



the Sentinel

A publication of the College of Dental Surgeons of
British Columbia for dentists and certified dental assistants

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College Adopts Standards of Practice for Dentists and CDAs

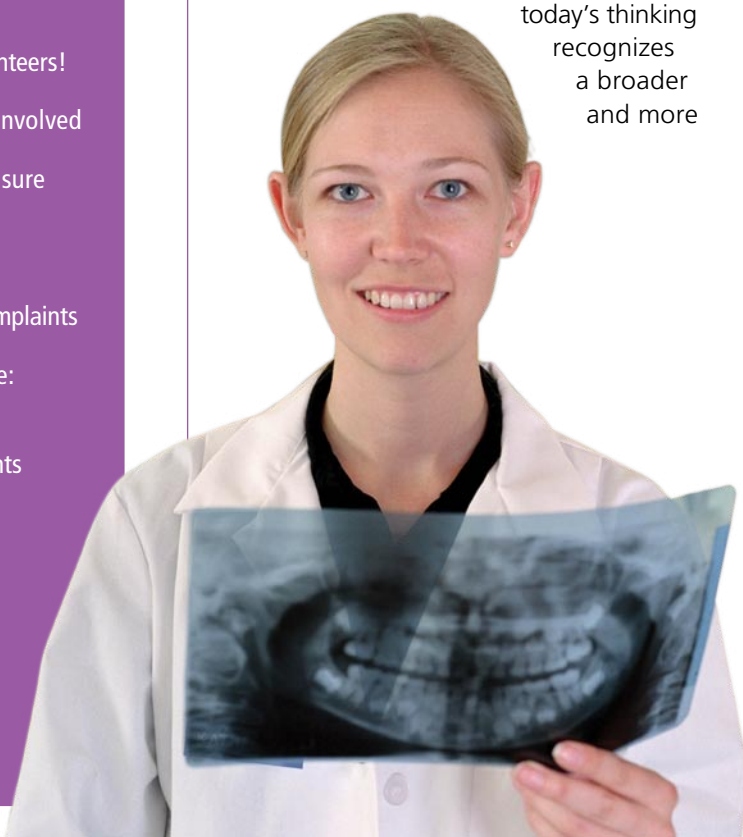
When you hear the words “quality assurance” in the context of the College of Dental Surgeons, you probably think of taking courses to meet your continuing education (CE) requirements. While CE plays a supporting role, today's thinking recognizes a broader and more

comprehensive approach to continuing competency for self-regulating practitioners.

Dr. David Tobias, Chair of the College's Quality Assurance (QA) Committee, explains that the committee has spent significant time researching and designing the framework of a modern continuing competency program that will meet registrant needs for lifelong learning and ensure their competency to practise.

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“Practice standards are the fundamental, core principles that guide our practice,” says Dr. David Tobias.





President's Report Dr. Peter Lobb

Building Trust – Managing Change

“Life to me is the greatest of all games. The danger lies in treating it as a trivial game, a game to be taken lightly, and a game in which the rules don't matter much. The rules matter a great deal. This game has to be played fairly or it is no game at all. And even to win the game is not the chief end. The chief end is to win it honourably and splendidly.”

— Sir Ernest Shackelton
(Antarctic explorer)

Change is a constant. Trust comes from how we deal with that change. Your College has worked hard and made significant progress in building trust and managing change these past few years.

In the past year, the College has built trust by:

- carrying out its duties based on principles of respect and justice, exercised in a fair and reasonable manner
- handling complaints in a timely manner using an alternative dispute resolution model based on remediation

- managing its finances well (we are debt free, own 70 per cent of our building, College Place, have a contingency reserve fund and we reduced 2007–2008 licence fees for dentists by \$64)
- building better relations with CDAs, guided by the CDA Advisory Committee, and valuable input from our first ever CDA Workshop in May 2006.

**Change is a constant.
Trust comes from
how we deal with
that change.**

Significant changes handled during the past year include:

- developing Regulations and Bylaws to reflect how dentistry will be regulated for years to come under the *Health Professions Act*
- partnering with the Faculty of Dentistry at UBC to lead a national initiative to assess, gap train and register

internationally trained dental specialists as part of a federal government priority to recruit skilled workers

- negotiating labour agreements to allow mobility across provincial boundaries
- managing the resignation of the Registrar, Heather Laing, with plans to conduct a Registrar's search, and
- decreasing Council size (effective September 1) to 18 members – three elected officers, five electoral districts, two CDAs, one specialist, one UBC faculty member and six public members. Fortunately, many current Council members have committed to serve another term to provide leadership continuity.

