



the Sentinel

A Newsletter of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia

this issue

- 2 Your College – Be Part of the Evolution
- 3 Upholding Dentistry's Code of Ethics
It's Licence Renewal Time
- 4 Improving Access for Internationally Trained Dentists to Practise in B.C.
- 5 The College and CDAs
Employee Profile: Dianna Edwards
- 6 Council Highlights
- 7 Dr. Patricia Hunter, New Deputy Registrar
- 8 In Case of Emergency

The College is Calling

Actually, if we receive a complaint about you, the College will be writing to you.

The first thing we do when we receive a complaint about a dentist or CDA is ask for your side of the story. We usually send this request within three days of receiving a written complaint. We send you a copy of the complainant's letter and any other documents they have sent us so that you will know what has been said and can decide what information will help the College determine what happened. We ask you to reply in writing within 30 days.

After we receive your response, a Deputy Registrar reviews everything that has been received and determines if more information will be needed to sort out the concerns identified from the complaint. If you have not already sent them, the College may ask you for relevant clinical records, which may include charts, radiographs, models and/or billing records, depending upon the individual concern. When such records are relevant to the investigation, sending them with an initial response can save time and help resolve the complaint more quickly. We may also ask for information from other dentists who

have seen the patient before or after the treatment in question if such information would help explain what happened. The Deputy Registrar may also ask to meet with you, the complainant, or others to obtain more information.

Once sufficient information is received, a Deputy Registrar reviews the file again and decides on the next step, which can include:

- taking no further action,
- attempting to resolve the complaint informally or referring it to mediation, or
- referring the complaint to one of two committees: the Practice Standards Committee or the Professional Conduct Committee.

continued on page 3



Your College – Be Part of the Evolution!



President's Report

Dr. Dan Stoneman

**We can make
the ordinary acts
of dentistry
extraordinary
to the public.**

To paraphrase a sentiment that I believe is attributable to Winston Churchill, the public's measure of a profession resides not in the extraordinary acts of its leaders, but in the ordinary acts of its members done extraordinarily. What Churchill so eloquently observed was simply that the public's perception of dentistry is YOU.

In recognizing this simple truth, College officers and staff strive to create not only an accountable regulatory environment but also a nurturing one; an environment free of fear and intimidation, where the primary approach to regulation is to assist professionals to meet standards of conduct and care. Working together, in this atmosphere, we can make the ordinary acts of dentistry extraordinary to the public.

How does the College create such an environment? Once again the answer is YOU—with your help.

Last year the College established a separate Appointments Committee. The role of this committee is to oversee appointments to all College committees. The broad principles of diversity, experience and turnover are applied to each College committee. All interested volunteers who meet the requirements of a specific committee are placed "in a hat" and drawn at random. We feel this new approach will ensure committee turnover, bring fresh participation and reflect the broad diversity of an evolving profession.

It is often said there are only three imperatives in real estate: location, location, location. In professional regulation, it can likewise be said there are only three imperatives: process, process, process.

In recognition of our volunteers, and so that registrants may become acquainted with process, the College is holding an awareness session in March at the Pacific Dental Conference. The course is titled *It's Your College – Be Part of the Evolution!* This interactive session will be an opportunity for registrants to learn about the College from the inside out—how it functions and how you can become involved in the regulation of our profession. Guest speakers, including College volunteers and notable lawyer Murray Rankin, will contribute to what promises to be an engaging afternoon. I would like to personally invite you to attend to learn more about the valuable role we all have to play in making sure that British Columbians are assured of the highest professional standards of dental care.

Hope to see you there.

Upholding Dentistry's Code of Ethics

Like most professions, dentistry has a code of ethics that outlines principles and standards to help members fulfill their duties to their patients, their colleagues, the public and the profession.



Ash Varma, Chair of the College's Ethics Committee

"Dentists hold a position of trust in society," says Dr. Ash Varma, Chair of the College's Ethics Committee.

