

President's Column

CDA: A RISING TIDE THAT LIFTS ALL BOATS



Dr. Tom Breneman

As I look ahead to the coming year and consider the many challenges and opportunities in which I will be involved, I feel a sense of excitement and, yes, even some apprehension.

My days as a soccer coach remind me of the fact that no one player could win the match. The best results were always due to a team effort. Likewise, the success of a dental practice rests on the combined efforts of the dentist(s), hygienists, therapists, assistants, receptionists and lab technicians.

As issues arise in organized dentistry, we must gather and share all information, engage in dialogue and reach a decision. Then, as equals with different areas of responsibility, we implement these decisions together. Through CDA, organized dentistry in Canada has been able to present a united front on any given issue when dealing with

government and the public, and this unity has greatly benefitted our profession.

I can assure you that the challenges we face over the next year will be effectively addressed by your CDA team — the board of governors and representatives from all sectors of Canadian dentistry, with valued input from CDA's executive director and staff at the national office.

Of course, challenges present us with opportunities. The many issues facing dentistry (the priorities of which vary from region to region) will be addressed at every turn, as we move towards their resolution.

These are times of wrenching change for all health professions, dentistry included. Factors such as demographic shifts, the technological revolution, an altered regulatory climate and the changing face of the profession demand that dentistry prepare itself to meet increasing challenges. We must be aware of dentistry's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as we guide the profession to a preferred future.

During my term as CDA president, I plan to attend the meetings of all provincial dental associations. In this way, I will be able to hear first-hand the issues of greatest importance in each region of our vast country. I will listen to direct feedback on CDA's activities and suggestions for improvement. Conversely, I am looking forward to providing first-hand information to members about what CDA is doing for their direct benefit.

The hard work done by CDA in so many different fields of dentistry is of great value to the profession in general and contributes mightily to the betterment of public oral health. As motivational speakers like to say, a rising tide lifts all boats. Much of CDA's work benefits our members directly, of course, but it is quite often advanta-

geous for non-member dentists in Ontario and Quebec as well.

This brings me to the subject of corporate membership. Since CDA's work benefits all dentists in Canada, we have not lost sight of our objective to bring non-members in the voluntary provinces of Ontario and Quebec on board CDA by a process of joint membership with the provincial association. Ontario has underlined its strong support for CDA, which is a step in the right direction. The Task Force on Membership Equity is currently exploring the issue of corporate membership and we look forward to its report in the near future.

Because we now live in a world of instantaneous global communication, I will be in contact with FDI World Dental Federation and its leadership to ensure that all position statements and policies adopted by FDI are compatible with the views of Canadian dentistry.

With all of these challenges and opportunities on the horizon comes a sense of excitement. I look forward to meeting so many dedicated and talented individuals, who are prepared to devote much time and energy to accomplishing CDA's Strategic Plan, while moving forward to resolve many of the issues now facing our profession.

I believe that if we all pull together like a good sports team, CDA will have a very successful year. Both the profession of dentistry and the public it serves will be the big winners in this combined effort.

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