



Royal College of
Dental Surgeons of Ontario

Ensuring Continued Trust

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

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TO: ALL RCDSO MEMBERS

Council Meeting - May 10, 2007

This publication is mailed within four working days of each Council meeting to all College members and key stakeholders. At the same time it is posted on our website at www.rcdso.org. We welcome your feedback. If you have questions about any of these items, please contact RCDSO Registrar Irwin Fefergrad by phone at 416-934-5625, toll-free at 1-800-565-4591, or by e-mail at ifefergrad@rcdso.org.

New Practice Advisory on Informed Consent Issues

In response to the significant numbers of inquiries that College staff receive about consent issues around the treatment of minors, Council has approved a new Practice Advisory to replace the existing Guidelines on Communicating with a Patient Incapable of Providing Consent. The new advisory will be similar to the previous guidelines plus contain additional information on gaining informed consent to treatment from minors. This new practice advisory will be distributed with the summer issue of Dispatch magazine in mid-August.

Revised Practice Advisory on the Release and Transfer of Patient Records.

In response to membership feedback, the existing advisory has been amended to allow members to consider charging a fee to cover expenses for providing duplicates of a patient's records.

Audited Financial Statements

Council approved both the RCDSO and the RCDSO Pension Plan audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2006. These statements will be circulated to members in an abbreviated version of the 2006 annual report inserted in the summer issue of Dispatch.

Appointment of Auditors

Council approved the appointment of Deloitte & Touche LLP as auditors for year 2007.

NDEB Representative

Council approved the appointment of Dr. Cameron Witmer as the College's representative to the National Dental Examining Board of Canada, effective January 1, 2007.

Drug Interaction Program

In 2005, the drug interaction program became available as a member service from our website. Council agreed that this is a valuable service to both members and their patients and renewed the service.

Northern Ontario Dental Association (NODA) Grants

Council has authorized the payment of the \$500 grant to each of the societies in NODA and has asked the Quality Assurance Committee for a recommendation about the continuation of these grants to support speakers for society meetings in light of the now expanded education initiatives from the College.

Health Profession Corporations

The College has agreed to support wholeheartedly the initiative lead by the Ontario Dental Association to urge the government to allow trusts and holding companies to be non-voting shareholders, and to support the removal of joint and several liability between the voting and non-voting shareholders.

Council also agreed to have the HPC renewal fee discounted by \$25 for those members whose annual renewal form and fee are received on or before July 31.

ODA/RCDSO Idea Forum (ORIF) Working Group

The two organizations have joined together to form a working group with a mandate to generate ideas to expand collaboration between the two organizations and to discuss issues of joint concern. The group will meet about four times a year. RCDSO representatives are: Council members Parm Chahal, Dr. John Kalbfleisch, Dr. Elizabeth McSween, Dr. Peter Trainor and Registrar Irwin Fefergrad. The ongoing meetings between presidents and the registrar/CEO will continue as usual.

Items discussed at the first meeting at the end of March included opportunities to promote the importance of professionalism in dentistry; support to dentists to deal with problems like depression, stress, and addiction; and joint ventures in continuing education. Since that initial meeting, there have been several staff-to-staff meetings to look at ways that the College can support ODA in membership issues, such as the recruitment of new members.

Changes in Council Elections

The Elections Committee presented a number of proposed by-law changes in the process and eligibility requirements for Council elections, including a reduction of the cooling-off period from three years to two years before a member lets his or her name stand for election or random selection to committees after having served as a director or other member of a governing council, governing body of a national or provincial dental or specialty organization. Now that these changes have been approved in principle by Council they will be sent to the Legal and Legislation Committee for drafting and then they will return to Council in November.

Protocol for Registration of Internationally Trained Specialists from Non-Accredited Universities

On Thursday, May 10, Council took a significant step forward in taking charge of the destiny of dentistry. The College Council dealt with one of the most politically sensitive issues facing the profession in the last few years: the integration of internationally trained professionals into the workforce.

In a unanimous vote, Council put our College in the forefront of regulated professions in this province, and indeed across Canada, by passing a regulation that supports a registration process for internationally trained specialists from non-accredited universities.

Issue Background

The provincial government has made breaking down barriers and helping internationally trained professionals to put their global experience to work in their field of expertise an issue of the highest priority. All political parties have been pushing loudly and publicly for concrete solutions and those same demands for action echo across the country.

In Ontario, that pressure culminated in March with the enactment of FARPA – the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act – into law. The watchwords of this Act are transparent, objective, impartial, fair and expeditious.

This is a pretty serious piece of legislation. The bill places a number of requirements on us as a regulator.

The Act provides for a Fairness Commissioner to oversee and audit how regulators do their job. There are penalties up to \$100,000 for an organization that fails to comply with an order from the Fairness Commissioner.

As a regulatory college, we even have to ensure that the procedures and practices of any third party that we deal with on registration meet the requirements of the legislation.