"The commitment of every dentist to upstanding ethical conduct is essential to our ability to maintain that trust. Taking it a step further, adherence to a code of ethics, combined with education and training, is integral to our continued ability to self-regulate the practice of dentistry."

The College's Ethics Committee functions to guide Council as well as College registrants with respect to the application of those sections of the *Dentists Act*, and Rules under that act, that relate to promotions, advertising and professional conduct and behaviour.

The Committee must be alert to the changing characteristics of dental practices and make recommendations to Council to ensure that ethics-related guidelines reflect these. The Committee must also be aware of changing attitudes toward advertising and promotion and make recommendations to Council accordingly.

"Some of the significant changes we've seen during the past five years include the extent to which dentists use the Internet as a marketing tool, as well as a change in advertising emphasis from promoting dentistry as a service to a focus on the products used by dental offices."

Another important role of the Committee is to review advertising material that has been submitted by members of the profession or the public to ensure the

material is not considered to be false, misleading, deceptive or comparative.

"We all likely read the Code of Ethics and Promotional Activities rules when we received our *BC Dental Manual*. I encourage members to review these every year," suggests Ash.

Guidelines for Promotional Activity, as well as Articles 5 and 15 of the Rules under the *Dentists Act*, are posted at www.cdsbc.org.

Ethics Committee Members

Dr. Ashok Varma, Chair
Ms. Bethan Everett, public member
Dr. Rick Hallett, dentist member
Dr. Daniel How, dentist member
Dr. Graham Matheson, dental specialist member
Mr. Bill Phillips, public member
Dr. Mel Sawyer, dentist member
Dr. Elisa Yu, dentist member

continued from Front Cover

Only the Professional Conduct Committee, not the Registrar or a Deputy Registrar, can decide that a registrant under review should appear before an Inquiry Panel.

With approximately 80 per cent of complaints, the Deputy Registrar determines, after an investigation, that it is appropriate to "take no further action" and closes the file. You and the complainant will receive a letter advising of this conclusion. In the next issue of *The Sentinel*, we will report on what happens to the 20 per cent of files that cannot be closed at this stage.

Visit our website for more information at www.cdsbc.org.



It's Licence Renewal Time

Renewal forms due 4 p.m., March 1, 2005

Q: How can I save money?

Avoid late penalty fees by paying on or before March 1. If your payment was late in 2004 and is late again this year, the penalty will double. Late fees range from \$150 to \$450 for dentists and from \$30 to \$60 for CDAs, depending on how late your renewal is.

Avoid NSF fees by making sure there are sufficient funds in your account. Your licence will be recalled and cancelled until replacement payment, the late payment penalty fee and the NSF fee have been received.

Q: What if I haven't received my renewal form?

Please contact the College to make sure we have your current mailing address. Registrants may not practise after March 1 without having paid a practising licence fee.

Q: How can I pay?

You can pay by cheque (post-dated March 1), money order, bank draft and

cash. CDAs may also pay with VISA or MasterCard. U.S. funds are not accepted.

Q: What else do I need to do?

Make sure your continuing education credits earned up to December 31, 2004, have been received if your cycle ended on that date, or you will not be eligible for re-licensure. Dentists must indicate on the renewal form that they are insured by CDSPI, or they must provide a copy of their certificate of insurance from another carrier.

Q: What about transferring from non-practising to practising licences?

Ensure you complete and return the *Application for Licence* form with your payment. Holders of a special non-practising licence for disabled dentists who wish to renew their practising licence must include a letter from their physician with their payment, confirming resolution of the disability.

Improving Access for Internationally Trained Dentists to Practise in B.C.



Registrar's Report

Heather Laing

Our focus is on developing solutions that will work in the interests of the public while setting and maintaining the standards required of dentists to practise competently and ethically in B.C.

