation to our staff for their diligence on your behalf.

Licence Renewals due 4 p.m., March 1

- This year's form requires your signature.
- Haven't received your renewal package? Make sure we have your current mailing address. You may not practise after March 1 without having paid a practising licence fee.
- If your payment is late, NSF, or your credit card is rejected, your licence will be cancelled until all fees and penalties are paid.
- If your continuing education cycle ended on December 31, 2005, make sure your credits earned to then are up-to-date. The CE reporting form is available on our website.
- Dentists must indicate they are insured by CDSPI or provide a copy of the certificate.

Questions? Call us or visit the Registration and Licensing section of our website.

continued from front cover

Based on the survey results, the majority of dentists appear to conform to, and support, their responsibilities under the Code of Ethics in the *Dentists Act*. They generally agree with the principles behind the Code of Ethics and feel that all dentists should live up to their responsibilities to provide emergency care.

Nevertheless, the survey did identify a number of issues that impact dentists' ability to provide emergency treatment. The most notable is what appears to be fairly strong disagreement on providing after-hours treatment to people who are not patients of record.

Abuse is another problem associated with the provision of emergency treatment. This abuse takes two forms. The first is abuse by some dentists who refuse to provide after hours service or to participate in an on-call program, but refer their patients to other dentists who do, with the expectation these other dentists will provide treatment.

The second form of abuse is by patients. Some refuse to pay for services rendered. Others try to use the requirement to obtain narcotics. Some are violent or argumentative and demand service even if the dentist does not feel the situation is an actual emergency. Still others allow a dental problem to fester for weeks or even months, yet expect a dentist to treat them in the middle of the night. Other

patients do not want to take time from their lives to see a dentist during regular business hours, but use the requirement as a means of accessing treatment at a time that is convenient for them.

Other major issues raised in the survey include financial compensation and MSP fees, the role of local hospital emergency departments, concerns about personal safety or allegations of sexual harassment associated with having to see patients in the office after regular business hours, unrealistic patient expectations as to what constitutes a true emergency, dentist shortages in some communities, and questions related to the wording of sections of the Code of Ethics.

In conclusion, the research study broadened our understanding of dentists' perceptions and challenges associated with providing after hours emergency dental treatment in B.C. At its December meeting, Council referred the matter to the College Ethics Committee as the first step toward establishing a strategy that will involve working directly with the dental community, including the BC Dental Association and others, to find workable solutions.

We thank everyone who provided us with their insights and input and will continue to provide you with information about our progress.

PDC Highlights: Critical Skills for Patient Management

Join us for a version of this popular College seminar, relevant to all members of the dental team.

Topics will include:

- Practical record keeping tips and techniques, including what constitutes proper patient consent and the latest on privacy rules.
- Dealing effectively with patient disagreements and conflict – tips from one of Canada's most experienced dispute resolution trainers.
- How to avoid patient complaints and what to expect if one is filed with the College.
- Questions about the College? This is your chance to have them answered directly by members of College Council and senior staff.



Presenters include (L to R) College Deputy Registrar Dr. Patricia Hunter; Educational Coordinator Debbie Preissl; and lawyer and nationally recognized dispute resolution expert Gordon Sloan.

Council Highlights > December 10, 2005

Finances

Treasurer, Dr. McNiece, reported that College finances continue to be within budget expectations and he is optimistic that the College will not need to draw on its line of credit this year.

Council updated the mileage rate in the College's Expense Policy for Volunteers to match the rate published by Canada Revenue Agency on January 1 each year.

Further to the Expense Policy requirement for an annual review of Elected Officer honorariums, Council appointed an Honorarium Working Group to review the College honorariums and make recommendations to Council at its next meeting in March 2006. Mr. Durose was appointed Chair.

Budget 2006-2007

The budget was approved as presented.

Effective March 1, 2006, licence fees for dentists (practising and academic) will be \$2,647, (\$1,239 for regulatory and \$1,408 for member services), and for practising certified dental assistants, \$222, (\$100.35 for regulatory and \$121.65 for member services).

A new category for retired certified dental assistants was created with the annual fee set at \$25.