By continuing to build trust and manage change based on principles of fairness and consultation, your College has demonstrated its serious commitment to regulating its registrants with honour. We continue to pursue the vision of a College in which every dentist and CDA takes pride and every British Columbian has great confidence.

Standards of Practice

continued from front cover

Approved by College Council last year, this framework envisions a QA program that:

- builds on the strengths of our existing CE program
- provides increased opportunities for dentists and CDAs to identify and meet their individual learning needs
- enables registrants to obtain recognition of all relevant learning and professional development activities (not just CE courses)
- encourages registrants to link learning and professional development activities to their practices and patients and to address deficiencies or gaps, and
- is cost effective and easy to use.

With the framework in place, the committee decided that the first step was to research and develop standards of practice.

“Practice standards are the fundamental, core principles that guide our practice,” says Dr. Tobias. “What the committee has done is to articulate the expectations and responsibilities for dentists and certified dental assistants to carry out the safe and ethical practice of dentistry. These are essentially high-level principles to which we already adhere.”

He comments that clinical practice guidelines, on the other hand, are less generic, and more specific to different aspects of practice. “Guidelines can change as new evidence becomes available to the profession or new approaches are incorporated into practice,” he says.

“We envision a quality assurance program in which the dentist and CDA play an active role of self-assessment.”

Following are the Standards of Practice for dentists and CDAs that were approved and adopted by College Council in February:

1. Patient-centred Care
2. Unique Body of Knowledge
3. Competent Application of Knowledge
4. Professional Ethics
5. Professional Responsibility and Accountability

“We envision a quality assurance program in which the dentist and CDA play an active role of self-assessment to help them identify where they are strong and where they think they would like to improve based on the realities of their practice, their experience and their career plans,” says Dr. Tobias.

With the adoption of the Standards, the Quality Assurance Committee can continue to build a program that gives registrants increased flexibility and more choices in how they identify and meet their learning needs to remain competent.

A copy of the detailed Standards can be found on page 11. They are also available online at www.cdsbc.org/regonly_guidelines.asp.

IN BRIEF

Ethics Question: Waiving the Co-Payment

We are often asked if it is ethical to waive co-payments for insured patients. The simple answer is that it is not considered to be ethical.

Although dentists may charge whatever they want for their services, they must accurately reflect the percentage of the total fee that is being charged to the insurance company. It is considered a false declaration to indicate that a fee charged to an insurance company is 80 per cent of the total when, in fact, it is 100 per cent of the total fee because the co-payment portion is being waived. The situation may be different if you are unable to collect the co-payment but reasonable efforts must be made to collect it.

Professional Designations and Informed Consent

We often take for granted that patients know what professional designations stand for. However, the myriad of treatment options and elective procedures in today's marketplace leaves many patients unclear. It is part of informed consent for dentists, and certified specialists in particular, to make sure their patients are aware of their professional title, including what it means and the special expertise the dentist brings to the treatment based on their formal training and status with the College. It is also important to remember that the process of informed consent includes informing patients of options that may not be offered by a particular dentist, whether due to area of expertise or philosophy of practice.

College Honours 17 Volunteers at Awards Ceremony

“Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”*

This quote eloquently describes the value of the hundreds of dentists, certified dental assistants and members of the public who volunteer their time each year to serve the College of Dental Surgeons and other dentistry-related organizations. The College is proud to recognize their contributions at its annual awards ceremony, held during the Pacific Dental Conference.

This spring, 17 individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions to dentistry and the College.

Honoured Member Awards were presented to CDA Sandra Bailey of North Vancouver and



L – R: Alan Lowe, Sandra Bailey, Cia Harms, Marke Pedersen

Dr. Marke Pedersen of Vernon. This top award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the art and science of dentistry or to the dental profession over a sustained period of time.

Ms. Bailey, a dean at Vancouver Community College, has been active with the College since 1972, having served on a variety of committees and as a member of Council and the Executive Committee. In the past she received a Distinguished Service Award from the College as well as a Certificate of Merit and Honourary Life Membership from the CDABC.