Governments and private industry agree that a well-educated and skilled workforce is a key requirement for economic growth in the 21st century. Statistics Canada reports a growing reliance on immigration as a source of skills and knowledge, including the fact that immigrants represented about 70 per cent of total labour force growth during the past decade and are expected to account for virtually all net labour force growth by 2011.

As a result of these and other issues, federal and provincial governments are encouraging regulatory bodies to take a proactive role in helping manage the introduction of internationally trained professionals into the Canadian workforce. Governments are interested in removing barriers to education and improving access to professional practice for qualified individuals from international locations.

What does this mean for the College of Dental Surgeons? The bottom line is that this is a significant issue that we must take proactive measures to address before government addresses

it for us. The College's concerns must be focused on developing solutions that will work in the interests of the public while also setting and maintaining standards that are required of dentists to practise competently and ethically in British Columbia.

It is important, too, that we facilitate access for internationally trained dentists who are as competent as those who are already licensed by the College. We need to ensure that, regardless of where they are trained, those dentists who meet the appropriate practice standards and educational requirements are provided with access to licensure in B.C.

There are two core elements that must be considered with respect to licensing internationally trained dentists in Canada. The first has to do with how regulatory bodies formally recognize the credentials (education and training) of individuals who have been trained at non-accredited schools of dentistry. The second relates to analysis of competencies and the provision of additional training and education requirements that may be necessary to meet the standards of practice in British Columbia.

During the coming months, the College will be meeting with groups that have an interest in this topic, including representatives from governments, academia, dentistry specialist groups, and others. We will also be reviewing the key learnings of other jurisdictions that have developed programs to integrate internationally trained professionals into their workforce. It is our intent to develop a comprehensive approach that will guide the appropriate regulation of internationally trained dentists who are interested in being licensed to practise in B.C.

The College and CDAs

The College is frequently asked about how it regulates certified dental assistants (CDAs) and has developed the following overview in consultation with Ms. Betty Larsen, the College's Director of Operations and CDA Affairs.

Betty explains that the regulatory colleges for health professions in B.C. provide a framework to help ensure consistent, high quality patient care across the province. To accomplish this goal in the context of certified dental assisting, the College:

- **regulates registrants based on the *Dentists Act and Rules*** so that everyone knows the standards in a dental office and how CDAs fit into that picture,
- **manages complaints** so the public can have confidence in all dental office staff,
- **handles annual CDA and dentist licensing,**
- **coordinates regulation of mandatory continuing education,** helping every CDA and dentist to remain current, and
- **coordinates assessments and conducts CDA examinations** each spring and fall to ensure that applicants are able to meet required practice standards.

The College also:

- **links with agencies** that are relevant to certified dental assistants such as community colleges, CDABC, BCDA, CDAA and NDAEB,
- **liaises with government** on important issues such as the *Health Professions Act*, and
- **involves CDAs on committees** that are the key to the functioning of the College and vital to the effective regulation of dentistry.

"Having regulated standards for all dental offices has a real impact on certified dental assistants at work," says Betty. For example, the College provides CDAs with:

- **a definition** of the duties they are expected to do in a dental office,
- **structure** to fall back on in times of confusion about who does what, and
- **confidence** in the quality of dentistry in the province, so they can change employers, knowing that the standards (and the Rules) are the same wherever they work.

Betty explains, however, that the College does not become involved in activities outside its regulatory mandate, like employment issues. There are other organizations that provide personal, financial, legal, and employment or workplace related support.



In conclusion, the College of Dental Surgeons does its best job for CDAs and dentists by sticking exclusively to what it has been mandated to do by government – to keep the standards of dentistry high in the province of B.C.



College employee profile

Dianna Edwards

Dianna Edwards joined the College in 1997. Previously, she had worked for insurance-related companies, including group insurers as well as individual insurers. She was also employed by a large manufacturing conglomerate for many years.