Reporting Financial Irregularity

Council accepted a policy drafted by the Registrar that encourages College employees to bring to the attention of either the Registrar or the Chair of the Audit Committee any concerns about financial, accounting or auditing wrongdoing. The policy has been brought to the attention of staff and is included in the *College Operations Manual*.

Health Professions Act Bylaws Working Group

Dr. Varma, Chair, advised that guidance is being sought from various College committees that are examining the current Rules under the *Dentists Act* and making recommendations as to the principles that should apply when bylaws are drafted under the *Health Professions Act*.

The Scope of Practice Working Group will function under the HPA Bylaws Working Group.

CDA Advisory Committee

Ms. Boyd, Chair, reported on Committee activities.

Dr. Witt has been asked to review certain sections of the recommendations concerning the Orthodontic Module, in response to feedback obtained by the Committee from stakeholders.

Ms. Boyd thanked public member Ms. Leech, who resigned from the Committee, and advised that three new members have been appointed: Ms. Christine Elliott, Dr. Bill McNiece and Ms. Lane Shupe.

Pit and Fissure Sealant

Council directed the HPA Working Group, when it drafts bylaws under the *Health Professions Act*, to do so accepting the principle that dentists may delegate to CDAs "applying fissure sealants and adjusting by appropriate hand instrument or slow speed hand piece."

Certified Dental Assistants Strategic Planning Session

A CDA Strategic Planning Session is planned for Saturday, May 13, 2006. Topics will include ways to involve more CDAs in their regulation and better communication with CDA registrants.

Level II Dental Assisting Instructor

A motion was approved recommending that all Level II dental assisting instructors hold an active licence with their dental regulatory body.

CDA Prosthodontic Module Working Group

Council created a Working Group to be headed by Dr. David Bridger, with terms of reference and membership to be approved by the Executive Committee on recommendations from the CDA Advisory Committee.

Consent to Operate a Program

Council gave consent to:

- Malaspina College to establish and operate a Dental Hygiene Program conditional on applying for accreditation status with the Commission on Dental Accreditation within 12 months.
- Academy of Learning at its Langley campus to operate a Dental Receptionist Program.

Accrediting Continuing Education and Service Programs

The Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) confirmed that accrediting CE and service programs is not within its mandate.

2006 Election Dates

Council approved the following:

- Feb 16: Notice of Elections and call for nominations
- Mar 16: Close of nominations
- Apr 6: Deadline for submission of candidate statements
- Apr 27: Mailing of ballots
- May 25: Election count

Term of Office for Council Member from Prince George/Peace River and Districts

Council approved a two-year term (2006-2008) for this Council member position for the 2006 Election.

Mandatory Collection of Fees

Ms. Larson, President of Certified Dental Assistants of BC, and Ms. Robinson, Executive Director; and BC Dental Association President Dr. Zaparinuk, President Elect Dr. Gill, and Executive Director, Ms. Johnston made presentations in support of CDSBC collecting fees for member service organizations.

Council deliberated in-camera and voted by secret ballot to support the principle of mandatory collection of fees for other organizations as part of the annual licence renewal process, without a need for mandatory membership in those organizations.

Council directed the HPA Bylaws Working Group to draft a bylaw based on this principle and taking into account the current statutory authority now used by the College to collect monies as outlined in Section 85(2) of the *Dentists Act*.

Emergency Dental Treatment

Council referred the Emergency Dental Treatment Research Program Summary and Recommendations to the Ethics Committee to continue the process of analysis and recommendations.

The Ethics Committee was directed to report back to Council at its March meeting.

Business/Marketing Plan for Dental Clinic

Council received a Business and Marketing Plan to decrease or eliminate the operating deficit of the Dental Clinic. The plan proposes marketing the facility to new users, providing additional services and increasing the clinic rental and meeting room rental fee.

Quarterly Monitoring Reports: Registration and Licensing, and Complaints

As part of its monitoring function, Council reviewed quarterly reports from both the Registration and Licensing Team and the Complaints Team.

College Awards

The Awards Reception will be held at the Pacific Dental Conference, Thursday, March 9, 2006, from 6 - 8 p.m.