Dr. Pedersen has been involved with the College since 1987 when he was first appointed to its executive, and subsequently served as Treasurer, Vice-President and President. He was previously awarded the College's Distinguished Service Award and has also received a Certificate of Merit from the Canadian Dental Association and a Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Dental Surgeons of BC.

Distinguished Service Awards were presented to CDA Cia Harms of Surrey and Dr. Alan Lowe of Vancouver for their outstanding contributions to the College and to the dental profession over a number of years.

In recognition of special service – and reserved for individuals who have made a significant contribution to dentistry – Awards of Merit were conferred upon:

- Dr. Martin Braverman, Vancouver
- Dr. Kevin Doyle, Parksville

* source unknown

- CDA Jane Faulafer, West Vancouver
- Dr. Burton Goldstein, Vancouver
- Dr. Dana Herberts, Port Coquitlam
- CDA Frances Kirkpatrick, Kelowna
- Dr. Bill Liang, White Rock
- Dr. M.A.J. (Lex) MacNeil, Vancouver
- CDA Debbie Payne, Delta
- Dr. Wendy Rondeau, New Westminster
- Dr. Bill Seth, Vancouver, and
- Dr. Michael Wainwright, Vancouver.

Dr. Maureen Kent of Vancouver was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for her volunteer contributions to the College as a Public Member of the Review Committee and of the Registration Committee.

If you are interested in nominating an individual for a College award, please contact Janet Khong or obtain a call for nominations form from our website at www.cdsbc.org/pdf/call_for_nom.pdf. Nominations for 2008 Awards close October 31, 2007.



Back Row L – R: Jane Faulafer, Bill Seth, Wendy Rondeau, Lex MacNeil, Martin Braverman, Burton Goldstein. Middle Row L – R: Frances Kirkpatrick, Michael Wainwright, Debbie Payne, Bill Liang, Kevin Doyle, Maureen Kent. Front Row L – R: Sandra Bailey, Marke Pedersen, Peter Lobb, Heather Laing, Alan Lowe, Cia Harms. Missing: Dana Herberts.

Our Thanks to All Volunteers

With National Volunteer Week in April, spring is the perfect time to pay tribute to the more than 140 volunteers who give their time and expertise to the College and the dental community each year.

While we recognize a selection of volunteers each year at our awards ceremony held during the Pacific Dental Conference, we also want to acknowledge the support and dedication of those who, through their work on Council, Executive and our various committees and working groups, have contributed to making the College a leading health regulator.

To all of you... thank you for making a difference.



CDAs Actively Involved in College

CDAs have an active voice in the decision-making and policy setting processes of the College through the CDA Advisory Committee.

The College has made significant progress in meeting the goals identified by participants in the CDA Planning Workshop held last May. The aim of the workshop was to focus on ways to enhance and improve relations with certified dental assistants (CDAs).

Because of the College's mandate to regulate dentistry in order to protect the public, the workshop focused primarily on regulatory-related topics. Member service expectations – including those related to salary and employment issues, status in the workplace and other matters – were not discussed since they are the responsibility of the Certified Dental Assistants of BC.

The College is happy to report that, in less than a year, progress has been made in all areas, some of it quite substantial. A few highlights are:

- the addition of a second CDA position on the 18-member governing Council, which also includes public members and dentists
- promotion of CDA volunteerism resulting in nine new CDA appointments being made to College committees (in addition to 20 incumbent CDA volunteers), including an additional CDA position on the Quality Assurance Committee
- creation of a new CDA Licensure Subcommittee (proposed to be a regular standing committee in the draft Bylaws under the *Health Professions Act*)
- addition of the tagline *Regulating dentists and certified dental assistants in the public interest* to all printed and online materials
- active promotion of the role and position of CDAs whenever possible, including at the College Awards Ceremony, at external presentations and UBC student talks, in *Sentinel* stories and other printed materials
- creation of a formal process to ensure consistent answers to practice related questions from CDAs, and
- recent adoption of formal Practice Standards for CDAs and dentists (see full story in this issue of *The Sentinel*).



In addition to the above, CDAs have an active voice in the decision-making and policy setting processes of the College through the CDA Advisory Committee, which includes CDA members, a public member and the College President and Treasurer. The CDA Advisory Committee reports at every Council meeting and contributes fully to regulatory decisions based on CDA input.

