

President's Column

JOIN CDA
NOW...
I DID!



Dr. Louis Dubé

CDA's membership recruitment campaign is now in full swing. Planning this campaign is a very interesting exercise. After drawing up our report for the preceding year, CDA's officers and members prepare a list of issues that will be of concern to the profession over the next few years. This process is very stringent, since all of CDA's activities are related to our mission.

CDA is dedicated to defending our profession and improving oral health. These 2 objectives go hand-in-glove. Quite simply, a higher degree of competence on the dentist's part is reflected in higher-quality treatment for patients.

Nevertheless, according to surveys and our consultations among dentists across the country, there are those who feel that CDA does not offer enough tangible benefits to its members, thereby inhibiting our

efforts to recruit new members from Ontario and Quebec. Another reason often given for not joining CDA is the cost of membership dues. In our daily lives, we often spend hefty sums on consumer products that we really want, or think we really need, because we appreciate the inherent value of these products. Usually, if we assign a value to an object, its cost becomes far less important. On the other hand, if we do not see the overriding value of a product, the cost can become an excuse for not buying it. So my mission during my term as Association president is to demonstrate to you the immense value of being a member of CDA.

Our mission can be broken down into 4 key points. The first focuses on a steady improvement in the quality of oral health for all Canadians. CDA has developed a Public Education Program and raised its media profile substantially, emphasizing that the dentist is the primary provider of oral health care. Our Association is also helping dental faculties fulfill their role by offering administrative and even financial support. This key point also involves promoting the dentist-patient relationship. It is vital that we preserve the patient's right to choose a treatment plan suiting his or her needs, one that is not regulated by the interests of third-party payers.

The second key point is to maintain our status as a leader in oral health. By developing policies and guidelines, establishing work groups and organizing sessions on various issues, CDA enables provincial organizations to avoid duplicating efforts to solve problems, while also reducing their policy development-related expenditures. By maintaining discussions with professions allied to dentistry, CDA again ensures that the oral health of Canadians is among the

best in the world. Of course, much work remains to be done, but we can accomplish a great deal if we work together to find a common solution. This process ensures that everyone emerges a winner — especially the patient.

The third key point, essential if we are to succeed in our mission, is that CDA must obtain the funds it needs to cover its budget. This year's priorities are based on recommendations made by member-associations and the concerns of individual members. The participation of these groups and individuals is crucial. The more members we represent, the more influence and credibility we have with our partners.

Lastly, faithful to its fourth key point, CDA does not limit itself to membership dues as its sole source of revenue. We recognize the need to lighten the load imposed by individual dues and are developing more sources of non-dues revenue. We are also developing products that will be very attractive — and indeed essential — to our members. CDAnet has been, and still is, the state-of-the-art in electronic transmission of dental claims to insurers. ITRANS™ — a uniquely secure, Internet-based transaction and messaging service — promises to propel claim transmission into the 21st century. ITRANS™ is scheduled to be available in the first quarter of 2004.

Join up today: the optional services provided by ITRANS™ will be free for CDA members. The money you save can be used to pay a portion of your dues.

So you have 2 good reasons to join CDA: value *and* savings. When it comes to membership in CDA, you can count me in!

À la prochaine!

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