As a complaint assistant, Dianna receives the initial complaints from members of the public and fields queries from dental offices. She answers any specific questions they may have. Throughout the day, Dianna can be heard patiently answering questions pertaining to the Rules under the *Dentists Act*, and this is often sufficient to resolve a misunderstanding. Her position requires that she be attuned to sensitive issues and have a thorough understanding of the complaint process so she can advise individuals appropriately. Many times, it is a matter of explaining to members of the public how the College can assist them. If a complaint is pursued, then Dianna advises the complainant that all complaints must be received in writing.

In addition to receiving many telephone calls a day, Dianna performs administrative duties for the Deputy Registrars and Complaint Officers.

Dianna has a friendly, easy-going and calm nature and gets along well with the College staff. Of her colleagues, she says how much she enjoys "the outgoing companionship of the employees at the College who are hard-working and committed to doing an excellent job."

In her personal life, Dianna is very involved with her two grandchildren, eight and 12 years old. In the summer, she enjoys being outdoors and keeps busy gardening while during the winter, one can find her curled up with a good book or watching a favourite TV program.

Thanks for being part of our team, Dianna.

Council Highlights > December 10, 2004

Budget & Finances

Council approved a balanced budget for 2005-2006. More information will be provided in the Treasurer's Annual Report to be mailed to all registrants in January 2005 and posted on www.cdsbc.org. The third-quarter financial statements continue to project a surplus for this fiscal year. Legal expenses and ongoing litigation are expected to impact the actual financial outcome. Council directed that any surplus at the end of the fiscal year will be applied to pay down the College's demand loan for College Place.

Licence Fees

Council approved licence fees of \$2,595 for dentists and \$218 for certified dental assistants, which must be paid by March 1, 2005.

Pacific Dental Conference

Council approved transfer of the ownership of the Pacific Dental Conference (PDC) to the British Columbia Dental Association (BCDA) effective March 1, 2005, honouring the 1997 recommendation of the Task Force for the Future Structure of Organized Dentistry in B.C. The BCDA agreed its active members will continue to be able to register for the PDC by the "early bird" date without cost. It is understood that future excesses of revenues over expenses of the PDC will be used to reduce the annual licence fee for active members of the BCDA.

Dental Clinic at College Place

Council directed the Elected Officers to seek alternatives for the ownership of the Dental Clinic at College Place with the understanding that, with consultation with all stakeholders, the College should cease operation and ownership

of the Clinic by June 2006. Council established a working group to consult all stakeholders on ownership, operation and all future directions of the Clinic, and appointed the following to the working group: Dr. Susan Chow (chair), Ms. Betty Larsen, Dr. Alan Lowe, Dr. Ed O'Brien or designate, and Dr. Margaret Webb or designate. Ms. Jane Faulafer will be the staff person.

Complaints

The quarterly Complaints Team Report indicated that on November 30 the College was investigating 108 complaints. It was noted that the College has a policy of answering telephone calls within 24 hours and in practice, the majority of telephone calls are answered within two hours. Callers are told that formal complaints must be in writing and signed. On November 6, the College provided a one-day training program for members of the Practice Standards and Professional Conduct Committees. On November 22, Mr. David B. Wende, counsel to the Inquiry Committee, provided an evening training session for all members of the Inquiry Committee.

Registration and Licensing

The quarterly report from the Registration and Licensing Team indicated the team received 8,907 phone calls between March 1 and November 30. Staff processed 103 applications from dentists and 308 applications from certified dental assistants. Eighty-eight dentists and 173 certified dental assistants paid late penalties. Staff responded to 38 formal inquiries for licensure from dentists who graduated from non-accredited schools (internationally trained dentists). Twenty-five internationally trained dentists and 31 out-of-province certified dental assistants enquired about having

their qualifications assessed to sit the CDA Board Examination. Ninety-nine certified dental assistants applied for and received the Orthodontic Module designation and 17 applied for and received the Prosthodontic Module designation.

CDA Examinations

Results from the CDA Examinations conducted by the College indicated that of the 24 candidates who sat for clinical examination, 21 were successful. Of the 11 candidates who wrote the theoretical examination, nine were successful. No appeals were filed.