The CDA Advisory Committee recently polled all participants in the May 2006 workshop about whether to schedule another one this spring or wait until the College has transitioned from the *Dentists Act* to the *Health Professions Act*. Based on participant feedback, the College has agreed to wait until we are regulated under HPA.

CDA Planning Workshop Indicators

The outcome of the workshop was a list of nine “indicators” as goals that would contribute to building a collaborative, cooperative, complementary and respectful relationship between the College and its CDA registrants. The nine indicators are:

- 1 more CDAs volunteering with the College from across the province
- 2 within a year, develop a list of three to five activities that demonstrate that CDAs are a key part of the College
- 3 increased awareness among dentists, dental students, CDAs and the public about the role and value of certified dental assistants
- 4 implementation of a regular satisfaction survey
- 5 annual progress updates on activities and actions, relative to the strategy of building a collaborative relationship
- 6 consistent internal responses to practice related questions
- 7 clarification of “scope of practice” and “list of duties” for CDAs
- 8 CDSBC endorsement, promotion and support, whenever and wherever possible, of employment of *certified* dental assistants, and
- 9 clearly understandable practice standards in place for all registrants.

College Creates New CDA Licensure Subcommittee

In keeping with the College’s goal of strengthening its relationship with certified dental assistants (CDAs), Council recently established a new subcommittee specifically to review applications from CDAs seeking re-instatement and re-registration.



CDA Licensure Subcommittee Chair, Elli Cox

The CDA Licensure Subcommittee includes four CDAs (one being the chair), one dentist (who is currently the immediate past chair of the College’s Registration Committee) and two public members.

While the subcommittee currently makes recommendations to the Registration Committee, the College has proposed that the subcommittee be established as a regular standing committee in the draft Bylaws under the *Health Professions Act*.

Subcommittee members:

Ms. Elli Cox, CDA (Chair)
 Mr. Victor Bowman, Public Member
 Ms. Bev Davis, CDA
 Ms. Frances Kirkpatrick, CDA
 Ms. Memi Lam, CDA
 Dr. Al Lieblich, Dentist
 Mr. Robbie Moore, Public Member

Health Professions Act Update

by Heather MacKay, Acting Registrar



The College is continuing to move towards designation under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA). Each regulatory College under the Act will have its own

bylaws. In addition, each profession designated under the HPA will have Regulations that set out the scope of practice and use of title for that profession.

On November 21, 2006, the Ministry of Health posted draft Regulations under the *Health Professions Act* for dentists, chiropractors, medical practitioners and pharmacists. These documents set out the proposed scope of practice for

each of these professions. A draft of the Regulation regarding the master list of reserved actions that are regulated under the *Health Professions Act* was also posted.

It is important to note that more than one profession may be granted the same reserved action so that two or more professions may have overlapping scopes of practice.

Draft Bylaws approved by the Council of the College of Dental Surgeons of BC in October 2006 were posted on December 20, 2006, by government so that dentists, certified dental assistants and any other interested parties could provide feedback as part of the public consultation process.

The 90-day public consultation period for dentists, CDAs and others to provide feedback on the proposed

Regulations ended on February 21, 2007. The 90-day consultation period for the proposed College Bylaws ended on March 20, 2007. Government will assimilate and consider the feedback received and will meet with the College to discuss potential revisions to the Bylaws if required. Once these discussions have taken place, the Regulations and Bylaws will be taken to Cabinet for approval and a date will be set for the College to be designated under the HPA.

We will keep you informed about the progress of this process and will be developing documents to assist all dentists and certified dental assistants with the transition when the time comes.

Streamlined Complaints Process Gets Results

The average time it takes to resolve a complaint has decreased from eight months to six months.

The College's purpose, as stated in its mission statement, is to assure British Columbians of professional standards of oral health care, ethics and competence by regulating dentistry in a fair and reasonable manner.

One of the ways we achieve this is through the complaints process. The process was streamlined in 2003 in an attempt to better serve the needs of the public and maintain a fair process for the registrants involved.

The number of telephone calls handled by the complaints team dropped significantly over the last two years.

Written complaints, on the other hand, have increased from 121 in 2005/06 to 167 in 2006/07.