And most importantly, the Commissioner has the right to issue compliance orders to regulatory bodies that do not meet the requirements of the legislation.

Government wasted no time in appointing a Commissioner, and by the end of March, Jean Augustine had started work as the first-ever Fairness Commissioner in Ontario.

Thankfully the College was ready. Early on Council had wisely assessed the urgency of taking a leadership role in this issue.

That is why the College worked closely with fellow regulators in the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation (CDRAF), and with colleagues at the Canadian Dental Association, the National Dental Examining Board, the Royal College of Dentists of Canada, and the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry. In February, these ongoing discussions culminated with the College hosting a national summit of the CDRAF members and representatives of all these organizations here in Toronto.

After three intensive days there was unanimous support for the outline of a protocol for a nationwide program for the certification and registration of internationally trained specialists from non-accredited programs.

As this issue has unfolded over the past three to four years, members were kept in the loop all along the way.

In Dispatch, there have been no less than 14 major stories on the subject since September 2003. There were big bold headlines like: “Dental regulators work on fair national approach to thorny issue of access of foreign-trained dentists to job market.”

Council Highlights too had headings like “Specialist Applications from Non-Accredited Programs” as far back as 2003.

Over this same time period, the public and media pressure has been unrelenting. In the Toronto Star and The Globe alone, there have been over 70 major stories and editorials with headlines like:

- Ottawa throws door open to immigrants
- Doctors within borders, without jobs
- Immigrants upset over credentialing process
- Ottawa putting millions into Ontario immigration
- Fairness Commissioner will keep faith with newcomers.

The College’s action plan culminated in mid-March of this year with a special meeting of Council. At that time Council unanimously endorsed, in principle, the regulation that gives support to the protocol for internationally trained specialists from non-accredited programs.

Since that important February Summit, the momentum has just continued to build on the initial support of RCDC, NDEB, CDA, ODA, and the regulators across the country.

More and more universities are on board as a wave of acceptance ripples from the west coast towards the east coast. Now the University of British Columbia, the University of Manitoba, the University of Montreal, the University of Laval, McGill University, the University of Toronto, and the University of Western Ontario are all in agreement with the protocol and its general principles.

How Will It Work?

The credentialing will be done by the people who are the most adept at doing it, as delegated by CDRAF; for example, NDEB or the dental schools with the assistance of the department heads in that specialty. The Canadian Commission on Dental Accreditation has been involved in assisting the development of the credentialing process.

If the credentialing establishes that the applicant has gone through a program that is more or less equivalent to the accredited program here, he or she will proceed to the next step. If not, then the applicant must make an application to a full-time, accredited specialty program.

NDEB will build an entry-level exam with components to include a knowledge base of general dentistry, as well as the specialty and recognized standards of practice.

Each participating university will have a gap training program and assessment program of no more than one year. Only those who satisfy the credentialing requirement and the exam will be eligible to enter the assessment/gap training program.

Universities will individually set transparent and fair standards, as they do now, to determine which applicants might be accepted, contingent on the availability of seats. This is no different than the same limitations now currently found in the existing specialty programs and in the DDS and general qualifying programs.

Only those whose credentials are more or less equivalent to the training and standards in Canada AND only those who pass the entry-level exam will be eligible for participation in the assessment program and gap training.

At some point during the required academic program, candidates being assessed will receive a certificate of completion from the participating dental faculty/school.

Then these individuals will be eligible to write the RCDC specialty exam. This is an important point, as this exam will be the same RCDC exam that everyone in the specialty has to write.

Upon successful completion of the exam, the candidate will then apply for licensure at a regulatory college in the province of his or her choice.

Of course, many details are still to be worked out; however, everything is on track for implementation in fall of 2008.

Landmark Decision for Dentistry

The College did receive a number of submissions from dental specialists during the circulation period of the proposed regulation. Concerns focused on two issues: criticism of the shortened circulation period and what was perceived to be a bias towards internationally trained specialists.

Many of these criticisms have evaporated as members learned more about the fairness of the protocol and the FARPA legislated requirements.

It is hard to criticize the shortened circulation period when it was done with the official support of the Minister of Health George Smitherman. As the Minister said in his letter to the College:

The Ministry wishes to move forward on your College's proposed regulation to ensure that the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and its members are compliant with those provisions in the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act... thank you again for your continued efforts with this important initiative, in the interest of providing quality health services to the people of Ontario.

As President Frank Stechey summed up at Council: "This solution is an incredible victory for the profession, a victory won with an incredible amount of hard work on the part of many. The College could only have come this far because of the single-minded determination and commitment of all the regulators; and our colleagues in the dental community, the Ontario Dental Association, the Canadian Dental Association, RCDC, NDEB, and the universities. It has been a collaborative effort all the way. All of dentistry has every right to be very proud of this achievement."