Internationally Trained Dentists

Dr. Lowe briefed Council on meetings held in Montreal in October and in Ottawa in November 2004 about internationally trained dentists. Facilitating access to licensure of internationally trained dentists who are as competent as those already licensed by CDSBC will be studied and discussed in the coming months with interested individuals and groups. Discussions will include input from the Registration Committee before Council considers any policy decisions.

Annual General Meeting

The next Annual General Meeting will be held May 13 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Vancouver Airport Marriott Hotel in Richmond. The Audited Financial Statements for the year ended February 29, 2004, and the year ending February 28, 2005, will be presented to the membership at that time.

Council Size

Council passed a motion to maintain a Council of 21 members until such time as the profession is designated under the *Health Professions Act*.

Election 2005

Election date was set for May 26, 2005, with close of nominations on March 31, 2005. All positions will be for a one-year term.

CDA Member on Council

With the resignation of Ms. Janice van Veen, Ms. Kathy Boyd was appointed the sole CDA Council member for the remainder of the 2004–2005 Council year.

Working Group on Certified Dental Assistants

Ms. Boyd provided a progress report on the activities of the Working Group on CDAs. The following recommendations were approved by Council: a CDA Council Member Election Working Group will be formed to make recommendations on a process to move from an appointed to an elected CDA Council member; a CDA Bylaws Working Group will be established to draft bylaws for the transition from the current Rules to HPA bylaws and to incorporate any proposed and/or desired changes to the Rules made under the *Dentists Act*; and a CDA Advisory Committee will be created to address CDA regulatory issues, receive information, monitor and provide updates to Council on matters relating to CDAs.

Prosthodontic Module

Council rescinded the motion made June 18, 2002, requiring a syllabus for fabrication of a single unit provisional restoration. Council recognized that the Prosthodontic Module is accepted as the reference for the construction of single unit provisional restorations under Article 10.17 (u) of the Rules made under the *Dentists Act*.

Orthodontic Module

Council accepted the recommendations of the BC Society of Orthodontists to update the Orthodontic Module with full consultation of all parties involved.

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee conferred awards—to be presented at the Awards Reception on March 10 at the PDC—to the following individuals.

Honoured Member Award

Dr. Neil Basaraba
Dr. Ted Ramage (presentation postponed from March 2004)

Distinguished Service Award

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

Certificate of Merit

Ms. Margaret Dennett
Ms. Rosie Friesen
Dr. John Garforth
Dr. Rick Hallett
Dr. Peter Kearney
Dr. Eric Kjekstad
Dr. Ron Komm
Dr. Ken Neuman
Dr. John Nasedkin
Dr. Ed Penner
Dr. Bud Sipko

Certificate of Appreciation

Ms. Patti Schom-Moffatt
(Principal, Karyo Communications)
Mr. Neal Russell
(President, Protec Dental Laboratories)

Dr. Patricia Hunter, New Deputy Registrar

The College is pleased to welcome Dr. Patricia Hunter as part time Deputy Registrar. Her qualifications and work experience are both extensive and impressive.

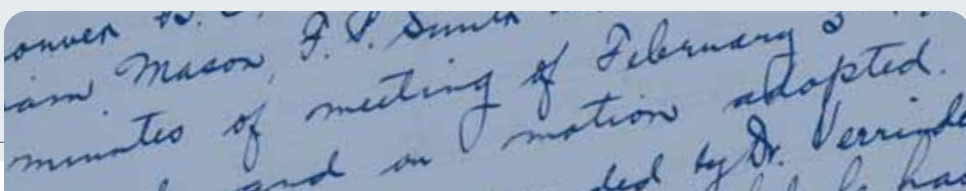


Patricia started her career as a dental hygienist and after practising several years in that field, decided to pursue further challenges by entering the Faculty of Dentistry at UBC. She graduated in 1983 with the gold medal and several other awards for outstanding academic and clinical achievements.