The average time it takes to resolve a complaint has decreased from eight months to six months, with many complaints being resolved in as little as two to three months. This has effectively eliminated the backlog of complaints waiting for evaluation by a Deputy Registrar. Also, the number of open, unresolved complaints decreased to 75 as of March 1, 2007, from 101 in March 2006 and 109 in March 2005.

The types of written complaints received remains steady. The most common treatment issues are:

- fixed prosthodontic treatment
- diagnosis and treatment planning
- odontogenic surgery
- operative dental treatment, and
- endodontic treatment.

The most common “non-treatment” issues mentioned by complainants are:

- patient relations
- billing, and
- informed consent.

The source of complaints has not changed. More than 80 per cent of complaints are from patients or their family members. About eight per cent of complaints are received from dentists or dental office staff. The remainder come from insurance companies, pharmacists and, occasionally, the Ministry of the Attorney General when a dentist is the subject of a criminal charge.

Approximately 80 per cent of complaints the College investigates turn out to be unsubstantiated, meaning there was no evidence found that corroborated a complainant’s allegations or that after investigation, no further action was required to protect the public. The rest of the complaints were resolved using various methods of alternative dispute resolution, which can include the Deputy Registrar or a review committee working with the dentist or CDA to reach a suitable agreement to address the College’s concerns and protect the public.

We continue to make every effort to streamline the complaints process and deal with complaints more efficiently.



College employee profile

Debbie Minton

“Good morning, reception, how may I help you?” asks the voice of our professional and dynamic receptionist, Ms. Debbie Minton.

Debbie joined the College team in November 2005 after gaining experience in the fast-paced offices of a variety of businesses in downtown Vancouver.

Her vibrant, upbeat disposition makes her perfect for greeting and helping our registrants and the public, either on the phone or in person.

“I enjoy my role at the College because I assist people by getting them the information they need. It is such a rewarding, tight-knit organization and I just love working with my colleagues,” says Debbie.

Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Debbie grew up in Tsawwassen, where she also raised her daughter, Melissa.

Debbie enjoys being outside, whether it’s for gardening, camping or just walking on the beach. With such passion for the great outdoors, it is no wonder that she also loves riding her motorcycle with the wind in her face. She says her most memorable trip was to Sturgis, South Dakota: “Riding through the Badlands of South Dakota was a dream come true for me.”

“I enjoy my role at the College because I assist people by getting them the information they need. It is such a rewarding, tight-knit organization and I just love working with my colleagues.”

Debbie is a multi-skilled team player whom we can count on at all times to carry out her responsibilities with a smile, efficiency and a totally professional attitude. We’re very grateful that she is part of our team.

Council Highlights > February 23, 2007

College Finances

The Treasurer, Dr. Bill McNiece, reported that as the College nears the end of its fiscal year on February 28, 2007, it is meeting its budget objectives with the prospect of a substantial surplus. This surplus is due in part to an increase in the number of registrants and a reduction in the amount of legal bills and committee expenses. Legal bills can be difficult to estimate year to year in that they are largely based on the number of legal actions in which the College is involved.

Dr. McNiece read a letter from Dr. Wayne Halstrom, President of the Canadian Dental Association, congratulating the College on the sound management of its financial affairs including the reduction in annual licence fees.

Contingency Reserve Fund

Council placed an additional \$500,000 in the contingency reserve fund.

Quality Assurance: Definitions and Standards of Practice

Dr. David Tobias, Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee, presented definitions for Standards of Practice and Clinical Practice Guidelines in support of the committee's recommendation that the College adopt a group of five practice standards as a component of its Quality Assurance program.

Definitions

- **Standards of Practice** – Standards of Practice statements provide dentists, certified dental assistants

and the public with a framework of expectations and responsibilities for dentists and certified dental assistants to carry out the safe and ethical practice of dentistry.

- **Clinical Practice Guidelines** – Clinical Practice Guidelines provide direction for dentists and CDAs in how to meet the professional standards in specific situations. They are developed by and for practitioners and are designed to enhance, not replace, clinical judgement and expertise. Guidelines are meant to describe best practices but are not meant to be rigid or definitive in all situations.

Standards of Practice

The Standards of Practice describe the responsibilities of dentists and certified dental assistants in providing dental care to the public in British Columbia and cover the following broad principles:

1. Patient-Centred Dental Care
2. Unique Body of Knowledge
3. Competent Application of Knowledge
4. Professional Ethics
5. Professional Responsibility and Accountability

Both the definitions and the Standards of Practice were approved by Council.