Council approved honouring the following past presidents with Distinguished Service Awards for their outstanding contributions to the College and the profession, especially during their term as President:

- Dr. Fred Froese
- Dr. Mac Leitch
- Dr. John Silver
- Dr. Hank Klein
- Dr. Jim Brass
- Dr. Raymond Greenfeld
- Dr. Myrna Halpenny
- Dr. Robert Rosenstock
- Dr. Dan Stoneman

Council also received a report from Dr. Stoneman, Chair of the Elections and Awards Committee, to honour:

Certificate of Appreciation

- Ms. Bethan Everett
- Ms. Lael Hamilton
- Mr. Mehmud Karmali

Distinguished Service Award

- Dr. Alan Lowe
- Dr. Evelyn McNee
- Dr. Edwin Yen

Award of Merit

- Dr. Douglas Conn
- Dr. Murray Fain
- Dr. Brad Forster
- Dr. Paul Garret
- Dr. John Gercsak
- Dr. Allan Hovan
- Dr. Todd Jones
- Dr. Graham Matheson
- Dr. Craig Naylor
- Dr. Dennis Nimchuk
- Dr. Matthew Panar
- Dr. Mark Spitz
- Ms. Barbara Steer
- Dr. Ashok Varma

Honoured Member Award

- Dr. John Diggins
- Dr. Perry Trester

Correction

Please note the following contact information for the British Columbia Dental Hygienists' Association. This is revised from the information published in the Clip & Save Contact Info that appeared in the last issue of *the Sentinel*.

British Columbia Dental Hygienists' Association (BCDHA)

604 415-4559

1-888 305-3338 Toll Free within B.C.

Email: info@bcdha.bc.ca

www.bcdha.com



Truth in Advertising

In addition to patient referrals, advertising can be an effective way to generate awareness and help grow a dental practice. As is the case with many other health regulatory bodies, our members' promotional activities are governed by legislation that strives to uphold the values and dignity of the profession.

The College's Ethics Committee regularly advises members on appropriate promotional activities, including advertising, the use of trade names and references to credentials and qualifications. The Committee bases its decisions on the Code of Ethics (Article 5 in the Rules under the *Dentists Act*) and Promotional Activities (Article 15).

Mel Sawyer, Committee Chair, says the College receives an average of two advertisements a week, usually submitted by members of the public or other dentists who are concerned about the ad's questionable content. He reinforces the importance of balancing freedom of speech with the need to ensure the public is provided with easy-to-understand, unbiased and reasonable information that will enable them to make informed choices.

"Anything that a reasonable person could perceive to be self-aggrandizing, misleading or comparative in nature should be avoided," says Mel. "Some of the comparative statements we frequently see include "the whitest smiles," "state-of-the-art dentistry," "highest quality care" or "the best dentist." He counsels that dentists should also avoid statements that could be interpreted as appealing to a patient's emotional vulnerabilities. Examples include "pain-free dentistry" or "we take time to listen to you."

The Ethics Committee also advises dentists about the use of credentials and specialist designations, based on the applicable Rules.

"Anything that a reasonable person could perceive to be self-aggrandizing, misleading or comparative in nature should be avoided," says Mel Sawyer.

For instance, a general dentist cannot refer to themselves as a specialist if they are not a member of one of the certified specialities recognized by the College. (Refer to Article 7, "Specialists".) However, they can advertise their practice as being "limited" to certain areas, such as "practice limited to orthodontics," provided they do not provide other general dental treatment.

The issue of patient "ownership" is one that the Ethics Committee is frequently asked about as well. "A preventive approach is best," says Mel. "We advise dentists to ensure this issue is addressed up front and in writing by making sure it is included in an Associate agreement."

For more information about promotional activities, advertising, and specialty designations, refer to the Rules under the *Dentists Act*. These are included in the *BC Dental Manual* and can be found on the College website www.cdsbc.org.

If in doubt about the content of your advertising, you can also ask the College Ethics Committee to review it before it runs. "We can usually have an answer back to the dentist within one to two working days," adds Mel.

Decisions about appropriate advertising are based on the Code of Ethics and Promotional Activities.

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and may be forwarded to the
Editor, c/o the College.

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