Following graduation, Patricia traveled to Tumbler Ridge where she spent a year practising her new skills as the town's only dentist. She then associated in New Brunswick for two years before returning to the Lower Mainland and opening her own dental office in Richmond.

In addition to a full time practice, Patricia has dedicated her time and energy to dentistry by serving as clinical instructor for the Oral Medicine and Periodontics Departments at UBC from 1986 to 1991, and as an examiner for the B.C. Dental Board Exams from 1994 to 1997. She then served as examiner for the National Dental Examining Board (NDEB) from 1997 to 2002 and was asked in 2002 to be the B.C. representative to the NDEB.

Patricia's years of experience in her solo practice have contributed to her acquired skills of team-building, organizational abilities, flexibility and dispute resolution, all qualities which will serve her well in her role at the College.





In Case of Emergency...

Recently, several concerns regarding emergency coverage have been brought to the attention of the College. Following are just a few examples.

- A dentist on call for a group practice turned off his cell phone and did not check messages for several hours. A patient requiring emergency treatment received a return call more than eight hours after leaving a message.
- On a weekend, a patient with a painful broken tooth called several practices, including some that were open or advertised 24-hour service in the telephone directory. They were told by several practices that they provided emergency services only to their own patients or that they were fully booked until Monday.
- A patient in a rural area had a “terrible toothache” on a Friday evening. Her dentist’s answering machine said the office was closed for five days and provided other contact numbers for the dentist. The patient left messages at her dentist’s home and on his cell phone. The local hospital emergency department could only provide stronger pain medication and recommended she go to a dentist in a town 100 kilometres away. The patient was only able to obtain treatment on Monday morning when she burst into tears in another dentist’s office. The patient later learned her regular dentist was away on holidays.

One of these cases received coverage in a local newspaper, which reflects poorly on the profession as a whole.

The College’s Code of Ethics makes it clear that dentists must provide emergency dental treatment to *any* member of the public or make arrangements for coverage.

Members are reminded that they have an obligation and a responsibility to render emergency treatment to any person, regardless if they are a patient of record, and irrespective of the practice policy of not accepting new patients. Note that emergency care must be rendered regardless of a person’s ability to pay.

When you are away, you or a colleague should be available by phone at all times, or able to respond to messages or pages promptly. You should not rely on hospital emergency rooms to provide emergency dental care, as most no longer have a dentist on call.

Remember to update your office, home and cell phone answering devices to reflect your arrangements for dealing with emergencies.

Patients should never “fall through the cracks” of emergency coverage.

The Code of Ethics states:

Dental emergencies. Members have an obligation to consult with and **provide dental emergency treatment to any member of the public**, or, if they are unavailable, to make alternative arrangements. Members with unlisted residential telephone numbers, or who will be otherwise unavailable, must make reasonable alternative arrangements to ensure that a person requiring emergency dental treatment will be able to consult with another member. **A dental emergency exists if a person needs immediate attention to relieve pain or control infection or bleeding, or if a person’s health or well-being is otherwise immediately jeopardized.** Where a member consults with or treats a patient of another member, the patient and that other member must be informed of any conditions found or treated. (emphasis added)

- Article 5.07(b) of the Rules made under the *Dentists Act*

The Sentinel is published by the:

**College of Dental Surgeons
of British Columbia**

Suite 500–1765 West 8th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V6J 5C6

Tel: 604 736-3621
800 663-9169

Fax: 604 734-9448
866 734-9448

Email: postmaster@cdsbc.org

www.cdsbc.org

Contributors: Paula Bohan,
Karen England, Doris Gagne,
Betty Larsen

Readers’ questions, comments
and content suggestions for the
Sentinel are welcome and may
be forwarded to the Editor, c/o
the College.

Copyright ©2005
College of Dental Surgeons
of British Columbia.
All rights reserved.

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.