Changes to Maximum CE Credits

On the recommendation of the Quality Assurance Committee, Council approved changes to the maximum allowable credits in the following areas commencing January 1, 2008:

- A. Dental Practice Management – to 30 credits from 54 for dentists, and to 18 credits from 22 for CDAs
- B. Non-Clinical Dental – to 15 credits from 20 for dentists, and unchanged for CDAs to a maximum of 12 credits

CDA Advisory Committee Report

Ms. Kathy Boyd, Chair, reported that the CDA Planning Workshop originally scheduled for Saturday, March 31, 2007, has been postponed. The decision to wait until after the College is designated under the *Health Professions Act* was made by the Committee based on feedback it obtained from participants in last year's workshop.

The CDA Council Member Selection Working Group will meet in early March 2007 to shortlist the applications received for a second CDA Council member.

Health Professions Act

Ms. Heather MacKay, Deputy Registrar, updated Council on the proposed College Bylaws. These Bylaws are currently posted on the Ministry and College websites for comment by the profession and others until March 20, 2007.

Internationally Trained Dental Specialists

Dr. Peter Stevenson-Moore updated Council on the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation meeting held in Toronto from February 16 to 18, 2007. This meeting was held



Standards of Practice for Dentists and Certified Dental Assistants in British Columbia

The following standards describe the responsibilities of dentists and certified dental assistants (CDAs) in providing dental care to the public in B.C.

1 Patient-Centred Dental Care

- Put the interests of patients before the interests of the dentist or CDA in providing safe, professional, quality patient care.
- “Do no Harm”.
- Respect the patient’s right to confidentiality.
- Respect the patient’s right and ability to make informed choices regarding dental care.

2 Unique Body of Knowledge

- Base dental practice on a unique, scientifically based body of knowledge and expertise.
- Practise according to evidence-based and peer-supported principles.

3 Competent Application of Knowledge

- Competently apply knowledge in assessing, treating and managing the care of the patient.

- Assess outcomes of care provided where possible.
- Maintain competence by undertaking continuous learning and professional development.

4 Professional Ethics

- Practise in accordance with the ethical guidelines for the profession.

5 Professional Responsibility and Accountability

- Maintain accountability in the public interest.
- Ensure that practice meets the legislative requirements and professional standards of the profession.
- Assume primary responsibility for maintaining own competence and fitness to practise.

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Council Highlights

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to develop a process and protocols for the registration of internationally trained dental specialists, including agreements on competency assessment and gap training.

All national regulatory authorities accepted the proposal presented by B.C. and signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Council is grateful to Dean Yen and the Faculty of Dentistry at UBC for their commitment to develop and manage a national process to register internationally trained dental specialists.

Council unanimously voted to commit \$280,000, based on \$100 per licensed dentist, to develop the national process. Funds for this initiative will be drawn from the budget surplus. The other dental regulatory authorities are being asked to make similar contributions to fund development of the national process.

Registration Committee

Mr. Victor Bowman was appointed as a public member of the Registration Committee.

Pacific Dental Conference

Ms. Margot White, Director of Communications, briefed Council on College activities during the upcoming Pacific Dental Conference, which will include the Awards Ceremony and course presentation titled *Tough Patient Situations – What Would You Do?* All Council members were encouraged to attend.

Registrar

Council met in-camera and accepted Ms. Heather Laing's resignation to pursue career opportunities elsewhere. She will use her accumulated vacation prior to the effective date of her resignation on March 31, 2007.

Council appointed Ms. Heather MacKay, Deputy Registrar, as Acting Registrar effective February 26, 2007, until the College completes an executive search for a new Registrar and CEO.

Resignations

Dr. David Prokopetz has retired from active dental practice and has therefore resigned from Council and all College committees. Council appointed Dr. Bill McNiece to serve as liaison for the Southern Interior electoral district for the remainder of the Council year.

Council presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. Prokopetz for his service as a member of Council and for his committee contributions, including Quality Assurance.

Ms. Christine Elliott, public member, resigned from Council and was not present at the meeting.

Regulating dentists and certified dental assistants in the public interest.

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policies and guidelines.